Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries

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Executive Summary

The purposes of the present research were to provide empirical evidence of the ways in which preschool literacy programs in Ontario public libraries (1) facilitate participating children's early literacy development and school readiness, and (2) influence family interactions supporting children's literacy learning. Multiple data sources, including surveys of 82 parents/caregivers, observations of 65 of the 198 children who were at the sessions we observed, and interviews with10 library staff, enhanced the reliability of the results.

Strengths of the Early Literacy Library Programs

- The early literacy library programs have been particularly strong in meeting parents'/caregivers' goals of fostering children's school readiness and their motivation to read. Parents'/caregivers' observations of their children at home provided evidence of the library program's success in nurturing children's motivation to read, as the children were talking and asking questions about books, and telling stories to accompany illustrations in picture books. This library-based exposure to literature appears to have contributed to children's enthusiasm for literature, a finding consistent with that of previous studies of preschool library programs.

- Participating children demonstrated many early literacy behaviours and understandings considered by leading early literacy researchers and experts to be foundational to later literacy success: vocabulary development; awareness of rhymes and sounds of language; and an understanding of books that were read by library staff.

- In addition to supporting these foundational underpinnings of children's later literacy and school achievement, library staff served as excellent literacy models for the parents/caregivers, enabling them to make reading with their children more engaging and more productive in terms of learning early literacy skills and understandings. Parents/caregivers cited many examples of what they had learned about engaging their children with books and print and about appropriate books to read with their children. In order to further their learning, parents/caregivers recommended that library staff provide resource materials for parents/caregivers to consult in their homes.

Recommendations

- Print awareness is an area of literacy development that library staff could encourage to a greater extent. We observed very few instances of such behaviour, with most of the observations taking place in two of the preschool early literacy programs. Concomitantly, developing children's print awareness is a recommended topic for professional development of library staff.

- Staff expressed concern about library budgets and the need to invest in the early literacy programs by providing more physical space, funds for craft materials, professional development and preparation time, and set-up and clean-up of sessions. Eight of the 10 library staff members expressed a desire for workshops and resources to help them plan their preschool library programs.

Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries

Research Purpose

The overall objectives of the present research were to understand ways in which preschool literacy programs in Ontario public libraries facilitate participating children's early literacy development and school readiness, and to seek empirical evidence of the influence on family interactions supporting children's literacy learning. More specifically, our research endeavours were focused on the following areas:

1. Examine library staff members' and parents'/caregivers' goals for the preschool library programs and the materials and practices used by library staff to meet these goals.
2. Examine the early literacy behaviours, as identified in research (Clay 16; Lynch, van den Broek, Kremer, Kendeou, White, and Lorch 327-328; Mazzoni, Gambrell, and Korkeamaki 240; Paris 232-233; Snow and Oh 379), that three- to five-year-old children demonstrate in preschool library programs.
3. Examine parents' and caregivers' perspectives on how the preschool library programs foster family interactions, attitudes, and habits that support young children's literacy development.

In examining these multi-faceted aspects of the programs, we sought rich accounts of the programs by engaging key participants including children, their parents and caregivers, and library staff members in both quantitative and qualitative data gathering activities.

Background

Research on early literacy development informed the data collection and analysis of our research. In this review of the literature, we define early literacy behaviours and describe adult-child interactions that support the development of these behaviours. We also outline previous research on library literacy programs regarding the potential contributions of the programs to children's literacy development and developing caregiver capacity for supporting early literacy at home.

Early Literacy Development

Research has shown that young children's development of print motivation, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, and print awareness has "significant and reliable relations to future reading outcomes" (Justice and Piasta 201). As such, these skills provide a useful framework for assessing outcomes of pre-school library programs.

Vocabulary development involves the understanding and use of a range of words in print and oral conversation in a wide range of contexts. Vocabulary is a reliable predictor of five-year-old children's later success in literacy activities in primary grades and in the reading comprehension of children aged 8 and older (Snow and Oh 379). Children learn new vocabulary when the words are used in context, such as in a story or through playing with the words in songs, games and rhymes (Harris, Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek57). Children construct understandings of the new words and remember them more readily when they see how the words relate to other concepts that are already familiar to them. Each time children encounter and use a word in a story, song, conversation or other form, they reinforce and expand on their understandings of the word (Blachowicz and Fisher 3).

Print motivation is an openness to learning to read and a readiness to persist through any challenges encountered while learning to read. Self-concept and valuing of reading are critical to reading motivation (Mazzoni, Gambrell, and Korkeamaki 240). Children who believe they are capable of reading and experience success and pleasure in participating in literacy activities are likely to outperform those who do not hold these beliefs and have these experiences. Similarly, children who have experiences that nurture a belief in the personal relevance and importance of reading are more likely to experience reading success (Ibid 237).

Phonological awareness is the recognition of the sounds that make up words. This includes recognition of rhymes and syllable breaks, as well as the ability to blend sounds (phonemes) to make words and to separate sounds in words (Metsala 74). Phonological awareness is important because the process of reading involves learning the correspondence between phonemes and letters (graphemes), using both auditory and visual information to be able to read print (Paris 232-233). Phonological awareness, an important predictor of later reading and writing success (Erdoğan 1506), is developed through children's participation in language

games, nursery rhymes, stories, clapping out syllables, and other play-related activities that are commonly included as components of library story times (Arnold 48).

Narrative awareness/competence is the ability to recount activities of the day or to retell stories showing an understanding of the connections and relationships between events. To make sense of books and other narrative texts, children need to have both a large vocabulary and the ability to understand relationships, particularly causal relationships, among events, characters and episodes (Lynch, van den Broek, Kremer, Kendeou, White, and Lorch 330-333). Narrative awareness requires "background knowledge about the content of the narratives and knowledge of narrative structure," all developed through hearing or reading a wide range of narrative texts (Lynch, van den Broek, Kremer, Kendeou, White, and Lorch 350). Although research in narrative competence is in preliminary stages, researchers believe it to be fundamental to early literacy and cognitive development **(**Ibid 327-328**).**

Print awareness is children's knowledge of the ways in which print is organized in various texts, their recognition of how environmental print (e.g., signs, labels) and other print communicate meaning, as well as awareness of other concepts about print, (e.g., directionality of print, concept of a word and letter) (Clay 16). Along with vocabulary and phonological awareness, print awareness, particularly knowledge of letters, is a reliable and strong indicator of children's future success with reading (Justice and Piasta 201). Adult-child interactions with books are supportive contexts for developing children's print awareness, especially when adults point out letters, words, direction of print, book titles, and authors/illustrators of books (Evans, Williamson, and Pursoo124).

Environments Supporting Early Literacy Development

A recent survey of library practitioners providing early literacy programs in 400 libraries across Canada showed that the literacy skills and knowledge underpinning the Every Child Ready to Read® program of the American Library Association were evident in the majority of the programs (McKend 1). These elements mirror the early literacy knowledge and skills recognized as foundational to later literacy achievement as described in the previous section. With their focus on developing early literacy and being "in a remarkable position to expose children to great quantities of print and meaningful language opportunities that researchers say

are crucial to reading achievement" (Celano and Neuman 3), pre-school library programs have the potential to make significant contributions to children's literacy development. The print and language exposure takes place primarily through reading books aloud to children, recognized as the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson 23), and through chanting rhymes and poems related to the books, practices that have been shown to develop phonological awareness (Yopp and Yopp 19).

Research examining the impact of library programs on school-aged children's literacy showed encouraging results. When compared with a similar non-participating peer group, children in grade 4 who participated in summer library programs showed greater enjoyment of reading, greater motivation to read and confidence in participating in reading activities. They were more likely to perceive reading to be important, and to improve their reading achievement skills (Roman, Carran and Fiore 48). Similarly, in a comparison of the reading levels of elementary-school children attending a summer library program with those of children in a control group, the reading levels of children in the library program group were more likely to be at or close to grade level whereas the control group children's reading levels were more likely to be below grade level (Celano and Neuman 43).

Library programs that are devoted to encouraging parents and caregivers to spend more time with their children reading books and playing greater roles in supporting their children's literacy development at home have also made a significant contribution to children's literacy development (Celano and Neuman 4). Participation in such a program led parents to carry out, with greater frequency, parent/child interactions that supported their children's early literacy development. These interactions included parents' use of the library with their children, and their propensity to share books, introduce letters and letter sounds, play word games, and introduce new words to their children (Arnold 51).

The current study, described below, expands on this research by surveying parents/caregivers, interviewing library staff, and observing children engaged in preschool early literacy programs across Ontario.

Research Methods

Library Sites and Participants

Of the 10 participating Ontario libraries, one library is in a rural community, seven libraries are in large urban communities (populations of 100,000+), and two libraries are in communities of less than 100,000 people. Six of these sites are either in Toronto or within 50 km of Toronto. Of the remaining four, two require air travel and the other two are within a three-hour drive of Toronto.

The programs observed ranged from 5-8 weeks with one program that was ongoing:

- one 5-week session;
- three 6-week sessions;
- five 8-week sessions; and
- one ongoing session

Each program, with 30-minute sessions, was observed twice by two members of the research team. The programs observed were specifically designed for three- to five–year-old children. The first library visit took place in the second week of the program, while the second visit occurred in the final week (the eighth week of the ongoing session). In total, 118 girls and 80 boys attended all the sessions we observed. Attendance at individual sessions ranged from 6-29 children.

Children's parents/caregivers were in attendance during eight of the 10 preschool early literacy programs. Forty-two parents and caregivers completed an initial survey, and 40 completed the final survey: 67 mothers, 10 female caregivers, one Montessori instructor, two grandmothers, one grandfather, and one father. In eight of the 10 libraries, parents/caregivers remained in the room with their children, although they had the option of leaving.

We interviewed 10 library staff (all female) who delivered the preschool programs at the participating library sites. Participating library staff had 5-21years' experience working in libraries. Their educational backgrounds were varied: B.A. (in English, journalism, Hermeneutics, and French); B.Sc.; MILS; B. Ed.; and library technician diploma.

Procedures for Contacting Libraries and Recruiting Participants

In September 2011, we invited the participation of all 10 libraries on an initial list provided by the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries Steering Committee. Seven libraries accepted the invitation and three declined. From a subsequent list that included five libraries, we successfully recruited three additional libraries.

Most of our contact with libraries was accomplished through email and the occasional phone call. Once the library agreed to participate, we sent library staff a formal invitation. We followed this with a letter providing additional information about the study and requests for information (days, dates, time, registered program with attendance taken, drop in program, number of children) about their pre-school literacy programs. One member of each pair of researchers acted as the contact person with the library staff member at each location to set dates and times for the visits, plan when they would conduct the library staff's interview, gather information about the contents of the session, and obtain travel and parking instructions.

We prepared an information letter for parents/caregivers to explain the study and invited them to give permission for us to observe their child and, if they were willing, to complete a survey. We prepared a similar letter for the librarian explaining the study. Library staff and parents/caregivers signed two forms, keeping one for their own records.

All of the letters, permission forms, surveys and interviews exist in electronic format and usually were forwarded to the appropriate library staff member in advance of the visit. We asked, if possible, that the staff member explain the study to the parents/caregivers at the first session and request permission for participation at that time.

Data Collection

We sought multiple perspectives by gathering data from parents/caregivers, children and library staff. Parent/caregiver surveys were administered on two different occasions in order to gather information about their perspectives about the program goals as well as changes in their literacy interactions at home and their children's literacy behaviours at home. Interviews with library staff provided crucial information about their vision for the program, program implementation strategies, literacy activities, and challenges. Observations during the second session and at the end of the programs allowed us to examine both the processes and outcomes of the library programs in depth.

Observations: We observed four to six three- to five–year-old children participating in each pre-school library program. The first visit took place in the second week of the program to ensure that start-up procedures did not interfere with our observations. The second visit took place in the final week of the session series. Forty-four children were observed during the second-week visits and 46 children were observed during the final visits. Because the attendance varied between the second and final sessions, only 24 children were observed across the two sessions, and it was necessary to recruit new children in order to ensure that we were observing at least three children in each session. We determined that two research assistants should visit each site to ensure accurate observations of all focus children in each session. Each researcher wrote observations of what their assigned focus children said and did for the duration of the session. Researchers seated themselves in locations that allowed for an unobstructed view of the focus children.

Interviews with staff: We prepared two interview protocols for library staff (see Appendix A for library staff interview protocols). Before or after the session, when the library staff member was not busy with children, parents or caregivers, researchers interviewed the library staff using audio recording or written notes to capture the interview responses. We interviewed a total of 10 library staff who delivered the preschool programs at the participating library sites. We also gathered information about each library. One researcher asked questions about the library layout and its facilities, the organization of the children's department and the session that researchers were about to observe; responses were recorded by the second researcher.

Parent/Caregiver surveys: We developed two parent surveys; one to be completed during our first visit, the other during the final visit (see Appendix B for parent survey protocols). Almost all surveys were completed independently by the parent, although two were conducted in an interview at the library or over the telephone to accommodate the parents' schedules and wishes. Interviews were conducted at the end of each visit. When the session ended, one or both researchers collected surveys from parents/caregivers. Forty-two surveys were completed during the second-week visits and 40 surveys were completed during the final-week visits.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed inductively, keeping in mind McKend's (2010) six literacy skills: *print motivation, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, print awareness,* and *letter knowledge*. Two doctoral student research assistants met with the principal investigators to

generate potential categories of child and library staff behaviour arising from the observational data. In addition to the literacy skills, we found that the children demonstrated many school readiness behaviours that were important measures of success in kindergarten classrooms. Drawing on our experience as classroom teachers and researchers, we created a category called *school readiness* and determined a number of codes within this category, as well.

The two research assistants then conducted an inductive analysis of one of the transcripts of library program observations. The entire research team met in early December to discuss the analyses, discussing each researcher's categories in order to add, modify and delete the initial set of codes, creating the coding protocols that we applied to the data. We found that it was important to analyze both the library staff and child behaviour and created a coding protocol for each.

The research assistants used the new codes to re-analyze the observation transcript and then analyzed a second transcript using the new coding categories. The team met again to determine how well the revised coding protocols work for the new transcript and determined an inter-rater reliability rate of 99 per cent for both transcripts. The two research assistants then analyzed all of the observation transcripts of observations.

We used a similar inductive process to analyze the parent surveys and library staff interviews. Two research assistants met with the principal investigator to create the first round of codes and then met to revise the codes where there was disagreement. The inter-rater reliability rate for the second round of coding also was 99 per cent.

Results

We begin by reporting on the goals and desired outcomes of the library programs from parents/caregivers' and library staff member's perspectives, as well as the key features of the program implementation processes and principles. Subsequently, we present the program outcomes in terms of evidence of children's early literacy learning and demonstration of school readiness skills, and parents' and caregivers' interactions with their children in literacy activities.

Perspectives about Program Goals

As noted previously, school readiness was parents/caregivers' predominant desired outcome for their children's participation in the library program (72% of their goal-related comments referred to this goal). It was also an important goal for 40% of library staff members. Parents/caregivers gave specific examples of the school readiness behaviours they hoped that their children would develop through participation in the library programs: "Learn to sit and listen"; "Learn to interact with other kids"; and "Continue to enjoy books and learn to listen to a 'teacher'." Parents/caregivers also hoped that their children would learn how to function in a group situation, be able to play with other children, and be able to separate from their parent. One parent, for example, wrote: "I am hoping that she will develop focus, listening, socializing skills and will promote learning." Library staff identified related goals for children, such as learning routines, listening skills and "a little self-awareness and independence." One library staff member's school readiness goals included: "Develop[ing] long enough attention span to sit through the program…Gain[ing] social skills, such as a hello greeting, eye contact, interact with others, respond to questions."

A love of reading and engaging with books was another important skill that both parents/caregivers and library staff desired children to develop. One parent, for example, explained that it was important for library staff to "bring the children into the story in a variety of ways (actions, questions, objects)," and another parent felt that the library program "introduces [children] to the fun of reading." Similarly, one library staff member stated that she "wants [children] to have fun, [as] literacy, books and reading should be fun." Another reported that "I want them to love coming here, hook them and keep them coming here, reading and loving

books. I want them to read. I want them to like reading even if they are not good readers." One library staff member thought that an important outcome of the early literacy program was the carryover into children's home lives. She explained:

> I love it when a little guy, or the mother, will come up and say "You read that story and now he wants me to read it to him every day. I love that. Or that they'll say that they went home and sang whatever it was that day – that they carry it over. I think that's really nice when you see evidence of it being carried over into the rest of their life.

Of primary importance to library staff, though not mentioned by parents/caregivers, was the goal of instilling a love of the library so that young children would enjoy coming to it. It was important to library staff members that the early literacy programs strive to "develop a relationship with adults and children." This relationship was seen as important so that children would "feel comfortable in the library." Underscoring this goal, one library staff member hoped that the early literacy library programs would instil a desire "to want to come back and want to keep coming back; to feel that they are wanted here and they're welcomed."

Particular to parents/caregivers was the wish to enhance child-parent relationships by "bonding over books and songs" and to provide a location where families could come to do something enjoyable together or "interact with other parents and kids." Some new immigrant parents valued the library program as a place where their children could hear English spoken by native English speakers.

Program Implementation Processes for Achieving Library Program Goals

In their interview responses, the library staff members talked about developmentally appropriate practices for engaging young children and for developing early literacy skills and knowledge. One library staff member, for example, explained that "these children couldn't stay focused on longer books. In the beginning I skipped pages and speed read through to get finished before the kids got squirrely. I have changed my usual books to incorporate more of the shorter books. This is mainly due to their young age of this particular group." Another staff member advised that "the children respond well to predictability, so we sing opening and closing songs that are always the same. This makes children feel comfortable, helps them improve their memory also." Three staff members talked about the need to include activities that developed

early literacy skills, as explained in the following: "[We] must include a literacy skill in each program. . . The actual content is up to the individual librarian, and we get to choose your own books and rhymes as long as they support the six pre-literacy skills…"

As a result, when reflecting on their guiding principles, seven librarians identified the need to be flexible in planning and presenting the program, not only in the broadest sense, but also on the day of and during the program. This entailed the ability to vary content sequence, alternate between quiet listening and active participation, and alter the course when something is not working. One library staff member advised that it was important to "know the children, engage them, read their responses and readjust accordingly. [Have] lots of materials and mixture of activities… If you're not having fun or not able to go with the flow then it's just not going to work no matter what you do."

 The librarians' recognition of the need to make the activities fun and engaging was identified by five of the participating staff as a guiding principle. While each of the programs differed in specific content, there were many similarities. They all readily mixed songs, finger plays (fine motor movement), gross motor movement, rhymes, puppet portrayals of stories, felt boards, chanting or chiming in, with books and reading of stories, for example. The following librarian's statement attests to this approach:

> Well you need to make sure that you have a balance between sitting quietly and getting up and blowing off some of that energy. They really like to do an "up" activity. Plus they like things like the flannel board, it gets them kind of excited. And parents like the idea that the kids are kind of learning something. But we don't want to be teachers; we want them to have the warm fuzzy feeling when they think of the library.

Our observations of the library programs showed that the library staff supported the children's school readiness in the routines that they instituted. Eighteen of the 20 sessions we observed began with a welcoming or entry song that signalled the beginning and focused the children's attention on the librarian. This and the various procedures used to distribute name tags were just some of the routines that helped with organization and establishing quiet and calm. One library staff member explained that: "[the children] learn the routine and that we all have fun together because when they're really into it it's really rewarding for me, and I think they get more out of it too, when they understand the routine."

Library staff members consulted a wide range of sources for materials and ideas for their programs. All ten library staff stated that print materials were their primary source for program content. Amongst those they identified as useful were the American Library Association's *Ready to Read* resources, collections of nursery rhymes, magazines, finger plays and songs, such as that produced by Jane Cobbs, and their personal collections. Print materials were used in preparation for sessions and in the sessions. During the observed sessions, library staff used 61 picture books. Most of these contained text, but some were wordless picture books which invited children to provide the text for the story and to mime the characters' actions.

Five library staff reported that they also referred to Google, the Hennepin Library website for the 6 pre-reading skills, and other websites for rhymes, themes, and story-telling. Three staff members stated that they consult and collaborate with colleagues to share ideas and materials. In some instances library systems have had staff organize themed kits that they are required to use for these sessions. In other cases using library prepared kits is optional.

Program Outcomes

The early literacy library programs have had a noticeable impact on children's literacy behaviour and on parent/caregiver-child interactions in their homes. These program outcomes are detailed in the following sections.

Changes in children's literacy behaviours at home

In survey responses, participating parents and caregivers identified numerous changes in their children's behaviours throughout the duration of the early literacy library program. The predominant changes involved children's increasing engagement with books and stories. These behaviours included "talk[ing] about books and think[ing] that books are fun," as well as telling stories to accompany pictures in picture books (e.g., one parent wrote that her son was "learning how to read books or make up stories by looking at pictures in a book"), asking family members to read books with them, and discussing books with family members. One parent wrote, for example: "I have noticed [she] bring books to me to read after the program and often will discuss the themes of the books with me." Indeed, some of the children imitated the behaviour of the library staff, as observed by one parent: "She reads to us and holds up the book like the librarian. She passes the book around the circle we sit in. She also does this with

her dolls. She tells the story by describing the pictures." Another parent reported: "With others reading to him he asks lots of questions and shares observations."

The children's development of social skills required to thrive in school were widely observed by parents and caregivers as well. Parents remarked that their children seemed "more social and independent." One parent was happy to observe that her son "has learned to sit with other kids and try to listen" as the library program was "his first time being in a large (more than five) group setting." Another parent was pleased to observe the following behaviour: "She is shy, but very participative. She participates in everything."

Parents and caregivers were also satisfied that their children had gained in their "ability to focus and listen, follow directions and manners." One caregiver explained: "He has learned to watch, sit and follow instructions. Seeing other children do it helps him, I think." A parent noted with pride that her child was "following the teacher and taking part. … very attentive. "Similarly, six of the library staff stated that they had witnessed growth in the children's school readiness. One library staff member observed that children's "attention span increased; children take part much more, … [and] socialization skills have improved. [They are] comfortable to participate and not shy with each other; great at turn taking."

A third aspect of school readiness observed by parents and caregivers was their children's development and pride in using writing and drawing tools. One parent wrote, "He has a lot of pride with the crafts, showing them off to family and friends." Another parent also observed, "He holds pencils and crayons better. He takes time drawing."

Parents/caregivers noted that their children showed greater interest and knowledge of words, letters, phonics and print after having participated in the library programs. For the most part, their interest and knowledge was demonstrated through writing. One parent explained that her daughter "likes to draw pictures and put captions under them. She writes letters in her captions… These drawings and captions are her own form of making a storybook." Other parents observed that their children were starting to write and illustrate their own books, and to write their name and three letter words like *cat* and *dog*. One child was even starting to use fridge magnets to make stories like the ones she had heard in class. Children also showed their interest and knowledge of print through identifying words in books that they were reading with family

members. One parent, for example, observed that her daughter "likes to learn and know more words and feels good when she recognizes words," particularly as the early literacy program progressed.

Parents' literacy interactions with their children

Because parents and caregivers were present during the early literacy library programs, they also had an opportunity to learn about supportive adult-child-book/print interactions. The 40 parents/caregivers who completed the final-session survey provided 39 examples of what they had learned about engaging their children with books. Six of those examples described the knowledge they had gained about authors and books that were appropriate for four- and five-year-old children. The early literacy sessions had introduced parents/caregivers to new books, different styles of books (pop-up, wordless), songs, action rhymes, and authors. One caregiver wrote: "I like seeing new books and authors. [I learned about] books with large print for child to see and clear pictures."

The other 33 responses identified particular ways in which parents and caregivers livened up the reading of books to their children and engaged in retelling and writing activities. One parent wrote, for example, that "the program encourages me to read books with enthusiasm and make reading fun. I borrow pop-up books and lift-the-flap books from the library. We use a 'tag' reading system at home, which he loves. I buy him preschool workbooks, he loves them, too." Another parent commented: "I have learned to do circle time at home… I am more animated when I read to her; use different voices and actions with the story." Another parent explained that she and her child "retell stories and draw pictures of the stories read and try to write stories." Parents and caregivers started using puppets with their children and began combining "physical play while reading along with songs/poems." Parents and caregivers also began writing and creating stories with their children, as explained by one caregiver: "I notice that [my daughter] likes to stories on the board so sometimes we create our own stories using paper. She draws and I write key words for her." Another parent explained that she "read[s] with him, write[s] him notes, ha[s] him write notes and make[s] him aware of the sounds." It is very apparent that the library staff members serve as excellent literacy models for the parents/caregivers. They have enabled the parents to make reading with their children more engaging and more productive in terms of learning early literacy skills and understandings.

Development of Children's Literacy Skills and School Readiness Behaviours

Our iterative and inductive analyses of the program observations resulted in five main literacy skill categories, each of which subsumed multiple sub-skills. Together with children's readiness for school, the five early literacy categories were: vocabulary development, print motivation, narrative awareness, phonological awareness, and print awareness. Participating children demonstrated 2,855 early literacy and school readiness behaviours during the 20 visits (two per program). The average number of school readiness and early literacy behaviours observed for focus children participating in each session was 62—a remarkable number for two half-hour sessions. Children's school readiness and vocabulary knowledge were demonstrated to the greatest degree. The children also demonstrated print motivation, narrative awareness, and phonological awareness frequently. Children's demonstrations of print awareness were far less frequent, with the majority taking place in two of the observed programs.

Similar skills development patterns were observed from data from library staff members. In other words, library staff members' instructional strategies and foci mirrored this pattern. The greatest percentage of their interactions with the children involved supporting children's vocabulary development, print motivation, their school readiness, narrative awareness, and phonological awareness. There were fewer examples of instructional strategies for fostering print awareness. Below, we discuss each skill category in detail.

School readiness

Children demonstrated a range of skills required for participating in school. They included taking turns, following instructions, paying attention to library staff, participating in activities, and considering others. Table 1 shows positive evidence that supports the development school readiness. Children's disruptive behaviours decreased and their positive behaviours increased over the duration of the program, with the exception of children's participation in activities. This slight decrease is likely the result of library staff engaging children in fewer activities that required a longer attention span (e.g., using longer books) because of children's growing ability to attend.

Table 1 *Children's School Readiness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
School	Takes turns	2	7
readiness	Follows instructions	72	72
	Focuses on library staff	79	91
	Participates in activities	383	267
	Decrease disruptive behaviour	36	1
	Shows consideration of others	2	7
Sub-Total		574	445

Table 2 *Library Staff's Instructional Strategies for Children's School Readiness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
School readiness	Encourages turn taking	6	9
	Provides instructions	92	85
	Invites and redirects focus	17	11
	Encourages consideration	4	4
Sub-Total		119	109

Table 2 summarizes the various instructional strategies used by the library staff to support children's readiness to participate in the sessions and develop school readiness skills. Staff members carefully established routines that they used in each session to enable the children to recognize the beginning and end of the session, and organize themselves appropriately. These ranged from hello and good-bye songs, stretches, "fluttering down like snowflakes", and "shaking your sillies out". One library staff sang a hello song into which she inserted each child's name as she distributed name tags. Another walked through the group to let each child greet/pet the stuffed dog she carried.

Providing instructions about all aspects of the session from settling down, getting name tags, and organizing orderly departure at the end of the session were significant features of the library staff members' interactions with the children. In each session very little prompting was required to accomplish all of these things; all basic classroom skills. Library staff, for example, gave explanations of how to hold hands and form a circle, and demonstrated stretching with a song about turning around and touching toes; some of the many ways in which they settled the children and organized them for listening and participating in the session. The children responded favourably by demonstrating increasing instances of being able to follow instructions across the two observations of each program.

During the sessions we observed, with increasing frequency, children's eyes glued to whatever library staff did or read during the session. For the most part this was accomplished with minimal prompting. Library staff often held up books to draw the children's attention. To focus the children further they made comments such as: "This book has a button to push to make the lights twinkle." "I have two books that I want to share with you today. One has beautiful pictures, and one is a pop-up." These methods and remarks succeeded in redirecting any distracted children, as evidenced by the decreasing need to redirect the children in the second observation of each program.

On occasion library staff had to encourage turn taking. When a child said "We went to grandma's cottage, I didn't want to get in the boat," the library staff acknowledged the comment, but asked her to wait because another child was speaking. This is just one example of this type of necessary interaction between children and staff.

There was little difference between the two observations in the occurrence of encouraging consideration for others, another skill essential for working in a group. Library staff asked children to wait their turn or sit down so others could see the book. We watched one library staff repeatedly redirect a child who stood in front of the book to sit down so that others could see. Although the child did so once, even twice, the child returned again, only to be redirected again; all of this to ensure that the other children could see the book and the disturbance cease. Staff efforts to address this type of behaviour resulted in a reduction in disruptive behaviour in the second observations.

Children's vocabulary development was demonstrated through children's recognition of songs and words from other contexts, talking about concepts in books, songs and rhymes, and using book vocabulary. There was a modest decrease in demonstrations of vocabulary development between the two observations, as shown in Table 3, although the number of demonstrations was remarkably high in both observations.

Table 3 *Development of Children's Vocabulary Development*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Vocabulary Development	Recognizes songs and words from other contexts	12	18
	Demonstrates concept or vocabulary knowledge	442	363
Sub-Total		454	381

Table 4 *Library Staff's Support for Children's Vocabulary Development*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Vocabulary Development	Asks children to demonstrate vocabulary or concept knowledge	211	163

For the most part, the children showed that they understood the vocabulary used in books, songs and rhymes by carrying out actions, such as pointing to their nose when the story referred to "one shiny red nose", jumping up exuberantly when the library staff member read about a rocket blasting off, and making squealing car sounds when a story mentioned a character going in the car. Sometimes children voluntarily labelled objects in illustrations. For example, one child walked up to a book the library staff member was reading and said, "Moon, moon" while pointing at a picture of the moon. Children also demonstrated their vocabulary knowledge by answering library staff members' questions about the words for objects in book illustrations.

Children participating in the library programs demonstrated their motivation to read by attending to books read by library staff and by asking questions or making comments about the books. The number of observations showing children's motivation to engage with print was high in both observations, although it decreased in the second observations. Library staff members' support for children's motivation slightly increased across the two sessions.

Table 5 *Children's Motivation to Read*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Print Motivation	Attends to books that are read	156	152
	Asks questions and comments	81	51
Sub-Total		237	203

Table 6 *Library Staff's Support for Children's Motivation to Read*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Print Motivation	Invites attention to illustrations	26	27
	Invites questions or comments about book	26	37
Sub-Total		52	64

Library staff facilitated children's motivation in several ways (Table 6). Observer comments such as: "Three children watch the book as [staff member] reads the actions of the characters going on a bear hunt," attest to the children's attention to the illustrations and the librarian's use of the illustration to interest and focus the children. Furthermore, children responded actively to books read out loud. Participating children demonstrated interest in and motivation to engage with text various ways. They quietly read along with library staff members when the librarians read a book aloud, attended closely, and giggled at the silly pictures. Children also echoed sounds or words appropriately as the staff person read or invited their participation.

Narrative awareness

Children demonstrated narrative awareness by answering questions and predicting stories. The number of instances where children demonstrated narrative awareness increased slightly across the two observations (see Table 7). Library staff utilized various instructional support strategies to develop children's narrative awareness, including asking for predictions, asking questions about background knowledge, and using voice intonation to make the story or poem come alive (Table 8).

Table 7 *Development of Children's Narrative Awareness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Narrative Awareness	Responds to question	60	54
	Predicts story	22	33
	Demonstrates narrative comprehension	75	78
Sub-Total		157	165

Table 8 *Library Staff's Support for Children's Narrative Awareness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Narrative Awareness	Asks for predictions	11	7
	Asks questions about background knowledge	35	24
	Use voice intonation	6	18
Sub-Total		52	49

Library staff enriched children's understanding of the narratives by asking children to identify what was in the illustrations and by asking questions that highlighted connections between the children's lives and the stories. For example, one library staff member asked: "Can cows lay eggs?" when she introduced the book *The Cow that Laid an Egg*. Another, when introducing the book *The Leaves on the Trees*, asked, "Do we wear swim suits in the fall?"

Library staff engaged children in discussion about stories that they had read aloud in order to deepen their understanding of the stories. For example, one library staff member asked children why the Little Red Hen didn't want to share the bread she had made. Library staff sometimes used felt boards, chart paper stories, puppets, and oral storytelling to tell stores such as, *The Little Engine That Could*, and *Franklin is Afraid of the Dark*. Another library staff member asked children to look at the book cover and make predictions. Notes from this observation described the following: "Staff introduces Dragon Story [and asks] 'What comes out of his mouth? [talking about the front cover] 'Can you tell where we are from the front cover? Who lives here? What has happened?'" The children responded with enthusiasm and information to such inquiries.

Library staff further enhanced children's narrative understanding through the animated readings, intonation and the use of voices appropriate to the text and character (e.g., squeaky voice for tiny animal). Instances of this behaviour increased in our second observations.

Children demonstrated their understanding of narratives they were read in many ways. Some children were observed putting their hands under their ears to show sleep as a book ended, for example. During a reading of *Going on a Bear Hunt* one of the children looked very worried about the bear. Another child uttered 'Uh oh!' when the babies in the [another] story started to cry." Another observer reported, "At the end [a child] says 'That was a funny one and a long one.'" In addition, one girl was observed lying down when the bear in the book being read fell asleep and then put her hands under her ear to show sleep as the book ended.

Phonological awareness

As shown in Table 9, participating children demonstrated phonological awareness through repeating sounds, repeating rhyming words, and singing along with the library staff member. Concomitantly, library staff supported phonological awareness by inviting children to join them in these activities, as shown in Table 10. Singing and chiming activities occurred less frequently in the second session as longer books were read to the children.

Table 9 *Development of Children's Phonological Awareness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Phonological awareness	Repeats sounds	33	22
	Repeats words/supplies rhyming words	2	9
	Sings songs or chants rhymes along with library staff	74	72
Sub-Total		109	103

Table 10 *Library Staff's Support for Children's Phonological Awareness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Phonological Awareness	Invites children to supply rhyming words	1	1
	Invites repetition of sounds	8	3
	Sings or chants songs and rhymes with children	86	65
Sub-Total		95	69

Library staff alternated quiet reading of books with chants and finger plays, nursery rhymes and songs to foster awareness of rhyme. Additionally, they furthered children's phonological awareness by inviting children to repeat sounds and by introducing letter sounds. Children repeated or mimicked the sounds and sang along or joined in the rhymes and chants with the staff. Often, the children followed particular actions prompted by library staff as they sang, chanted or made animal sounds. Singing songs such as *Skinnamerink*, *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, and *If You're Happy and You Know It* occurred frequently and elicited high participation from the children. While reading, library staff frequently invited children to chime in a word or a portion of the text that was repeated. When reading the *Little Red Hen* the staff person invited the children to make animal noises. Another librarian encouraged the children to say, "toohoo!" to support the reading of *The Wise Old Owl*.

Print awareness

There were few observations of children showing letter and word knowledge and even fewer of their recognition of book orientation. The number of observations increased across the

two observations as greater numbers of children carried out letter and word recognition tasks. These observations took place primarily in two of the preschool early literacy library programs.

Table 11 *Children's Print Awareness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Print Awareness	Recognizes book orientation	1	0
	Identifies letters	5	17
	Identifies words	1	3
Sub-Total		7	20

Table 12 *Library Staff's Support for Print Awareness*

Category	Skill	Frequency	
		Obs1	Obs2
Print Awareness	Invites children to correct book orientation	15	6
	Asks children to identify print direction	2	2
	Asks children to identify letters	2	13
	Asks children to identify words	27	11
Sub-Total		46	32

Library staff fostered children's print awareness by naming and using letters, tracking print direction and echo reading (Table 12). In early sessions library staff introduced correct book orientation, asking the children if the book was being held the right way up: At one session, the staff member "turn[ed] book upside down, ask[ed] 'Are we ready to read?'"

Library staff in two of the preschool early literacy programs introduced the children to letters and letter sounds. In one session the staff member took out the felt letters *BED*. One library staff member asked the children to name the letters, then reviewed the sounds that each made and blended the sounds to say the word. A couple of children responded. They watched as she rearranged the letters and asked if they were in the right order to make the word bed. Another

staff member took out the letters for *BINGO*. The children identified each letter. One child shouted out, "It's going to be *BINGO*!" The librarian and the children sang the song *BINGO*; as they sang, the librarian removed one letter at a time, and some children independently pointed out letters that they recognized. In another instance, an observer noted that "[the child] recognizes that the letter *t* and the word *tea* are the same. '*T* is for *Tea*', she tells her mom." In another session, library staff member handed out letters of the alphabet to all the children. The children came up to the front when their letter was called and put their letter on the board.

It is possible that book orientation was established by the final session, so library staff did not feel the need to highlight the front of the book, top of the page and other elements of book orientation to the same degree as they did in the early sessions.

Summary of Program Strengths and Recommendations

Evidence gathered from observational, survey and interview data indicates that the 10 preschool early literacy library programs are particularly strong in supporting young children's early literacy and school readiness, as well as their parents'/caregivers' literacy support at home. In the following section, we detail specific strengths and recommendations based on our analysis and on suggestions provided by participating library staff and parents/caregivers.

Strengths

Fostering children's school readiness

Preschool children participating in the early literacy library programs demonstrated a large number of school readiness and early literacy behaviours during 20 half-hour observations. With library staff encouragement, the establishment of routines, and some explicit direction, they participated in activities, focused on library staff, followed instructions, took turns, and showed consideration of others. Almost all parents and library staff identified these skills as desirable outcomes of children's participation in the library programs. The decreasing numbers of school readiness behaviours between the second and final sessions are likely indicative of the children's increasing maturity and familiarity with the library program routines. They were able to attend for longer periods and did not demonstrate new behaviours with such great frequency in the final sessions as they did in the second session of each library program. Given that we observed an

average of 21.3 instances per child of positive social skills and school-like behaviour in two half-hour observations, it appears that the programs were successful in meeting parents' expectations.

Our study found that library staff devoted substantial effort to developing preschool children's school readiness skills in the library programs. Given that participating children's parents considered school readiness to be desirable outcomes of the library program and that such skills are helpful in ensuring that children are able to participate fully in the literacy activities, school readiness should be considered when developing early literacy library programs. It should also be featured in literature advertising the programs.

Another issue that should be examined, however, is the relative emphasis on school readiness behaviours. The amount of time and energy allocated to modeling and teaching school readiness behaviour may have taken away from time for fostering early literacy skills and knowledge, such as print awareness. Further discussions about the relative importance of the two desirable learning outcomes and the implications for the content of library programs are indicated in these findings.

Fostering the development of early literacy skills

The children participating in the 10 Ontario library programs were introduced to 61 picture books during the two sessions we observed at each site, an average of six per library program. As a result, participating children demonstrated in a number of ways print motivation, vocabulary knowledge, narrative awareness and phonological awareness; early literacy elements that are foundational to later literacy development (Justice and Piasta 201)..

Vocabulary development: Children's vocabulary development was demonstrated through children's recognition of songs and words from other contexts, talking about concepts in books, songs and rhymes, and using book vocabulary. They also answered library staff members' questions and carried out actions to show their understanding of the vocabulary in books. We observed an average of 18.6 instances of such behaviour per child observed in the 20 sessions.

Motivation to read: Over the course of the two observations, children demonstrated greater motivation to engage with books, with an average of 5.6 instances per child observed in the 20 sessions. Library staff invited children's attention by asking questions, commenting about the book or identifying features of the illustrations in books. Parents and library staff identified

children's enjoyment of and engagement with books as an important outcome of the library programs. The exposure to literature in the library programs appears to have contributed to children's overall enthusiasm for literature, a finding consistent with that of previous studies of preschool library programs (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson 23; Celano and Neuman 3).

Narrative awareness: Children demonstrated narrative awareness by answering questions and predicting stories. The number of instances where children demonstrated narrative awareness remained relatively stable across the two observations, averaging 7.2 instances per child observed in the 20 sessions. Library staff utilized various instructional support strategies to develop children's narrative awareness, including asking for predictions, asking questions that highlighted connections between the children's lives and the stories, background knowledge, and using the animated readings, intonation and voices appropriate to the text and character.

Phonological awareness: Participating children demonstrated phonological awareness through repeating sounds, repeating rhyming words, and singing along with the library staff member. Children's demonstrations of phonological awareness were fairly stable between the first and second observations, averaging 4.7 instances per child across the 20 sessions. Library staff alternated quiet reading of books with chants and finger plays, nursery rhymes and songs to foster awareness of rhyme, as well as encourage children's participation and focus on the activity at hand.

Positively influencing adult-child interactions at home

Consistent with previous research examining the impact of early literacy library programs (Arnold 51; Celano and Neuman 4), the observed programs had an impact on adult-child interactions with books in the homes of participating children. Parents/caregivers cited many examples of what they had learned about engaging their children with books and print and about appropriate books to read with their children. This outcome extends beyond library staff goals for their library programs and is a positive feature that could be included in literature advertising the programs. Parents'/caregivers' observations of their children at home provide evidence of the library program's success in nurturing children's motivation to read, as the children were reported to be talking and asking questions about books and telling stories to accompany illustrations in picture books.

Recommendations

Our observations of children's behaviour and library staff interactions with preschool children show that all areas of early literacy learning are highly supported in the preschool early literacy programs except for fostering print awareness. Consequently, our recommendations in terms of the content of the programs are that they continue to provide this support and enhance work in fostering children's print awareness.

Despite universal satisfaction with the programs, parents/caregivers and library staff felt that there were some challenges that should be addressed and made suggestions for scheduling, defining parental expectations for parent/caregiver involvement in the sessions, and ways to support library staff members in planning and facilitating the early literacy library programs. We discuss these suggestions in the following section.

Fostering print awareness

Although our observations of participating children show that there were few instances where children demonstrated their awareness of letters, sounds and other concepts about print, such as book orientation and directionality of print, there was some evidence of library staff teaching basic understandings about print. We observed an average of 7.8 instances of library staff eliciting print awareness behaviour per library program over the two observed sessions, although much of the print awareness behaviour on the part of library staff and children took place in two of the preschool early literacy programs.

It appears that the library staff members' efforts to foster children's print awareness has had an impact on children's behaviour at home, however, as parents/caregivers observed that their children showed greater interest in and knowledge about words, letters, and other aspects of print over the course of the early literacy library program. The age of the children (3-5 years old) may have contributed to the lower incidence of print awareness behaviour in many of the sessions, but these findings do indicate a need for greater support of children's print awareness across a larger number of preschool early literacy programs.

Scheduling

Twelve of the 82 participating parents/caregivers expressed some concerns about scheduling. Some recommended that the preschool library programs be made more widely available. One parent, for example, suggested that the library "offer the same program on

multiple days to open up more spots for people to register," and another suggested that the program could be extended beyond six weeks' duration. A third parent felt that 45 minutes would be an ideal length of time for each session. One parent recommended setting up more programs without caregivers/parents present because she believed that "it is important for [her daughter] to attend this because it will help prepare her for school and being separated from us during the day." Another parent, expressing a wish for material that could be taken home, wrote that "the librarians used to provide a photocopy of the songs and finger plays every week, I found those really helped to use them at home." Five library staff members suggested that library budgets, planning and staffing issues were important in addressing these recommendations. One parent was supportive of initiatives to increase funding to make the program more accessible and longer in duration: "I don't know if it's a funding thing, but I think it's really great and I would totally support, and sign letters to support more funding."

According to participating library staff, an issue that has an impact on scheduling is clarification of the program's purpose. One library staff member said: "The library powers-that-be must decide if the aims are entertainment or educational. If it's entertainment, then it is ok to have many children and looser guidelines. If it's education, then must have more structure. Programs get crowded, [it's] better to register, smaller numbers make the educational opportunities greater." Another echoed the need to determine whether the focus of the program should be on "promot[ing] a love of reading or as a child care."

Defining expectations for parent/caregiver participation

Given the significant positive influence of the preschool early literacy programs on adult-child interactions at home, it is highly recommended that parents/caregivers continue to attend the sessions with their children.

To enhance their and their children's learning, however, developing expectations for their participation is recommended. Six library staff members indicated that managing parents and children was challenging for them. One explained that she felt discomfort when "adults don't always step in to intervene." Parents and caregivers were aware of these tensions, as well. Another parent stated, "As much as I love all-age events it can be distracting if older kids just want to come for the stories." One library staff member recommended that participating adults be given very clearly defined rules and explained that she displayed these guidelines and

reviewed them often with the parents: "Put cell phones on vibrate, stay engaged with your child, save conversations for later, and save food for after." It appears that there is a need to educate or guide the parents to appropriate behaviours in a group setting.

Supporting library staff

Five of the participating staff expressed concern about library budgets and the need to invest in the early literacy programs by providing more physical space, funds for craft materials, professional development and "more time off-desk" for preparation and for setting up and cleaning up sessions. Two staff members suggested that it was essential to select the appropriate staff to run the program and that the skills and interests of its personnel should be considered when making these decisions.

Eight library staff members expressed a desire for workshops and resources to help them plan their preschool library programs. The findings of this research indicate that fostering children's print and phonological awareness would be important workshop topics. One staff member explained: "Maybe I could learn more about music and songs. I feel like I rely on the same thing." This sentiment was echoed by another library staff who commented, "We need refreshing. We need to be able to afford to send us… like we always sing the same songs which the kids love, but it's nice to bring in new things that the kids would like." Four other library staff identified closer connections to schools and to other library staff as an important focus of professional development. One staff member said that she "would LOVE to have a talented Junior Kindergarten teacher come in to offer insights on better school readiness and class room management skills." Others recommended setting up brainstorming sessions with library staff at other locations and being given opportunities to attend various professional sessions. Another library staff member believed that it was important to have "more connection with schools; share information with schools." This need for an infusion of skills and knowledge, whether in the form of professional development, collaboration, time to plan and prepare for the sessions, or feedback and support from colleagues and supervisors, was a recurrent theme.

Closing Remarks

The present research builds on and extends McKend's (2010) survey of library staff providing early literacy programs in Canada to examine concrete literacy interactions and evidence of children's literacy learning in library programs. The key literacy skills recognized as foundational to later literacy achievement in McKend's study guided the instrumentation and analyses of multiple data sources gathered in the present study. We sought a rich account of program outcomes and practices that helped to achieve the outcomes. Multiple data sources from library site visits and triangulation of multiple participants' perspectives about and experiences of the programs contributed to new understandings about the actual literacy practices carried out by library staff and participating children, as well as the impact of the program on home literacy interactions.

The observation and survey/interview data used to gather information about children's literacy development provide rich contextual information but also present limitations in determining the direct impact of the programs on children's literacy development. The reported changes in children's literacy behaviours between two observations (in the second and final sessions of the programs) should be interpreted cautiously, given the relatively short duration of the programs (two months or less), the great variations across the programs in terms of program length and age ranges of children participating in the programs, together with the absence of information about other activities in the children's lives that would have influenced their literacy development. Although every effort was made to select libraries randomly from each quadrant of the province, proximity to the researchers' city played a role in order to facilitate data collection. In addition, some libraries that were initially contacted chose not to participate. These factors should be kept in mind when generalizing these results to other library programs. Bearing such limitations in mind, we believe that the present study offers positive evidence of the effects of the early literacy programs offered by Ontario public libraries.

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Appendices

A. Library staff interview protocols for first and second visits
B. Parent/caregiver surveys for first and second visits

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Library Staff (after second early literacy session)

<u>Before the interview:</u>

Date	
Location	
Interviewee	
Gender	

<u>During the interview:</u>

Professional Background and Role	1: What previous experience have you had in planning and delivering early literacy programs prior to this session?	
	2: Describe your role in the program	
	3: Tell us about your educational background	
	4: What kind of training have you had to help you prepare to plan and deliver the preschool literacy program?	
Preparation for the Early Literacy Program	6: What do you think is important when planning and delivering the early literacy program? What guiding principles or certain practices do you think are most effective?	
	7: What materials or resources have you found helpful in planning and delivering your program?	
	8: What are your goals for the children in your program?	

Interview Questions for Library Staff (after second early literacy session)

Before the interview

Date	
Location	
Interviewee	

Program Effectiveness	1: What has been most satisfying to you about the early literacy program this year?	
	2: What challenges did you experience and how did you overcome them?	
	3: Do you have any concerns or suggestions for improving the program?	

Appendix B

Parent Survey/Interview Administered before second early literacy sessions

Hello Parent/Caregiver!

Thank you for your interest in the library's early literacy program. Here are a few questions to find out about your interest in the program. Thank you for your input. Your answers will help the library staff to improve the program.

Sincerely,

Shelley Stagg Peterson and Eunice Jang, professors at the University of Toronto

Date	
Library	
Your relationship to the child you brought today	

1: What is your child's name?	
2: How did you learn about the early literacy program?	
3: Why are you interested in the library's early literacy program?	
4: What do you anticipate that you and your child will get from it?	

Second Visit Questions for Parents or other Caregivers

Date	
Library	
Your relationship to the child you brought today	

1: What is your child's name?	
2: How satisfied are you with the program?	
3: What have you observed that your child has gained from being in the program? (e.g., What do you notice that your child can do or likes to do with books? What does your child do when she or he has a pencil/crayon/piece of chalk, etc. in her/his hands?)	
4: Is there anything that you have learned as a parent from the program? Can you give some specific examples of how the program changed what you do with your child at home? (e.g., What do you like to do with your child to encourage her/him to read and write?)	
5: What suggestions do you have to improve the program?	