

THE IMPACT OF THE FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT ON
ADULTS IN RURAL KWAZULU-NATAL: A CASE STUDY

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Declaration

I, Alethea Desmond, declare that this dissertation represents original work that has not been previously submitted in any form to any university. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has been duly acknowledged and referenced in the text.

Signed: Alethea Desmond

Date: March 2002

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ABSTRACT

There are many family literacy programmes in countries such as England, United States of America and Australia. The programmes usually include both parents and children and are presented in different forms. In South Africa there are very few family literacy programmes of any sort.

This is a case study of a family literacy programme in a deeply rural area of KwaZulu-Natal. The study presents information gathered from interviews with parents and teachers on their perception of early childhood literacy and their role in its development in their children.

The study contains information on the interventions of the Family Literacy Project in an attempt to assess the impact these have had on the behaviour and attitudes of the parents and teachers. Tentative conclusions are drawn and suggestions offered for future research and action.

The study includes a review of related literature. This, together with the findings of the study should contribute to the discussion of how relevant family literacy programmes could be in South Africa.

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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Family Literacy Project, based in KwaZulu-Natal brings together adult and early childhood literacy by working with both young children and their adult carers. The focus is on helping parents to improve their own levels of literacy while at the same time giving information and support on how parents can help their young children develop early literacy skills. The closest translation of the project slogan “Masifunde Njengomndeni” is “Families reading together”.

In Britain and the United States of America, family literacy is seen as an important part of educational strategies developed to help vulnerable and/or immigrant families. In both countries government grants as well as charitable trusts fund the work. Auerbach (1995) states that since 1985, family literacy in the United States of America has been seen as a solution to problems of schooling and a number of charitable trusts have been formed, for example The Barbara Bush Family Literacy Foundation, the Keenan Family Trust and the Coors Family Literacy Foundation. In addition there are four federal laws governing family literacy programmes with federal funding totalling \$135 million in 1999 (Amstutz 2000). In 2000 the British government allocated £5 million for family literacy and numeracy initiatives aimed at those parents living in disadvantaged areas and with basic skills needs (Bird 2001).

The main reason for supporting family literacy is that parents are seen as the first and most important teachers of their young children. What parents do with their children, what the children observe them doing and what parents encourage children to do as far as literacy activities are concerned have an impact on how they approach reading and writing when they are in formal school. Children who are read to and who have print-rich environments understand the importance of being literate (Nickse, Speicher & Bulchek 1994).

Notwithstanding this research, we must be aware that as Gadsen (1994:4) observes, while a “core of research studies on parent-child literacy suggests that children have a decided advantage when they are read to and when reading materials are available; other studies find children learning to read without ever seeing their parents read or having many reading materials in the home”.

In South Africa there are few family literacy groups and no government funding for this work. It has not become part of mainstream educational projects. The focus of this research is to look at the work of the Family Literacy Project in KwaZulu-Natal to determine how effective it is in encouraging adults to develop early literacy skills in their pre-school children. A sub theme of the research is to look at the attitude and behaviour of an adult literacy teacher as she incorporates early literacy into her work with adults. The research included in-depth interviews with four parent members of one of the family literacy groups and two adult literacy teachers working for the Family Literacy Project. The information gathered in these interviews was supplemented by reading documents used and produced by the Family Literacy Project.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In March 2000 the final research report by Khulisa Management Services on the three-year national Early Childhood Development Pilot Project was completed (Khulisa Management Services 2000). Among the aims of the pilot project was to establish whether or not children in community-based and formal pre-schools were receiving quality Reception Year education and investigate the most effective means of educational delivery to 5 and 6 year old children. Among the questions the research attempted to answer were the following:

“Are community-based reception year programmes providing high quality, equitable and cost-effective education? and

How do community-based reception year programmes compare to the quality, equity and cost-effectiveness of reception classes offered at state schools?”

(Khulisa Management Services 2000: iii).

Findings of particular concern to me were that there was a “decline in the early literacy and early numeracy assessment results over the three-year period for the Grade 1 and Grade R classes”, and that only a “quarter of community-based sites are offering “high” quality education” (Khulisa Management Services 2000: iii).

One of the recommendations made by the research team was that “Grade R quality needs to be improved.” In particular the team felt that the “low early literacy and somewhat higher early numeracy assessment results show that educators are not spending enough time on literacy and numeracy tasks and, even more importantly, have not mastered the methodologies for passing these skills to the learners.” (Khulisa Management Services 2000: iii).

The team made a number of recommendations on how to improve the quality of Grade R service, one of which was that more books and educational equipment should be provided in the classrooms. The report stated that “the presence of accessible books is highly correlated with improved early literacy assessment results” (Khulisa Management Services 2000: viii).

As a senior member of the research team, I pre-tested the assessment instrument, was in charge of drafting the interview instruments, trained the fieldworkers, conducted fieldwork and assisted in the report writing. I was concerned that by the end of the three-year pilot project, there had not been a more significant improvement in the early literacy assessment scores.

This concern was coupled with the knowledge that in South Africa 7.5 million adults need adult basic education. This means that these adults have had no education or very little, for example less than 7 years of formal schooling (Harley et al: 1996).

1.3 THE FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT

1.3.1 Context of this study

This study concentrates on one of the areas where the Family Literacy Project works. Mpumlwana, the area selected for this study, is a remote area near the small village of Creighton in the southern Drakensberg of Kwa Zulu Natal. The area is very beautiful, with commercial and indigenous forests, waterfalls and interesting rock formations. The road to Mpumlwana was built in 1997 and people are very proud of the bridge that now enables safer crossing of the river. Before the road and bridge were built, the sick and elderly were transported on wooden sleds.

Between Mpumlwana and Creighton the only facilities are Centocow Mission and St Apollinaris Hospital. There are a few “tuckshops” along the way but no general dealer of any size. Taxi operators are very powerful in the area, not allowing buses through although the community would prefer to have a choice of how to travel. From Creighton to Mpumlwana there are few signs, only those to the sawmill and hospital. The schools are not signposted, neither is the small church at Mpumlwana or the pre-schools. There is no employment apart from the hospital and sawmill. Many men travel to Pietermaritzburg or Durban to find work.

Many of the women have small gardens, and there is a community garden to raise funds for the pre-school. There is no organised sale of vegetables, neighbours pass by the gardens and buy when they need vegetables. There is a small sewing group, with four shared hand operated sewing machines. There is no electricity in the area and no piped water to homesteads.

An adult literacy class has been running since 1997 and in 2001 this changed to a family literacy group. However everyone refers to it as “adult school”. The group meets in the small church with the women sitting on primary school benches. Fundulwazi Pre-School was built by members of the community and is about to be registered by the Department of Welfare. This will bring in funds to provide food for the children.

1.3.2 Establishment of the Family Literacy Project

The concern raised by the research into the Early Childhood Development Pilot Project (Khulisa Management Services 2000), together with reading I had done on family literacy programmes in the United States of America, led me to establish a non profit organisation, the Family Literacy Project. Funding was secured and the project began in March 2000 in deeply rural areas around the small KwaZulu-Natal towns of Underberg, Himeville and Creighton.

The main aim of the project, which brings together adult and early literacy, is to encourage young children and their adult carers to see learning to read as a shared pleasure and a valuable skill.

Years in the early childhood development sector led me to believe that many adult carers of young children are not comfortable reading to or helping their children learn to read. In many homes there are few or no books, and opportunities to use other resources such as advertising and signs absent or ignored. Many parents are afraid of doing something that teachers will criticise, and do not realise or are unwilling to play the important role they have as the first educators of their children.

The work of the project is based on my belief that for young children to become literate reading and writing must be introduced into their lives as desirable and enjoyable skills. Adults who care for them, parents and teachers, should guide them and by example demonstrate the importance of literacy.

In 2000 three Family Literacy Groups were established and I ran six workshops for each group. The adults discussed ways they could support the development of early literacy skills in their children and every session included a chance to try out a play activity. Although the parents were not asked about their own levels of literacy it was clear that many were struggling with reading and writing. With this in mind I designed activities to help adults as well as children develop skills such as letter recognition, matching, sequencing and interpreting pictures. For example parents made books with pictures from magazines. Working in pairs, they practised how best to use these with their children, asking questions as well as modelling how to handle the book.

Two of the groups were established alongside under-resourced but imaginatively run pre-school classes and during the workshops the group observed the teachers working with the children. The first activity observed was story telling and the adults were so interested in this that at the next session one group arrived an hour early so that they could watch the teacher and children busy with a different activity. The teachers showed the parents the portfolios they kept of each child's work and the parents then began to look for the work done by their child and displayed on the walls. In the session following the one where we made books, the parents were delighted to see how the teacher had done the same activity with the children. The teachers tried out activities from the workshops and parents in one group insisted that their work go up alongside that done by their children.

The third group was an established adult literacy group. The crèche alongside this group was run by two women with no early childhood development training and was a safe but dull place. Sixty children crammed into a small rondavel left little space for any activities. The adults, however, were excited by the workshops on early literacy. This group followed the same programme as in the other two groups but without any input from the pre-school workers.

A problem in the first two groups described above was that attendance was erratic. There was always a group of women present, but many were there "representing" others, or came because on that day there was no casual work available in the forest or fields. Attendance at the third group was consistently high and apologies were always given if someone was absent. I put this down to the fact that the group had been meeting for adult literacy lessons since 1997 and so had established a strong sense of the importance of regular attendance. I thought that if I introduced an adult literacy component into the other two groups, attendance there would improve. Another reason was to find ways to integrate adult and early literacy.

To test this the Family Literacy Project was allocated funds to pay a consultant to conduct a participatory rural appraisal. The focus of this appraisal was adult literacy needs. Each group was asked to select a local woman who could, in 2001, be trained as an adult literacy teacher. These women were then trained as fieldworkers and helped conduct the appraisal. This was done to assess their capabilities and for them to learn how to assess the needs of their communities.

The enthusiasm and excitement generated by the work done and the lessons learnt by the Family Literacy Project formed the basis for the second phase from January 2001. By March 2001 the five women chosen by their communities had attended four weeks of adult literacy training at Operation Upgrade, a Durban based non-governmental agency. Their brief was to establish adult literacy groups at the two sites where I had run workshops, and to strengthen the existing adult literacy class. They were also to work with new groups established close to the existing groups. The expansion of the Family Literacy Project into these new sites was partly the result of one of the findings of the participatory rural appraisal where teachers expressed the wish to set up family literacy groups attached to their pre-schools.

So, early in 2001, in addition to the first three family literacy groups, four new groups were set up. One of the adult literacy teachers was unable to attach herself to any pre-school or crèche as the parents in her area were all employed as farm workers and were not free during the day. Her group is the only one not attached to a pre-school.

Since the beginning of 2001, seven family literacy groups have existed at:

- Mpumlwana: this was the group that started as an adult literacy group in 1997. The crèche, previously housed in a small rondavel, is now in a larger building.
- Ndodeni: this group began in 2001 and meets in a small church building. The crèche building fell into disrepair and the family literacy group is working to find alternative accommodation for the children and teacher.
- Stepmore: this group began in 2000 alongside a small pre-school. In 2001 it expanded to include parents from a neighbouring pre-school and the group now meets in the local community hall.

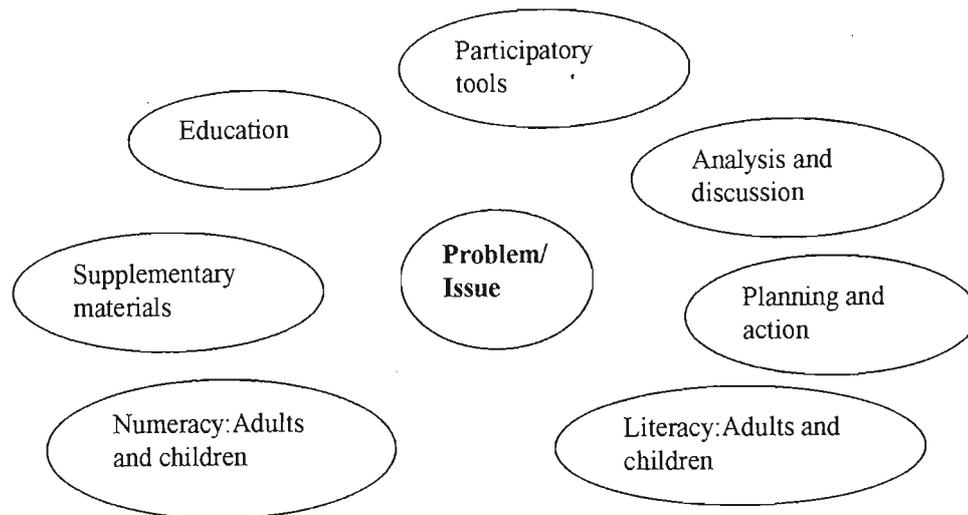
- **Mangozi:** this group began in 2001 alongside a very small pre-school. The group has only eight members.
- **Loteni:** this group began in 2000 in a Grade R classroom at a primary school. In 2001 it expanded to include parents from a neighbouring pre-school.
- **Siyamukhela:** this group was started in 2001 in a small crèche building. The group and crèche children had to move when the owner reclaimed the crèche building.
- **Makholweni:** this group started in 2001 at the request of a local community leader. There is no crèche nearby.

1.3.3 The nature of the Family Literacy Project interventions

- a) Each of the groups meets regularly for sessions led by the adult literacy teacher. They follow a unit of at least eight lessons. This unit has a focus or theme that is of interest to the adults, for example crime, water, HIV/Aids and early childhood development. Early literacy is covered in one of the lessons and readers on early childhood development have been developed as reinforcement.

This method of working is a result of discussions and experiments by the Family Literacy Project during the early part of 2001. A close look at it is important to explain how early childhood, and adult literacy skills are addressed and drawn together within each unit.

A MODEL UNIT



Explanation of model:

1. There are no arrows showing direction. This is because Literacy and Numeracy, Supplementary materials and Education will be brought in several times in one learning cycle or unit.
2. Problem/Issue: Something relevant to the group such as crime or Aids.
3. Participatory Tools: These include maps, Venn diagrams, trees, time lines. They provide an opportunity to look more closely at the problem/issue and give the learners a chance to write or draw their concerns.
4. Analysis and discussion: Questioning at this point is very important.
5. Planning and action: This is where the group decides what action to take to tackle the problem. The adult literacy teacher is a facilitator, not a member of any action planned.
6. Literacy: Opportunities for this can and must be created during any of the steps.
Adults: These can be taken from the Operation Upgrade workbooks.
Children: One session must be spent on an activity parents can do at home with their young children. The activity should promote development of early literacy skills and should be linked to the problem/issue.
7. Numeracy: Adults: Opportunities will arise throughout the unit for activities that will build numeracy skills.
Children: One session must be spent on an activity parents can do at home with their young children. The activity should promote development of early numeracy skills and should be linked to the problem/issue.
8. Supplementary materials: Leaflets, books, posters – anything related to the problem/issue. The materials developed by the Family Literacy Project are used here.
9. Education: An outsider who will speak on an aspect of the problem/issue e.g. clinic sister

For a more detailed look at the way early childhood literacy is included in the adult literacy sessions, see Appendix G: Early childhood literacy development (Page 85) which details information from the workshop outlines used by Zimbili Dlamini, the adult literacy teacher in one of the Family Literacy groups.

- b) Books have been purchased or received as donations and placed in each group and in the adjacent pre-schools. These books are available for the adults and children to borrow. Books in the groups are in Zulu and English and include books for both adults and children. In the pre-schools, small cloth bags are provided to protect the books and raise the status of borrowing books.
- c) Discussion cards: these are interesting pictures from magazines such as National Geographic, cut out and laminated and available for parents to borrow to talk about with their children. Guidelines are available to parents to help them initiate, extend and enjoy discussions with their children.
- d) Ideas for activities for young children are available to group members. These are known as “activity cards” and when these cards were being developed, parents were asked to comment on if and how much their children enjoyed the activity and what they learnt from it.
- e) Parents in the groups have books to record interactions with their children. These “journals” are written in Zulu. Parents cut pictures from magazines, paste these into the books, and record the ensuing discussion between themselves and their children.
- f) Pictures of, for example, a clinic scene, a mother bathing a child and a mother preparing a meal, have been used to promote discussion between parent and child of familiar events.
- g) Books for newly literate adults have been developed by the Family Literacy Project. These cover topics such as HIV/Aids, parents and young children, and the development of early childhood literacy skills. These books are referred to during the different units.
- h) Three storybooks for children have been developed by the Family Literacy Project. The text is in both Zulu and English. An audiotape has been produced on which the stories are read and three original compositions are sung.

- i) As project co-ordinator I visited the groups on a regular basis and on occasion spoke about early childhood literacy or introduced the journals, activity cards and books.

For a more detailed description of the project see Appendix F: Details of the Family Literacy Project (Page 78).

1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Family Literacy Project has been operating since March 2000 and this research was conducted in order to determine the effectiveness of the Family Literacy Project approach. To do this the following questions were framed:

- What were parents and adult literacy teachers' attitudes towards early literacy early on in the intervention by the Family Literacy Project?
- Has there been a change in the attitudes of parents to their role in the development of early literacy skills in their children?
- Has there been a change in behaviour of parents at home with their young children?
- Have there been changes in the attitudes and practice of an adult literacy teacher working for the Family Literacy Project?

These questions were an attempt to discover how important parents deem early literacy development to be and whether or not they see that they have a role to play in this development. The answers to these questions indicate whether or not the level of interest displayed in group sessions translated into behaviour changes in the adult.

A question about the adult literacy teacher who is taking part in the family literacy group served to bring in another perspective. We are able to see whether or not the level of engagement in the topic of early literacy by the adult literacy teacher had an impact on the degree of interest and involvement by the parents.

1.5 THE RELEVANCE OF THIS TOPIC

I have not been able to find more than two other groups in this country involved in practices that they are calling family literacy. I have found no research conducted specifically on the attitudes and behaviour of the parents or how these may have changed as the result of interventions designed and delivered by these two groups.

The Centre for Research into Children's Literacy in the Department of Information Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA), has together with Project Literacy, a national non governmental organisation, set up two family literacy groups in Mamelodi and Winterveld, areas near to Pretoria. Dr Myrna Machet of the Department of Information Science together with her colleagues, made an assessment of some of the children whose parents attend these family literacy groups. The Family Literacy Project approached her with a view to her conducting a similar study of the children whose parents are involved in their groups. In March 2001 base line data on the children was collected with a follow up assessment conducted in November 2001. The study will look at changes in the children after a year during which their parents attended family literacy group meetings. These findings together with the findings of this study will be an important contribution to discussion on family literacy programmes in this country.

This study will contribute to raising awareness in South Africa of family literacy and the possible benefits to parents and ultimately, their young children. This study may be able to inform discussions on the usefulness of combining both adult and early childhood literacy initiatives.

Although not a focus of this study, the results may inform the debate on the most effective ways of ensuring a low drop out rate from adult literacy classes. This study may point to one strategy that could interest parents enough for them to continue with their own literacy development.

There is also concern in this country about the high rate of repetition in the lower grades of school. In his study of "failure" in the first grade Taylor (1989) provided an insight into the problem, a problem which still exists in our schools. He states that after one year of schooling only three in every four African children reaches grade two. This situation has remained unchanged for almost thirty years. He concludes from this that this is one of main reasons for the high illiteracy levels in this country.

Having made a study of useful interventions, Taylor (1989) makes the following statement:

“Experiences in both South Africa and other countries indicate that school readiness training in the form of pre-primary programmes of two years or longer, together with continued support throughout the primary school, are needed to mediate the school experiences of children from poor and otherwise oppressed communities”

(Taylor 1989:43).

Although there are different reasons given for this so-called failure, parental involvement has been cited internationally and by Taylor, as one way of ensuring that young children perform well at school. This study of the Family Literacy Project may give information on one way in which parents can increase their level of involvement with their children’s development not only in their homes but also in the pre-schools attended by their children.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 TYPE OF RESEARCH

I chose to use a qualitative method of research. The main reason for doing this is contained in the following quote from Merriam & Simpson (1995:97):

“The overall purposes of qualitative research are to achieve an *understanding* of how people make sense out of their lives, to delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and to describe how people interpret what they experience”

The purpose of this study was to find out how women in family literacy groups understood and made use of activities and information presented to them. I also wanted to find out how their attitudes, and the attitudes of the adult literacy teachers changed because of, at least in part, the interventions made during the Family Literacy Project programme.

I must make it clear that I played a major role in the intervention as well as being the person who collected and analysed the data. This was a bias that could not be avoided. I designed many of the interventions, and delivered some of them (through a translator). As project co-ordinator I also managed the provision of materials such as books and other printed and audio materials.

To collect the data I visited the site and interviewed four parents and one teacher from the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group, this being the group selected for this study. (See Appendix D: Detailed Parent Interview Responses Page 63 and Appendix E: Detailed Adult Literacy Teacher Interview Responses Page 74) I was able to observe the area, community structures and problems the women experienced. This gave me a very good feel for the situation in which the women lived and an understanding of how they were trying to integrate new learning into an already busy daily programme. I visited the site on a regular basis, making in total 12 visits to the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group in the course of this study.

To quote again from Merriam & Simpson (1995: 97), this study used an inductive approach as I was “discovering the meaning a phenomenon has for those involved”. The questions I asked related to early literacy and attempted to find out what people themselves thought about this concept before and after the intervention. It was also important to try and discover how meaningful this concept was and if the information was presented in a way that was relevant to those taking part in the programme.

This was not a quantitative study and conclusions are therefore tentative. I was interested to see if people met regularly over a period of time and were presented with a range of interventions, that their attitudes and behaviour would change. To do this I had to establish their initial attitudes and behaviour patterns relating to the development of early literacy skills. I then had to test if these attitudes and behaviours had changed. I had to then look at the changes and make links between these and the interventions presented in the programme. To quote Mouton and Marais (1994:161), this hypothesis was “the guiding element(s)” in my research.

2.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I selected the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group as the site in which to conduct this research. All sources of data were chosen to build a rich description of the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group and the work covered during a 10-month period from February to November 2001. This data served to answer the research questions and to trace the development of the different role players:

- a) Myself as the project co-ordinator;
- b) Two adult literacy teachers: Zimbili Dlamini from the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group and to give a broader picture, Phumuzile Ngubo from the Makholweni Family Literacy Group; and
- c) Four adult learners with children attending the pre-school adjacent to the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group: Bongiwwe Zondi, Busisiwe Dlamini, Fikile Dlamini and Delisile Zondi.

By drawing on documents, interviews and observation from and of the different women involved in the project, some triangulation has been attempted.

In order to build this rich description I chose to do a case study. I wanted to concentrate on a small group of people over several months. These people were all involved in the Family Literacy Project and by looking at different players and the documents used; this was what, according to Merriam & Simpson (1995) could be called a descriptive case study. In addition it could also be seen as “heuristic” as these types of case study “can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known” (Merriam & Simpson 1995:109).

A case study was the best method as it allowed me to focus on one component of the project in order to throw light on the rest of the project. By focussing and taking a very close and detailed look in the case study I was able to bring out information that was not only useful in the group from which the case study participants were drawn, but information that was useful to other groups and to other projects.

The data collected related primarily to four women from the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group. The data on the adult literacy teachers served to add to information gathered. This provided an interesting and useful dimension. As Nickse and Quezada (1994:223) state, “the essence of collaboration is joining the skills of teachers possessing different expertise in early childhood and adult basic education and melding them into a new, integrated team to conduct a family literacy program”. The adult literacy teachers interviewed and observed in this study received training in both adult literacy and early childhood development.

The data for this qualitative study was collected using three strategies – interviews, observation and document review.

2.2.1 Interviews

Interviews with parents

I conducted in depth interviews with four women participants from the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group. This group was established as an adult literacy group in 1997 and it was incorporated into the Family Literacy Project in March 2000.

Two of the four women, Bongiwe Zondi and Busisiwe Dlamini, attended group sessions in 2000 and so could be expected to have some understanding of the aims of the Project. The other two women, Fikile Dlamini and Delisile Zondi, joined the group at the beginning of 2001.

Interviews with adult literacy teachers

I conducted two in depth interviews with two adult literacy teachers. Zimbili Dlamini works in the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group attended by the four women interviewed. Phumuzile Ngubo works in the Makholweni Family Literacy Group, an area an hour's drive away from Mpumlwana.

The first interview was in February 2001 and the same set of questions was used with both teachers. (Appendix C: Adult Literacy Teacher Interview Schedule Page 62) Some of the questions were not relevant, as neither teacher had started teaching the adult literacy class. A follow up interview was conducted in October 2001. These interviews were conducted in English.

The questionnaires were designed to collect information on the way the women saw early literacy as well as their role in the development of skills in their own children. Other questions related to the ways in which early childhood literacy and adult literacy were integrated in the lessons they taught.

The adult literacy teachers played a major role in the interventions, both in designing how to integrate discussion and action on adult and early literacy development, and delivering this information and responding to learners' questions. For this reason it was important to trace changes in their attitudes and how this affected the lessons they taught.

2.2.2 Observations

On two occasions I observed Zimbili Dlamini, the adult literacy teacher at Mpumlwana working with the women. One observation was early on in the study and one near the end of the study. These observations were not documented but provided me with a sense of the development of the relationship between the adult learners and the teacher and how early childhood literacy development was presented in the sessions.

2.2.3 Review of documentation

I reviewed the workshop plans and outlines prepared by the adult literacy teachers. At the start of the study both adult literacy teachers had received their initial training the month before. Their development as adult literacy teachers could be traced through

their written work. This work also provided an insight into the degree to which they included mention of early childhood literacy development.

I reviewed journals kept by the women. All the women attending this family literacy group were asked to keep journals of their interactions with their children. The journal entries were not required to be long and work done with the children was included where possible. These journals provided information on how important the women felt it was to record what they did with their children. The journals also provided data for this study as progress could be traced through the women's own words and the interactions they felt were important enough to record. It was not compulsory to keep a journal.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

As has been stated above, the data from the interviews was entered under question headings so that the responses made during all interviews could be seen alongside one another. This provided information from which changes in attitude and behaviour were noted and dated.

The interview responses and all other data collected from review of documentation and observation was stored on computer but no computer programme was used to analyse or sort the data. This was done manually. The broad headings used in the sorting process included background and interactions with children.

2.3.1 Background

This included information to build a picture of the lives and expectations of the women selected for the case study. This included information on the development of their personal literacy skills. This was important as changes could only be noted once a clear baseline had been described.

Other background information related to the course material and course delivery methods. This was drawn from interviews with the adult literacy teachers, review of documents and the initial observation of the adult literacy teacher.

2.3.2 Information on interactions with children

Information on interactions with children was drawn from the interviews and from the material where interactions with children were part of the course material and delivery. It was important to note how the interactions changed over time as this was key to noting change in attitude and behaviour of the adults, both parents and teachers.

After collecting and studying the baseline data from the interviews, I was able to formulate questions for the final round of interviews. This was, as stated in Terreblanche and Durrheim (1999:139), an indication that “there is no clear point when data collection stops and analysis begins. Rather, there is a gradual fading out of the one and a fading in of the other, so that at first you are mainly collecting data and towards the end you are mainly analysing what you have collected.” They go on to say that a “key principle of interpretative analysis is to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding”.

Once the sorting was completed, I read and re-read the data to view it from as many angles as possible and make many different yet meaningful connections. Data collected from one source was used to extend or explain data from another source. This exercise not only served to clarify but to validate and sometimes to lead me in a new direction.

In a study such as this it was important that the findings be presented in a coherent and interesting way. The purpose of this study has been not only to inform the future direction of the project but also to be helpful to others doing similar work.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most research into family literacy has been conducted in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. This may be because the term “family literacy” was coined in the United States and there is a well-funded and extensive range of projects offering variations of family literacy interventions. In addition, more research is conducted generally in these two countries than in other parts of the world.

Family literacy programmes are delivered through different models:

- Parents in schools

Problems that children experience in school are identified. Interventions are designed that target parents so that they can help their children overcome these problems. Those parents, who take part in classroom activities such as reading, helping in libraries and producing newsletters and notices, are given appropriate guidance (Auerbach 1995, Paratore 1995).

- Children and parents in groups together

Parents and children are shown ways to play, talk, or read together. This can be in structured activity sessions in or outside the home. In some programmes parents and children are asked to engage in activities such as storybook reading, using the library, and writing up literacy and other activities. These are then discussed during group sessions and guidance provided. If parents and children read at home they are monitored and receive guidance on different techniques (Neuman 1995, Harrison 1995, Baker et al 1995).

- Children and parents at home

Resources and activities in the home are the resources parents and children are supported to use in order to develop literacy skills. These include printed material such

as magazines, books and newspapers as well as print in activities such as shopping lists, account payments, greeting cards and circulars. Programmes provide strategies for helping parents to help their children enjoy reading and other literacy related activities (Graves, R 1995, McKee, P. 1995, Harrison, C. 1995).

Whatever the model, family literacy programmes often combine adult and early literacy as well as educating parents. This means that programmes often operate where adult literacy levels are of concern. Programmes target one or more in a family, usually the mother and child, often a pre-schooler. This is based on the assumption that parents are the first and longest standing and most influential teachers. Parents join family literacy programmes for a variety of reasons, for example to improve job prospects, to conform to state benefit requirements and for the benefit to their families, in particular the children.

Underlying the different models of family literacy interventions, is the acceptance that parents play a most important role in the development of early literacy skills in their children. This is based on a growing body of research and some of the main findings are summarised by Nickse, Speicher & Bulchek (1994:212) in tabular form.

Research Topic	Authors	Summary of Findings
A. Home environment	Chandler et al., 1983 Chall et al., 1982 Heath, 1980, 1983 Hewison & Tizard, 1980 Smith, 1971 Teale, 1978, 1986	Availability and range of materials in home are important; ("everyday print," – labels, magazines, newspapers – necessary; many ways parents can arrange for children to come into contact with print; homes devoid of books and lacking curiosity about world inhibit child's enthusiasm for learning in school.)
B. Shared reading activities	Chall et al., 1982 Chomsky, 1972 Clay, 1979 Smith, 1971 Taylor, 1983 Teale, 1984, 1986	Parents' reading to children is important; being read to is fundamental to early literacy development; demonstrate concept of print, books, reading, and form and structure of written language; is major correlate with language maturity and reading achievement; creates shared bond as base for positive literacy experiences in home which support reading and writing practices.
C. Parents as reading models	Chall et al., 1982 Duff & Adams, 1981 O'Rourke, 1979	Parents are child's first and most influential teacher; parents act as models for reading behaviour; "printworm" parents' children test higher in word recognition and reading comprehension; early reading preparation and supportive home environment promote reading as natural life process; children of mothers with higher literacy levels outperform children of non-reading mothers at 6 th -grade level.

Morrow (1995) states that it is difficult to define family literacy clearly and simply as it is a concept of many parts. She uses a definition provided by The Family Literacy Commission that focuses on the family rather than on the school as being where early literacy skills are developed.

“Family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community. Sometimes, family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children ‘get things done’” (Morrow 1995:7).

In the United States of America the initial approach to family literacy was to encourage partnerships between parents and schools to help children learn to read. By 1991 this approach had broadened to include what Morrow (1995:5) citing Braun (1991) described as providing “environments which enable adult learners to enhance their own literacies, and at the same time provide environments which promote the literacies of their children”.

Hannon’s view differs from Morrow’s who states that the first family literacy initiatives concentrated on what went on in schools. Hannon (2000) states that Taylor was the first to use the term family literacy.

“Taylor, in the USA had coined the term to refer to the interplay of literacy activities of children, parents and others which she found in six families studied over periods ranging from months to years. She concluded that ‘literacy is a part of the very fabric of family life’”(Hannon 2000:2).

The different models of family literacy reflect the contexts in which they operate and what their starting point is, for example home or school. While accepting the important role played by families, many family literacy projects have a strong link with schools. This leads to a question of how the organisers of family literacy projects view families and how much a programme is aimed at promoting activities similar to those presented in schools.

Auerbach, (1995), in her initial study of family literacy indicated that programmes were established by identifying problems experienced in the school and then providing a range of activities or giving direction to parents on how to work with their children so that these problems could be solved. This indicates a deficit model of families; in other words that the way schools approach literacy is the best way and that what happens in families is not as important. This model has been challenged and there are many family literacy programmes

that see family literacy more in the way that the Family Literacy Commission, quoted above, does.

Hannon (2000) discusses the change in the use of the term 'family literacy' from that of describing research into early literacy skill development into a description of educational programmes. He says that there is now less research into the development of early literacy skills within families and more work on evaluation and research into family literacy programmes. This means that research such as, for example that by Weinberger in 1996 that focused on the early literacy experiences of young children in their own homes has not been followed up as much as documentation of these experiences as a result of parents and children within family literacy groups.

Gadsen (1994) raises the issue of what literacy means within different families. This is particularly important when talking about families from a range of cultures. There is also a need to clarify what constitutes a family and how much research takes into account the different ways in which people group themselves to form what they consider to be a family. The difference between projects that focus on parental involvement in schools to those that use the word 'family' in their programmes indicates that in the latter there is an awareness that families include grandparents, siblings and other adults.

Most family literacy programmes in the United Kingdom and United States of America, in order to qualify for state funding, have criteria that determine the way the programme is offered. The result is that parents with low levels of literacy are targeted because it is believed that it is their children who are most likely to experience reading problems. (Hannon 2000). Amstutz (2000) notes that in the United States of America family literacy programmes target parents of children under eight and who live in disadvantaged areas. She goes on to list the objectives for the parents as being that they develop parenting skills, develop entrepreneurial skills as well as improving their own levels of literacy and English language skills.

Questions should be asked about the way in which access to family literacy programmes is controlled, for example that if parents want to take up places in the adult literacy component their child has to attend the early childhood component of the programme. Family literacy practitioners need to look closely at their own work and how this is explained to participants. Questions are also raised as to the validity of the assumption that children from low income families with low levels of literacy are likely to experience problems with literacy. This view, mentioned earlier in this chapter, is challenged by many who object to what they see as

a deficit model of families in family literacy programmes. One reason for this 'deficit' model being so well accepted by policy makers could be their need to find simple solutions to problems of a social and educational nature (Hannon 2000, Amstutz 2000).

Amstutz (2000) cites a 1989 study by Auerbach as one of the earliest studies that challenged this 'deficit' model of family.

“There were many indirect factors such as the frequency of children’s outings with adults, the amount of time spent interacting with adults, parental involvement with the schools, and the level of financial stress, which had a stronger effect on many aspects of reading and writing than did direct literacy activities, such as help with homework” (Amstutz 2000:37).

For historical reasons, projects in South Africa often focus on families who have been disadvantaged and have not had access to services or information. The Family Literacy Project in this study should not be seen as subscribing to a 'deficit' model of families as it is not the family that is at fault but the circumstances in which they have been forced to live. It is important to note that the families targeted live in historically disadvantaged areas. The areas were chosen because of the belief that it is important to bring services where there were none rather than targeting a group within a larger community as is done in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. However the assumption that parenting skills may be seen as lacking because they differ from those assumed to be present in middle-class families, must be guarded against.

Researchers caution against family literacy practitioners imposing their own ideas of parenting and so, whether intentionally or not, changing the way families behave (Amstutz 2000, Hendrix 2000). A study by Janes and Kermani (2001) highlights the need to work with parents rather than impose a particular practice on them. They found that in a family literacy group parents were shown how to read to their children. The books chosen were in the home language of the parents, texts simple and pictures colourful. In the first year many parents left the group. In the next year, parents were encouraged to make their own books to read to their children. Attendance was good and reasons put forward by parents was that in their youth reading was seen to be a punishment rather than a pleasure. When they were free to choose what to read to their children and how to present the stories, they were engaged and found the exercise enjoyable.

There are family literacy programmes that attempt to bring home and school experiences together in support of early literacy development. Parents spend time in the classroom engaged in storytelling, cooking and other activities that could be replicated at home. Programmes such as these show an understanding that literacy type activities take place at home even if they do not mirror what is usually seen as school type literacy. In addition the teacher learns more about the children's homes and as trust is built between teacher and parents so the flow of information and commitment to the programme increases. School based family literacy programmes should be aware that activities such as dealing with accounts or reading religious texts also contribute towards early literacy development in children (Nistler and Maiers 2000, Gadsen 1996).

Studies by St Pierre et al and Poulson et al (Hannon 2000) demonstrate gains in programmes where parents and children are targeted jointly. The concern is that these studies do not show how much more change are due to strategies that may be combined into 'family literacy' but which could also be taken up as separate options i.e. adult literacy classes, parental involvement in pre-school provision. The 1996 study by St Pierre and Layzer showed how little effect parent education had on children's literacy. They discovered that there is not a great deal of evidence that children will be positively affected if their parents literacy levels are improved. It appears to be more important that parts of the programme should be directed at children and parts specifically for parents (Hannon 2000, Amstutz 2000).

In contrast to the findings above, Amstutz (2000) refers to self-reports and anecdotal evidence from programme organisers who claim improvement on a number of levels in both the parents and children taking part in family literacy programmes. She cites research by Snow and Tabors (1996) where they found that parents provide more help to their children when they read books for enjoyment, ask questions and encourage the children to predict events, rather than if they spend time on, for example, phonics.

Ballara (1992) discusses how important the educational level of mothers is as they transmit attitudes as well as knowledge to their children. Women with low levels of education, if they have work, do not have well paid, rewarding occupations. Many women want their children to have a better life than their own and attend family literacy programmes as a way to break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty.

There are many other studies that demonstrate that it is the parents' attitudes towards literacy that play a major role in the development of early literacy skills in young children rather than the material environment in homes, neighbourhoods or schools (Nistler and Maiers 1999).

Amstutz (2000:38) draws attention to a 1997 study by Ebener, Lara-Alecio and Irby, where parents encouraged their children to study, had high expectations of their success and equated education with achieving a better life. This finding is also referred to by Gadsen (1996) when she describes findings in 1984 by Wigfield and Asher that “demonstrated that parents’ attitudes and expectations for their children’s performance are good predictors of children’s attitudes toward learning, effort in school, and classroom performance.” (Gadsen 1994:4) In Australia Spreadbury (1996) found “that it was not merely reading to a child that facilitates that child’s own independent reading, but rather the amount and quality of the interaction between parent and child that correlated with the child’s reading ability at both age six and eight” (Spreadbury 1996:215).

Amstutz (2000) investigated the effects of programmes on parents, in particular their attitude towards their role in the development of early literacy skills in their children. It is important to take into account the traditions, culture and background of parents. She says it is important to “encourage parents to write in their native language and to talk to their children about their language”. (Amstutz 2000:42) She goes on to stress the importance of letting parents know what they can do for their children, whatever their own levels of literacy might be. Articulating high expectations of parents will lead to their being more confident about the help they can give their children.

Gadsen (1994) when discussing research into family literacy notes that “family literacy programs generally describe their purpose as improving parents’ literacy to ensure the literacy development of the child; less attention has been given to the quality of relationship between program and parent or parent and child” (Gadsen 1994:9). She recommends that this be a focus for future research. The suggestion by Gadsen (1994) that has implications for this study and the work of the Family Literacy Project is that what happens in families should be examined to understand how and why literacy skills are used. What happens in the family is important and should influence programme design. She also states that through research into family literacy we will be able to determine how learning occurs across generations and how attitudes towards literacy changes and how behaviour changes are sustained.

This study on the Family Literacy Project cannot achieve such an outcome but will be able to contribute to discussion on a framework within which the development of family literacy programmes in this country can take place.

A programme that draws on parents is the 'Parents and Literacy Project' that supports a wide range of skills rather than a focus on making parents **more** like schoolteachers. Spreadbury (1996) states that the success of this programme was because it was run in the community rather than in a school, and that the university researchers demonstrated an interest in the parents and what they did at home with **their** children.

One study on the effects of a family literacy programme on parents conducted by Yaffe and Williams (1998) focussed on the women **taking** part in an "Even Start Family Literacy Programme" in the midwestern United States of America. The research studied women who joined in the family literacy programme and what factors contributed to the programme being successful. While conducting an evaluation of the whole programme, the researchers were drawn to this study because the women impressed them and they wanted to find out what made them attend family literacy meetings. They conducted indepth interviews with six of the women taking part in the programme. **Although** the "Even Start Family Literacy Programme" differs in many ways from the Family Literacy Project, it is a study with a focus on the adult participants.

The "Even Start Family Literacy Programmes" **are funded** by the United States of America government and grew out of the "Head Start" pre-school programmes in that country. "Head Start" pre-school programmes target young children from low-income families and provides a wide range of services that meet educational, health, nutritional and psychological needs in the belief that early intervention produces good results. This belief is borne out by close on one hundred studies into the programme. The study by Yaffe and Williams (1998) showed that the fact that all staff members were women contributed greatly to the women participants' sense of ease and the relevance to them of the topics discussed. **An important but alarming finding** by Yaffe and Williams (1998:18) was that the women had not joined the programme because of the focus on **family literacy**. "The women did not indicate that they were initially aware of or understood the concept of family literacy". As stated in the study this is an important finding that has implications for family literacy programmes, and, ultimately, for the development of early childhood literacy. This because the researchers felt that if the family literacy programme is to be effective, parents need to understand the principles of family literacy. This finding indicates the importance of making family literacy principles explicit, and of checking the recognition and understanding of this focus by the parents participating in the programme.

Hendrix (1999) discusses the findings of Yaffe & Williams (1998), and points to what he sees as shortcomings in family literacy programmes in the dominant United States of

America model. He acknowledges the importance of family literacy as a rallying point for adult literacy, early childhood development and education in general. He points to its ability to bring together these issues as well as to address the links between home and school. However he cautions against promising that family literacy can unite the field of literacy as he lists four main concerns:

- “(a) too often family literacy education is conceived and implemented as a compensatory model;
- (b) family literacy education targets only one child and one parent, generally a preschooler and his or her mother;
- (c) family literacy education does not effectively integrate adult education, literacy/ESL, or parent-child interaction time into programming; and
- (d) funding from grants does not provide a stable base on which to build lasting coalitions around literacy.” (Hendrix 1999:48).

The last concern is not relevant to this study on the Family Literacy Project but the other three concerns must be taken seriously as they touch on principles underlying the project.

Edwards (1995) describes a programme known as “Parents as Partners in Reading Program”. This has elements that mirror closely some of the work of the Family Literacy Project. Edwards describes how she encouraged the school to allow parents to borrow books to read to their children. She then ran workshops in which she modelled, explained to, guided and observed parents learning how to read to their children. At the same time she also worked with teachers to discuss ways children became literate. Through the course the parents came to appreciate the contribution they could make to their children’s success at school. Edwards also found that teachers who were more aware of the home situation of their pupils were able to work more effectively with parents.

The reading that I found most interesting and relevant to my study was by Graves and Wendorf (1995:130) who describe the approach of the “Reading is Fundamental” programme. Their approach mirrors closely that taken by the Family Literacy Project and for that reason I include it despite the length.

“Our programs and materials

- Treat parents and parents, not as instructors; parents are enlisted to encourage reading and guide children in activities, not to teach them to read.

- Build on parents' strengths, regardless of their level of formal education; our programs include roles, activities, and tasks for parents with varying reading skills.
- Provide hands-on opportunities and resources so that parents can translate good intentions into positive actions.
- Acknowledge the powerful aspirations that parents have for their children and that can guide parents in encouraging their children's love of reading.
- Are based on a pleasure principle for parents that resembles the one for children: parents who learn that participating in their children's reading is fun and more likely to affect positively their children's reading behaviour and attitudes toward books.”

The “Reading is Fundamental” programme and the Family Literacy Project share the belief that if parents enjoy books, children will. It is expected that this will result in the easier acquisition of early childhood literacy skills.

Underlying all the programmes is the objective that children should be able to read well and enjoy literacy activities. More research should be conducted into programmes in poor countries to discover how effective the programmes are in improving the lives of children and their parents.

To conclude, my review showed different ways of delivering family literacy programmes as well as different attitudes towards families. The Family Literacy Project is a programme that targets parents and works with them to help children develop their own literacy skills. It is not, as some programmes have been described, a school based programme and neither does it engage children and adults in one setting as some programmes mentioned do. The activities encouraged by the Family Literacy Project are those parents will find easy to do within their normal routines and with few extra resources. The activities for children are a support for their own early childhood literacy development and do not depend on a high parental level of literacy.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of the Family Literacy Project has been on supporting parents in their role in the development of early childhood literacy skills in their children. This research study is to determine how effective the approach and delivery has been. To determine this, questions were framed to elicit responses on the parents and adult literacy teachers' attitudes towards early childhood literacy and whether or not there was a change in these attitudes. A further question was whether there was a change in behaviour when parents and young children are at home. Interviews were conducted with the adult literacy teacher to add a dimension to the discussion and see whether or not her attitude toward early childhood literacy changed over the year.

The following four case studies of women attending the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group provide the main findings for this study. The four women, Bongiwe Zondi, Busisiwe Dlamini, Fikile Dlamini and Delisile Zondi live at Mpumlwana. Bongiwe and Busisiwe started adult literacy classes in 1997, Fikile and Delisile only joining when the group had changed to a family literacy group.

All four women have young children who attend Fundulwazi Pre-School operating next to the church where the family literacy group meets four times a week. These women were selected on the basis of their having pre-school children. No other criteria were used. The group facilitators did the selection.

Group members are encouraged to engage in free writing activities not necessarily related to the unit sessions but related to activities with young children to support the development of early literacy skills. This includes journals, activity cards and letters written to me. For more detail of these activities see pp 7 - 9.

The whole group is able to write in Zulu. The group was given books (journals) to record interactions with children. They cut out pictures from magazines and recorded the children's comments on these as well as on books and other pictures. They were given written and

verbal guidance on how to encourage discussion with young children and wrote short sentences in their journals on what happened when they followed this.

The activity cards are short descriptions of games to play with young children to encourage particular skills. The women were asked to take a card home and follow the instructions. They were asked to comment on whether or not the activity worked well, how they knew it worked and what they thought the child learnt. Some commented verbally to the adult literacy teacher while others took the opportunity of writing about the activities.

4.2 PARENT INTERVIEWS

4.2.1 Bongiwe Zondi

Bongiwe Zondi is a quietly confident woman who, the first time I visited the group, quickly volunteered for the initial activity of drawing a map of the area. She was born in 1968 at Ndulwini and spoke about enjoying the Zulu dancing and gardening there, saying only that she did not like the housebreaking by some members of that community. After completing Std 3 her parents took her out of school to look after the family's cattle. In 1988 she married and moved to Mpumlwana. Her husband, with whom she had one child, died in 1990 and she has a new partner who is a bus driver in the area. She has two other children, and Zamokhule the youngest girl, born in 1997 and who attends Fundulwazi Pre-school.

Bongiwe enjoys cleaning her house and watching her television. When asked what she hoped to be doing in five years time she said she would like to be employed, perhaps as a cleaner. However she said her long term plans were to learn to speak English and understand more about "maths" and to be a teacher. Her days start early, at 5am when she gets up to prepare her children for school and crèche. Other tasks in the day include fetching firewood and repairing her house both of which she finds difficult. She also goes to the Family Literacy Group and tends her garden. She belongs to the local sewing group. She worries about her cattle and goats straying, and having to meet all expenses for school, her home and special occasions such as Christmas as she only has a monthly R400 widow's pension. Her hopes for the future include to be able to "pass at adult school to be equal to others in the country" and she will try "with all her power" to make sure her children get more education than she has.

During the first interview Bongiwe said that she used to think that it was not interesting to read books but has since changed her mind. At the beginning of the year she said the books

she had at home were the children's schoolbooks, booklets cut from a newspaper supplement and Bona magazines from the family literacy project. The books were placed high up and although her pre-school child knew where they were she could not reach them and had to ask her mother if she wanted to look at them.

Bongiwe now has books borrowed from the family literacy group and her child takes these to look at on her own or with her mother. If Zamokhule is looking at a book on her own, Bongiwe asks her to sit on a mat so that the book is kept clean. She said, in the second interview, that for the first time in her life she bought a newspaper (Ilanga), and a magazine (Bona).

All Bongiwe's children attended crèche and she said she thought that Zamokhule would benefit because she did not have a "quick mind". In the first interview when describing what she did with her pre-school child, Bongiwe said she washed her, gave her a packed lunch and walked her to pre-school. In the second interview she said the three most important things she did with Zamokhule were to read a book, ask her to collect things to check if she knows the names of different items, and do things with her child although if she is busy she does ask her to wait. In the first interview she described her child's day by saying that she went to crèche, played with a ball, ate and fetched cattle. She gave more detail in the second interview, responding that now Zamokhule reminds her mother to read a book or a magazine and when they do the other children join them.

When asked initially if she read to her pre-school child Bongiwe said she did although she thought that only when children were over seven would they understand stories. When asked to give an example of a story she talked about giving information about her whereabouts. In the second interview Bongiwe was able to give the title of her child's favourite book and say what it was about, something she was not able to do at the time of the first interview.

When asked to talk about changes from the time of the first interview she said Zamokhule could now count and likes to read. When Bongiwe reads all her children now take their books and read as well, something they did not do before. Her partner shows her letters, for example from the Department of Home Affairs, and asks for her help. She laughed when she said this and commented that perhaps he was testing her to see what she had learnt. She also said that she now understands pronouns and how to construct a sentence in English.

When asked about the free writing activities, Bongiwe said she liked writing in her journal because it reminded her to help her child. She completed 12 pages of pictures and recordings

of interactions with her child. When Bongiwe wrote about her child she confused pronouns and sometimes referred to her daughter as “he”.

Throughout there is evidence that if her child had a question or was not clear about the picture then Bongiwe helped with explanations. For example alongside a picture of yachts is written:

“Msizi (child’s nickname) says that he sees the white umbrellas in the cars then I told him that that’s the boat and he also see houses in a forest.”

There is also evidence of Bongiwe extending conversations with her child. For example alongside a picture of two girls preparing to race is written:

“Msizi says that he see the boys wearing tights.
‘No Msizi’, That’s not the boys but they are the girls. Yes, they are wearing tights and vests.
I ask, what are they doing?
He says, ‘they are standing’.
I said, what do they want to do? He says they want to run.
I said to him, do you like running, he answered, yes. He started running.”

Bongiwe showed her sense of humour when she wrote:

“My Msizi let’s start bathing now it’s the time to go to crèche. Take the bath basin and the soap container..... I asked him “What do we call the part I’m washing now? He said, it’s a head, then he continues saying other parts on his body. What he forgets I remind him. But he never forget the bums.”

Bongiwe recorded her thoughts on her role as a parent. This was alongside the written guidelines on how to talk to your child:

Describe and discuss

- *Gives names to things. Your child may not know what objects around her are called. Help her to learn these names.*
- *Describe the things you see or the actions you are doing. Talk about the colour, size or shape. Talk about what things are used for. Ask your child for her ideas about what she*

sees or what she is doing.” (From Family Literacy Project guidelines on how to talk to young children).

Bongiwe wrote:

“I will always keep encouraging them with their school work because I want them to be on a good standard or level than where I am. Head, forehead, face, mouth. Mielie meal is white, blood is red, bread is brown, vegetables are green.

Make links

- *Help your child to see the connection between what you are talking about and other things in her life.*
- *You could ask questions that start with these words:*
 - *What if.....*
 - *Can you imagine if.....*
- *Do you remember when (From Family Literacy Project guidelines on how to talk to young children).*

Bongiwe wrote:

“What can you do if you wake up early in the morning? I will wake up, go to the kitchen and ask tea from Mom.

Do you remember the time when you were visiting by your mother’s home that you were travelling on a tractor? Yes Mom I remember there we ate a duck’s meat.”

Reflect

- *Let the child take the lead in the conversation. Listen to what she says. Give her the chance to ask you questions.*
- *Think about what you have done or what you have seen. (From Family Literacy Project guidelines on how to talk to young children).*

Bongiwe wrote

“I sometimes ask Msizi what they have learnt at the crèche. It is also good to listen to your child when he is talking to you. Mom now I know how to cut pictures. I saw toys at the crèche.”

Bongiwe wrote two letters in response to my request made in the Family Literacy Project newsletter.

In her first letter, written in April 2001, she referred to the project newsletter, which she said encouraged her to read and also helped her to understand that she should read to and help her young child. She said she wanted to help others learn, as well as helping her own children.

The second letter was written in August 2001 and included information on her child.

“I have a child who is attending to crèche and she is four years old. We sit together and discuss family members. She can mention them, father mother, brother and sister. I find it easy now to communicate with her. She enjoys cutting pictures and she uses all my exercise books. I normally ask her whether she is not going to school, we bath together and dress together and after that she asks for her handkerchief.

She also asked for her lunch box, what I have noticed is that she likes to copy things that are being done by adults. When I go to the garden to water plants, fetch water, sweeping to the other room, building houses with mud, when others go to fetch the donkeys and cows she is always there.”

Bongiwe took one activity card home. The activity she tested was entitled “Can say her full name”. She said that her child liked the activity and “knows his name and the names of his family”.

From these findings, it appears that Bongiwe has found it interesting and enjoyable to work with her young child. The ways that the Family Literacy Project suggested she engage with Zamokhule appeared to appeal to her and she was excited enough by the responses to write about how what she and her daughter did together.

4.2.2 Busisiwe Dlamini

Busisiwe Dlamini is a gentle, friendly woman who always rather anxiously tries to say a few words in English when we meet. Busiswe is 33 years old and was born at Qulashe, about an hour's drive from Mpumlwana where she moved when she was married in 1986. She enjoyed growing up because the forest was near and that made fetching firewood easier.

That there was no road to that area was a problem. She did not continue her schooling past Std 5, as there was no high school nearby.

Her husband is unemployed and they live together with their four children, her husband's mother, brother and cousin. Her youngest child Zwelethu, born in 1995, attends Fundulwazi Pre-school. Their income comes from a child maintenance grant and from selling clothes she has sewed and vegetables from her garden.

Busiswe's day starts at 6am when she wakes to cook, clean, and then go the family literacy group. She enjoys gardening and finds collecting firewood her most difficult task. Busisiwe would like to complete her schooling and become a teacher. She is very eager to learn English and mentioned this in both interviews.

In the first interview Busiswe said she had magazines from the group, books made from a newspaper supplement and an English book from the adult literacy teacher. She kept these in a cardboard box on the floor and her youngest child was able to reach them and look at the pictures. In the second interview she said that she has books from the group library as well as books borrowed from the pre-school. She also borrows discussion cards as her child likes to look at these and ask questions about things he finds confusing. He still enjoys looking at books on his own as well as with his mother. Busisiwe continues to tell him stories, "even new ones".

In the first interview when asked what she did with her child, Busisiwe talked about washing him and looking at different colours in magazines. In the second interview she said that three things she does with her child that are very important are to keep him clean, to teach him to read and write and to play with him for example running races. Her description of Zwelethu's day included details of what he learnt at crèche and how he played when he came home. Busisiwe said that children from the age of two would want to listen to a story. In the initial interview she described the stories that Zwelethu liked as being "about something not real". In the second interview she could name the book and said that as the mother in the story sings, he now asks her to sing. When they read together the older children sit and listen. She said that when she played the audio tape received from the family literacy group, he wanted to know how the children got into the tape.

Busiswe is a member of the crèche committee and commented positively on the new building that is now nice and warm.

When asked what changes there had been in her life since our first interview she said that she now likes reading. She talked about how her child is changing, how he can write his name and knows how to count. She said he was cleverer than the school children because they stay at home a lot. (Others reported that the primary school teachers are often absent.)

Commenting on the free writing activities, Busisiwe said her child likes the pictures in her journal. Writing in her journal has helped her to learn how to talk to children and how to work with her child. She recorded what her child said and some of the questions she asked.

The recording showed that the child made quite detailed observations. For example:

“He says that he sees a house in a forest, flowers, a mountain, a rope from inside to the outside of a house, a sky near the house, a man who is going inside the house, a grass near the house, a small house without a wall, stones gathered nicely. Inside these stones there is a way. He also sees a big tree in front of a house.”

In recording what questions she asked her child, Busisiwe wrote:

“Look here at the health clinic, what do you see?
Look here in the city/town, what do you see?
What can you say if your teacher doesn't teach you, can you tell me?
Can you think that if you've finished schooling, you can work or doing what?
Can you think about the first time you went to a crèche?
Let's go to see grandfather at the hospital. Where do they sleep at the hospital, Ma?
He asks.”

Busisiwe recorded how her child noticed similarities between the picture and his own surroundings:

“He see a mother and a child, a child is looking to his mom, He sees a mother cutting a pumpkin dressed like his mom.”

Busisiwe wrote three letters, the first in April 2001, one undated and the third in August 2001. In the first she gave similar information she had given during our first interview.

The second letter was about a trip she and her child took to Ixopo. She commented on how her child “asked lots of funny questions, like why are there so many people, where did they get the things that they are selling and how.” Busisiwe said that she “could not answer all his questions”, but she took the opportunity to encourage her child to study hard. “I told her that I would love him to get well educated and not that he suffered like I do. I wish him to learn and get a better job.”

The third letter was more of a recording of her child’s development:

“Every morning I wake up and boil bathing water for him. Then he would wake up and bath and I will ask him if he wants porridge and if he does I will cook it and I will ask him if he can see how to cook porridge.

My child is six years he can now do simple things like washing his underpants, his socks and handkerchief.

When we are together, we read through pictures and he also asks me a lot of questions, even asking me how do people get into magazines, and I always explain to him that they take photographs and print them on paper to be published on magazines. He then told me he would like to be on ‘Bona’ one day.

I also teach him to bath himself and also make bed and he is trying. I also tell him to write numbers 1,2,3,4,5 and he tries but he still writes his numbers upside down.

He is now the one who sometimes takes ‘Bona’ and tells me about pictures in the magazines.”

Busisiwe was absent on the day the activity cards were discussed and handed out.

Busisiwe and her child have engaged in the activities suggested by the Family Literacy Project. Busisiwe appears to be keen to teach her child new skills and to check how these are developing.

4.2.3 Fikile Dlamini

Fikile Dlamini was initially very shy, as she had only recently joined the group. She was born in Mpumlwana in 1959 and is 42 years old. She liked going to school although because

of lack of money she left after completing Std 4. She did not like fetching wood as this task interrupted her school day. She and her husband have two young children, the eldest Lungisani born in 1997 goes to Fundulwazi Pre-school. The other children also living in the home are older and are those of her brother in law. Their mother died some time ago and their father remarried.

Fikile spoke a lot about collecting firewood, mentioning it as the task that disrupted her school day, the most difficult task of her day as well as being what she does very well as she is now very strong. She said that the easiest part of her day was when she sat and read. Fikile's husband works for Spornet in Durban and when he comes home she prepares by cleaning the house and making Zulu beer. She earns extra money by ordering and selling clothes in the area, often travelling quite far to do this.

In the initial interview Fikile said that she had magazines at home that her aunt gave her. She kept these on the table and her child looked at the pictures. In the second interview she said that she had books borrowed from the group and from the crèche. She also mentioned having a Bible. She believes a mother should read to her child because "a child will understand well if he hears it from his mother", and that from the age of three a child will want to listen to a story. She said her child did look at books, sitting on a mat to make sure the book was kept clean. She said that she relaxes with a book. When she is tired she encourages her child to look at a book on his own. In the initial interview she described the stories her son enjoys as "traditional". In the last interview she gave the title of two books her son enjoys.

Fikile commented on improvements in the pre-school, noting that there were pictures on the walls and more equipment. When asked what her child learnt at pre-school in the last interview she added "storytelling".

When talking about changes between the first and last interview, Fikile said she used to stay at home but now that she attends the group she can write in Zulu and knows more about punctuation. Now her children ask her to help them with homework. She used to think she only had to help children once they were attending school, she now understands that she has a role to play in the pre-school years.

Fikile said she liked using the journal because she enjoys talking to her children about the pictures. She said that if her child does not understand something he asks.

Fikile recorded how she responded when her child misinterpreted a picture:

“He see a mom kneeling wearing a pinafore, a child standing in a bath dish, mother holding a towel bathing her child, a chair, a bucket, a teapot. I told him that, this is not a teapot, but a kettle for boiling water, then I show him a container near a bathdish, he says that it seems as if it is a car with wheels then I told him that it is a soap container. I show him clothes which is going to be worn by the child who is bathing.”

The following journal entry shows how Fikile and her child made a link between the picture and their lives:

“He sees father holding his child, then I asked him if he can see a child counting. He says he wants me to teach him to count too so that he will show his dad.”

Fikile, along with other group members, were given three storybooks for children. She wrote about how she used one, *Ezweni*, with her children.

“I told my children to look at water. Let’s go and fetch it. They were happy, they took the tins and containers then we go. I saw that they like water very much. Then I told them the importance of water. It’s not good for them not to know that water handles their life. Then I show them the road, I asked them what the road is for. They said it’s for cars. I told them that the road is also important because we also use it when we are going to the crèche even if we are going to buy food for eating, if we are going to clinic and even to Durban. They were happy.

I asked them what they can say if they see a car. They say we must stop it and get in to go to Ixopo with mom to buy sweets.

You think what can we use to buy, they said they use money.

Do you remember the time we went to take Certificates? They said, yes at Ixopo we took a taxi on the road.”

Fikile did not write any letters to the project. However she did take a number of activity cards home to try these out with her two youngest children.

The first activity was entitled “Make different sounds” Fikili said that her youngest child did like the activity because “she was laughing when I drove a tin like a car. When I said “bye bye” she made a noise and waved her hand.” She went on to write:

“My child is one year old. I bought a toy car for him and show him how to ride it. I say to him this is your car. When he is crying I say here is your car. He points to the hen crying. I say it is crying. Everyday when the hen is crying, he looks at me and laughs then I say ‘crying’”.

Fikile tested another activity card entitled “Say what is happening”. She said that she knew her young child liked the activity because when she and his older brother talk about what is happening at pre-school, he listens and wants to know more. She also said that when she looks at the book "Hands" her child remembers that it is about five fingers and puts out her fingers.

In her written comments she went on to describe how she plays with her children:

“My child is at the crèche, he is four years old. We were talking with each other about what we’ve done. He asked me why I wanted to talk about that. I said because I want to know if he can remember things he did so that he can go to Primary School next year. He was happy and said he will never forget what I told him.

Then I put my bag, fork, stone, book and pen on the table. Then I asked him if he knows all of them. He said yes. He named them then I covered them all. I hid one thing (a fork) and asked him what is missing. He told me it’s a fork. I praise him and thank him for remembering.

My other child is 3 years old. She does not go to crèche but I saw that she would like to go. She likes talking or asking about things that happen at crèche, copying things that her brother, who goes to crèche, does. She likes to be with the crèche children and play with them. She always says things that the children say e.g. counting fingers on your hand. She listens when they pray and also does that.”

Fikile tested a third activity card, this one entitled “Remember a story”. She said she could tell that her child enjoyed the activity because “he liked repeating the story and wanted me to tell it again”.

Fikile seems to be very interested in how her older child is responding to the activities. She extends this interest to her younger child and was very excited by the activity cards that gave ideas for her to try out at home with her.

4.2.4 Delisile Zondi

Delisile Zondi appears to be one of the less well off women in a group where no one has much money. Born in 1965 she is 36 years old. She has lived in Mpumlwana all her life and talked about enjoying the Zulu tradition of handwork such as making mud blocks and cutting grass for thatch. She said she was from a poor family so having these skills helped her. She left school in Std 4 as her single mother was not able to afford the school fees. Delisile's husband has temporary building work in Durban and sends a little money home. She lives with her six children, mother and sister in law, nieces and nephews. Her youngest son, Mthembeni was born in 1998 and attends Fundulwazi Pre-school.

Delisile joined the group this year because she noticed that the group members were "happy". As she did not get the opportunity when young, she now wants to study. In her initial interview she could think of nothing she was good at doing but referred to many skills such as making brooms, dishes and mudblocks. In two interviews she spoke of the difficulty of having no money to buy food for her children and often visits her mother to see what she can give her. She says she doesn't know how to answer when her children ask her what they will eat. She had no books at home at the beginning of the year but now has books from the group and the crèche and changes these every week.

In the first interview when asked about her own interactions with her pre-school child she said only that she would send him to ask his granny for something. In the final interview she talked about how she teaches him respect, to read, write and notice different things such as colours. Delisile described how her child played with his siblings and in the last interview added that he talks about what he did during the day, showing her new things and in the evening he looks at books. In the first interview Delisile said that if a child has a quick mind you could read to him, although she said she did not think you could read to a child as young as five. Initially she said she did not tell her young child stories but that sometimes his grandmother did. In the last interview she said she now sees that reading and telling stories is important because "it makes his mind to be open". In the last interview Delisile gave the title of her son's favourite book. She says he also sits on his own and looks at the pictures.

She said her son has a hereditary speech impediment and that other children laugh when he speaks.

Delisile said that she had not written in her journal as she only remembered it when she saw me. She did not write any letters to the Project. However she did take activity cards to try out with her child at home.

Delisile tested an activity card entitled “Talk about her day”. She said that she did understand most of the activity but “Here and there it was difficult” She said that her child learnt how to greet and how to say goodbye. Neither of these was part of the activity card.

Delisile appears to be very interested in the changes she has observed in her child. However she has not written about any interactions she has had with her child.

4.3 Adult literacy teacher interviews

The following provides more information on the two teachers interviewed and observed facilitating family literacy group sessions.

4.3.1 Zimbili Dlamini

Zimbili was initially quite quiet but now asks for clarification during meetings and discussions. She contributes to discussions and is at ease translating between Zulu and English. She was born in Mpumlwana in 1978 and is the single mother of a son. She lives at home with her parents and brother and her mother looks after her child when she is working or away. She completed matric. Zimbili enjoys watching television, especially “Generations” and the news. She is a member of the local netball team.

In the first interview she said that parents should read to their pre-school child because “a child understand parents well than a teacher”. She said that “when they start to tell you what they do outside you can start telling stories and help improve them to talk.” Another indicator of when a child would first want to listen to a story would be when she wants to tell you things she has seen.

She said that the most important thing she learnt on the adult literacy course was that if parents are literate they could advise their children well as they will consider education to be important.

In the final interview Zimbili said that the most successful thing she had done in her work was that she helped give people important information such as how to avoid getting cholera and the importance of building a pre-school. She questioned her own practice in her answer to what had caused her the most difficulty. She said that the beginner learners, those who are learning to write their names, are “very lazy and this makes me unhappy. I ask myself where do I go wrong?” Zimbili enjoys facilitating discussion in her group and making sure that people who are shy participate.

In the first interview she said that she understood “early literacy” to be “where the education before children come to school or crèche. In the second interview she said she understood it as “the whole development of the child. This is good when it is started early rather than when you are old.”

Her responses to the question of what she understood by “adult literacy” were, initially, that “this is the education for the people who are the adults who have not been going to school and those who have been half at school”. In the second interview she said that adult literacy is “the added development of people. The person knows many things without reading and writing.”

In the final interview Zimbili said that she had been quite successful in bringing adult and early literacy issues together although there were some problems. These were that some people who were not aware that young children could attend crèche. Zimbili also encouraged parents to help children at home. She said that she noticed that parents also saw that when a child needed help they should not say they were too busy.

In both initial and final interviews she referred to wanting more information on childcare. She would like to continue her studies in early childhood development (she is currently enrolled with the University of South Africa on an early childhood development certificate course) as this helps her with her group as well as with her own child.

Zimbili has grown in confidence over the year and her ability to write lesson plans has improved. She is committed to the project and very interested in the link between adult literacy and early childhood literacy.

4.3.2 Phumuzile Ngubo

Phumuzile Ngubo started at the Family Literacy Group at Makholweni, near Underberg. Her group has not been very successful, as the local farmer has not provided any support to the farm workers registered with the group. He refused to change their working hours or provide transport to the group sessions. The men although interested in improving their levels of literacy said they were afraid to walk to the evening sessions, as there were rumours of a group of people in the area murdering for body parts. She has had a difficult year because of the small number of adults in her group as well as problems on occasion of drunkenness and fighting in the group.

Phumuzile was born in 1977 and is the mother of a young son. She lives with her mother and son as her father died during the year. Her son spends a lot of time with other family members as she is often away and her mother works part time. She completed matric. Her main interest, apart from her work, is playing football.

In her first interview she said she believed that from five years old a child would listen to a story. She said that to help a young child to concentrate they should be shown pictures and engaged in activities related to the story.

In her initial training, Phumuzile said she learnt the difference between teaching children and adults. Phumuzile said that bringing adult and early literacy together had not worked in her group because "I work with men and they don't live with their children and they do not see the need to teach their children."

Phumuzile is now working with only seven adults. She also runs a child to child programme in the local primary school. This is proving very successful but is not relevant to this study.

I chose to include interviews with Phumuzile in this study to add to the information gathered. However because of the problems she experienced and because her group did not show much interest in early literacy, she was not able to provide many insights or information useful to this study.

4.4.1 OBSERVATIONS

These were not documented but contributed to my understanding of the work done by the adult literacy teachers. This understanding has been incorporated into the discussions on the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

It is clear that by the time of the final interview all four members of the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group were better able to articulate their role as educators of their own children. It is important to try to extract the reasons for this from the data. Reasons could include that they have become, or are more aware that they have a role; learnt more about how they can help their children or that the interviews provided an opportunity to think and talk about their role.

The discussion and analysis is presented under the headings given in Chapter 4, which are background and interactions with children.

5.1: Background

This information builds a picture of the lives and expectations of the six women (teachers and parents) in the case study. It provides some evidence of their personal literacy development.

Early in the study all four women attending the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Group said they hoped to improve their own level of education. They also want their own children to have better access to education than they had. Bongiwe made this explicit, as did Busisiwe. Bongiwe, Fikile and Delisile said that if they won money they would spend it on their children's education. This indicates that the women see education as a way for their children to do better than they did, they "see literacy and schooling as the key to mobility, to changing their status and preventing their children from suffering as they have." Auerbach (1994:15) This is echoed by something Busisiwe wrote about a conversation she had with her child when she said she "would love him to get well educated and not that he suffered like I do".

The women all make an early start to days that are filled with tasks necessary to maintain their homes and provide for their children. These tasks include fetching wood and water, repairing their homes, gardening and shopping. This leaves little time for relaxation and activities for the women themselves. It shows commitment that the four women all attend the group sessions held four mornings a week.

All the women mentioned reading as important in their lives. In the initial interview they reported having very few or no books at home. In the final interview they all said they had books at home, borrowed from the Family Literacy Project library. Bongiwe said she finds reading interesting. She appeared very serious about this as in the final interview she said that for the first time in her life she had bought a newspaper and magazine. By the end of the study, all four women reported that they were reading more books at home for their own pleasure or to relax.

5.2 Interactions with children

All the women have pre-school children as well as children in their immediate and extended families attending local primary and high schools. As noted in the section above, all the women want their children to have a good education.

By the final interview, all four women were able to talk about activities they did with their children. This was in the interviews, in journal entries, letters and discussion about the activity cards. They did not only describe the activities but were also able to say how they knew their children had enjoyed them and what they had learnt.

This is a change from the initial responses to the question about what they did with their young children. Then only Busisiwe mentioned looking at a magazine with her child, the three other women talked only about how they provided physical care such as washing and feeding their children.

In answer to a follow up question of what the three most important things were that they did with their children, three of the women mentioned a literacy activity such as reading, teaching writing and drawing and looking at pictures. In the final interview all four women said much more in answer to this question. They described the activities in more detail and talked about how they interacted with their children, for example when they were tired or busy. Their answers showed they knew that their children expected them to read or play with them and that their children assumed that they would read or play with them. This seems to indicate that they are reading and playing with their children often enough for this to be a realistic expectation.

There is a change in all four women's ability to describe what their children do all day. Initial answers were brief while the final answers of three of the women gave more detail about the activities that included developing early childhood literacy development skills such

as describing, listening, recalling and sharing information. This was particularly clear in Fikile's responses to questions and in her comments on the activity cards when she described how she and her son discussed her interest in his day. She wrote about how her son asked her why she was interested in what he did at pre-school. The phrasing of her written comments indicated that she also told him what she had been doing. His question seems to indicate that this kind of conversation was new to him and that his mother had not previously talked to him in this way. Bongiwe wrote about how she asks her child what she learnt at pre-school. She went on to say how it "is also good to listen to your child when he is talking to you."

Three of the women said in the initial interviews that they read or told stories to their young children although the age at which they thought children would be interested in stories ranged from two to seven years old. In the final interview all the women said they read to their children and were more specific about when they read. Delisile, who initially said she did not read to her child, said that she realised the importance as it "makes his mind to be open". Bongiwe wrote that she learnt from the project newsletter how important it is to read to children.

When asked initially what stories they told their children, the women were not able to do more than describe the kind of story, for example fantasy or traditional. In the final interview each woman gave the title of her child's favourite book and three women mentioned something about the story. One reason could be that initially they had few or no books at home. With the provision by the Family Literacy Project of small libraries for adults and children, they now have access to a selection of books (see pp 7 - 9).

Each family taking part in the project was given three storybooks suitable for children. A tape of the stories read in Zulu and English and accompanied by three songs in Zulu was also provided. Fikile wrote in her journal about one of *inèse*, *Ezweni*. Her report showed that she started talking about the story and the importance of water in their lives. She extended this to discussion of the road. This was not in the story but a logical extension of the discussion to include other features in the area. This indicates that Fikile is aware of how to use printed material as a basis for discussion. Throughout the discussion with her children she also demonstrated the ability to make links with remembered events. This follows the guidance she received from the Family Literacy Project on how to talk to children. While I cannot say with certainty that she would not have had this kind of discussion anyway, it could be attributed to two of the project interventions, that of the provision of books and guidance on strategies to initiate, sustain and extend discussions with children.

By the end of the study it appeared that more of the children spend time looking at books on their own. Initially only Busisiwe and Fikile said that their children took books to look at on their own, now all of them do so. Their mothers teach them to take care of the books and three have told their children to sit on a mat to ensure that the books are kept clean. In the pre-school and in activities recommended to the parents, children cut out pictures from magazines. Bongiwe noted that her child wanted to cut out pictures from books and she explained that this was not appropriate.

Only Delisile did not use the journal given to record interactions between the mothers and their children. The other three women found these useful as reminders of how to talk to and help their children. It seems that this has been a useful tool for the mothers as well as an effective measure of the type and quality of conversation. Bongiwe's journal entries show how gently she responds to her child when she misinterprets a picture. A particularly good example of this is written alongside the picture of two girls preparing for a race. Zamokhule said they were boys wearing tights. Firstly Bongiwe corrects her about the gender of the runners, then acknowledges that she was right about the clothes. She goes on to ask what they are doing and because her child gives a short answer she asks another question. Several journal entries show how Bongiwe asks questions to continue a conversation and make links with what the child is familiar. This is another instance of putting into practice guidance found in project material.

Busisiwe also recorded questions she asked her son. The questions are all open ended and about familiar events, places and people. Busisiwe's son asks her a lot of questions that she answers when she can and acknowledges that at times she cannot.

The provision of activity cards stimulated three of the women, in particular Fikile who took cards appropriate for both her young children. Her responses to questions about the activities show an understanding of her child's development and an awareness of the way in which her youngest child is responding to increased activities and discussions. Fikile talks about her child's enjoyment and how she laughs when her mother says certain words. This behaviour is an example of a change Fikile saw in her own understanding of how she should behave with her children. She said she used to think she only had to help older children but that she now knows that she should help her pre-school child.

5.3 Teacher's attitudes and development

In both interviews, the teachers showed little understanding of the term “early literacy” and instead described it as early childhood development. This is despite the fact that they both attended a short course on early childhood literacy and have worked through assignments on early reading and writing development. This is reflected in the response of Zimbili to the question in the last interview about how she sees that she is able to bring together early childhood and adult literacy in her work. She is very positive about what she does but again, this is described in terms of early childhood development. Phumuzile's response was similar as they both talked about how parents can help their children before they go to school.

Zimbili included an early childhood development focus in each of her series of lessons. She introduced material produced by the Family Literacy Project where appropriate, for example when discussing pre-school education she used the book “Parents and Young Children”. Her approach was similar to that demonstrated during the interviews and she approached early childhood development in a holistic way rather than focussing on early childhood literacy skills. She showed initiative in including budgeting for a pre-school in her lesson on numeracy, and combining learning to write a letter with encouraging parents to articulate their own views about pre-schools. Both these activities gave parents opportunities to think more deeply about early childhood development and provision of pre-schools. However in these activities the emphasis was once again on early childhood development as a whole rather than early childhood literacy.

Phumuzile and Zimbili state that they are interested in early childhood development because of the courses they have attended as well as the fact that they both have young children of their own. They both said that they want to learn more about early childhood development because of their work within the Family Literacy Project. Zimbili said that she “would like to continue with early childhood development course because it will help with my learners” and Phumuzile gave as her reason that “I am in family literacy so I need to know more”.

Both teachers were chosen by the community for training as adult literacy teachers and both still live within the areas they work in. They are younger than most of the parents they work with but show respect for them both in how they speak and in their body language, always trying to be lower or on the same level as the older women. Their attitudes are similar in many ways to the parents, but as they have both matriculated, they do appear a little more determined and able to break out of the cycle of poverty.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was an attempt to find out if the interventions made by the Family Literacy Project had an effect on the attitudes and behaviour of women attending the sessions. The interventions were made in the hope that mothers of pre-school children would help them learn how enjoyable and useful being literate is. The development of early childhood literacy skills must be seen within the holistic development of young children but for the purposes of this study they are being highlighted.

The geographic area chosen by the Project is one where there is little support to become literate apart from school and pre-school. There is the need, of course, but few opportunities for children to see print around them in the forms of newspapers, books, magazines, signs, street advertising. Nothing in their immediate area has signposts and until the project provided books, few books apart from older siblings school books and adult literacy workbooks.

The interventions of the Family Literacy Project are detailed on pages 7 - 9 as well as in Appendix F: Details of the Family Literacy Project (Page 78). In summary they included:

- small libraries for both adults and children;
- books (referred to as 'readers') written in Zulu and on topics relating to early childhood development;
- ideas for activities to encourage the development of early childhood literacy skills;
- guidance on how to have conversations with children that encouraged recall, sequencing, use of imagination etc;
- journals to write about parent-child interactions; and
- information on early childhood literacy in the adult literacy sessions.

The adult literacy facilitator received training in early childhood development and as the project co-ordinator I made regular visits and led short sessions on early childhood literacy activities.

The interventions were made during the Family Literacy Group meetings. However they all relate to home-based activities in that the children were not present in the family literacy

group sessions and mothers were encouraged to try out activities at home. All the activities were based on the understanding that there were few resources in the homes. Most of the activities involve parents and children engaged in daily routines such as bath time, fetching water and gardening. Ideas for the activities were presented to the women and there was an opportunity in the group sessions for them to talk about these or write about them in their journals.

All the children attended pre-school and the project provided books, wall charts and pictures there as well as sponsoring the training of the teachers. However this study did not look at the effect of pre-school on the children although the mothers were asked to give an opinion on changes in the pre-school. Although not focusing only on the effects of pre-school but also on parental involvement in the family literacy group, the study by the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa will provide information on changes observed in children. I hope that when this study is complete the data on the children of the four women can be added to this study to provide further evidence of the effect of the interventions developed and delivered by the Family Literacy Project.

Two of the women selected for the case study had attended Family Literacy Group sessions the previous year (2000) and referred in the initial interview (2001) to some of the literacy activities suggested then. In the year of the study (2001), these sessions changed significantly in format and delivery to include information on early childhood literacy. However as the findings show, this information was more generally about early childhood development than on early childhood literacy in particular.

In the initial interviews in answer to specific questions, three of the women talked about reading or telling stories to their children. By the final interview all four women talked more about how and what they read to their children. They all gave the title of their child's favourite book and said something about the content. Their answers also showed that they were encouraging children to handle books with care, as they spoke about making sure that the children sat on mats when reading rather than on the mud floor or in a sandy yard.

By the end of the study all four women talked more freely and with more understanding about their children's literacy activities. Their behaviour appears to have changed from a great emphasis on catering for physical needs to that of modelling and encouraging literacy activities such as reading, questioning, listening, observing and describing. Their interactions were appropriate to the age of their children and they demonstrated, through their answers and writing, care and gentle encouragement. The project did not discuss how to

teach children to read and write but the women did make reference to their encouraging their children to start to write.

It is important to support and encourage parents to help their children develop skills before they go to pre-school. However it is of concern that neither teacher has been able to articulate an understanding of early childhood literacy. They have not demonstrated that they see particular skills such as sequencing, handling books, recall, and use of imagination as relating to preparing children to read and write. Their understanding is reflected in the way the parents describe what their children can do, for example in broad early childhood developmental terms. This holistic approach is valuable and valid but I am concerned that there is little evidence of anyone being able to focus on early childhood literacy skills. On one hand this is not negative because all parental support for their children is important, but it does raise the question of how to highlight literacy development within holistic development and whether or not it is important to do so. If the children show an interest in books and develop the skills that lead to reading and writing, then perhaps how this happens is not as important as that it does happen.

It is not possible to say that these are changes that are solely a result of the interventions made in the Family Literacy group sessions. ~~However~~ it is probable that these sessions provided the stimulus and the opportunity for the women to explore more fully the role they play in their children's development. They mentioned how they see that they have a role to play and they also talked about different activities they engaged in with their children.

These interventions were possibly the stimulus and the adult literacy teacher with her growing understanding and awareness of early childhood development made sure that there was a framework for the discussions. She rooted these in issues and concerns of importance to the women and they were able to relate these to their children and their needs.

The provision of books for adults and children is vital, as without these the women could not implement many of the ideas discussed in the group sessions. All the women and children now read or look at books together and this has engaged the interest of other family members. The women provided a picture of families sharing a book as well as sitting together each engrossed in their own book.

The interventions of the family literacy project appear to have stimulated the women and built on the desire, already present, for their children to have a better education than they did.

By the end of the study the women appeared to have a greater understanding of their role in this and the influence of the home environment.

The women were already concerned about their children's education and were taking steps to improve their own levels of literacy. What the Family Literacy Project interventions appear to have achieved is to provide a forum for discussion about early childhood development, activities to develop particular skills, and books for the children to read. This coupled with the knowledge and approach of the adult literacy facilitator and the regular visits and interest of myself as co-ordinator, no doubt acted as a stimulus.

Further study is needed to find out more about how and why the women have changed and what impact there is on the children. I would like to make some recommendations for further research studies:

- That a longitudinal study be conducted to assess the impact on children of parental involvement in family literacy group sessions. The study should assess if the effect is positive and if so, how long it is sustained into the primary school years.
- That a study be conducted into the women's ability to transfer newly acquired knowledge of early childhood development to other women in the community. This would explore the effects of peer interaction.

Provincial and national services could help counteract the lack of books in homes. It appears from this study that people do not have books because they cannot afford them rather than because they are not interested in them. At the beginning of the study, three of the women did mention books but these were flimsy newsprint books, magazines or educational material. At the end of the study all four women members of the Mpumlwana Family Literacy Project talked with delight about the books they borrowed from the small library of books in their group. They also spoke about the books borrowed from the pre-school and the Project to be read by their children. In the light of this I would recommend:

- That provincial library services explore the possibility of providing mobile or rural libraries to ensure that more people have access to books.

The last recommendation illustrates a point that I must make. That is that it is difficult to assess how much the changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the women were a result of information they were given or the resources that they had access to. The women had no

books (resources) not because of lack of interest but because of poverty. The women did not play with their children because they had not taken part in discussion (information) on early childhood development and their role in this. I think we can assume that given resources, information and a supportive environment in which to discuss new ideas and approaches, changes can be made by parents that will result in their children demonstrating an interest in and ability to enjoy and make use of books and other printed material.

The Family Literacy Project interventions are not expensive. The most expensive part of the programme is the provision of reading material. The activities recommended to develop early childhood literacy skills use local resources and rely mostly on parents interacting with their children. I feel confident that the work of the Family Literacy Project has had an impact on the lives of at least some of the women involved in it. I would speculate that this is due to the way in which the information is presented, for example by a teacher from the community and embedded in adult literacy work based on topics relevant to group members. I would go further and say that the women want their children to have a better start in life than they feel they had. This attitude makes it easier for the women to try new ways of behaving, and accept new ideas. To conclude it would appear that the interventions of the Family Literacy Project although still needing some refinement, are relevant and delivered in an accessible way. However it appears that it is the group members themselves who respond to the interventions in a very positive way and that that is what leads to the changes observed.

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APPENDIX A: PARENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name:

Date:

1. Introduction and reason for interview: I am trying to find out what people think about the work of the Family Literacy Project. One way I will do this is to ask you a few questions.
2. Please tell me a little bit about yourself:
3. If not mentioned, get the following information:
 - a) age
 - b) married/not married
 - c) paid employment
 - d) how many children and ages
 - e) highest school standard passed
 - f) interests
 - g) what are your hopes for the future
 - h) what do you think your life will be like in five years time?
4. When did you start attending adult literacy classes?
5. Please tell me three things you can do now that you could not do when you started attending this class. (Probe if answer is "I can read") Try to link to skills used in daily life outside the class.
6. You have been attending my workshops since March 2000. Can you tell me the most important thing you have learnt from these workshops? OR You have not attended one of my workshops, what do you expect to learn from them?
7. Please tell me what you did yesterday, starting with time she woke up:
(Checklist: do not read out)
 - a) fetched water
 - b) fetched wood
 - c) cooked breakfast
 - d) tidied my home
 - e) washed clothes
 - f) did some gardening
 - g) attended the adult literacy group
 - h) other:
 - i) other:
 - j) other:
 - k) other:
7. If children are not mentioned specifically: Can you tell me what you did with your pre-school child?
8. Do you do anything different at the weekend that you did not mention? If yes, can you tell me what that is?
9. What other responsibilities do you have?
10. If you need help with your pre-school child who would you go to?
11. Do you expect your pre-school child to do anything at home to help you? If so, what?
12. What is the most difficult part of your day?
13. What is the best/easiest part of your day?
14. Pause. Now I want to talk about books and stories:

15. Some people say that you should read stories to children in the years before they go to school, others say you should not. What do you think?
16. If yes: How old do you think a child will be when she first starts to want to listen to a story?
17. If yes: Do you tell stories to your young child? If yes: Can you tell me about this? – when, what stories does she like the most, what does she do when you are telling a story?
18. If yes to 10. Do you look at books with your young child? If yes: Can you tell me about this? when, what stories does she like the most, what does she do when you are telling a story?
19. If no, can you tell me why?
20. If you have books at home, can you tell me what some of them are?
21. Does your child go to crèche? If yes, what does she do there? Why did you choose to send her to crèche?

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL PARENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What did you like growing up in X (place of birth)?
2. What did you not like about growing up in this place?
3. If there were one thing you could change in your life, what would this be? Or If you won the Lotto what would you do with the money?
4. If you don't mind telling me, where do you get money to buy food etc?
5. Why do you want to learn to read /read better?
6. What do you want to learn more about?
7. What did you do last Friday?
8. What does your pre-school child do all day?
9. Who does your pre-school child spend most time with? What do they do together?
10. What are you good at doing?
11. When you read a story, tell me how you sit and what do you do?
12. How do you sit when you tell your child a story? What do you do, where is your child, who else is there?
13. Where do you keep these books?
14. Does your child ever get a book on her own? If so, what does she do with it?
15. What hopes do you have for your pre-school child?
16. What kind of work would you like her to do?
17. What do you do to prepare her for this work?
18. What will stop her from doing this kind of work?
19. List the three most important things you do with/for your pre-school child.

APPENDIX C: ADULT LITERACY TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name:

Date:

1. Introduction: Reason for asking questions: to find out what people think about the way we are working in the family literacy project.
2. Please tell me a little bit about yourself: If not mentioned, get following information:
 - i) age
 - j) married/not married
 - k) paid employment
 - l) how many children and ages
 - m) highest school standard passed
 - n) interests
 - o) what are your hopes for the future
 - p) what do you think your life will be like in five years time?
3. You have just been trained to be an adult literacy teacher: what was the most important thing that you learnt on the course?
4. Now that you have come back and worked in the adult literacy group, what has been the most successful thing you have done?
5. What has been the most difficult?
6. Which part of the lesson do you enjoy the most? Why is this?
7. Is there any part you don't like? Why is this?
8. Some people say that you should read stories to children in the years before they go to school, others say you should not. What do you think?
9. At what age do you think children start to want to listen to a story?
10. At what age do you think children start to want to look at books?
11. Tell me what you understand by the words "early literacy"
12. Tell me what you understand by the words "Adult literacy"
13. How do you think you will be able to bring the two together into a family literacy group? Can you describe some of the things you will do?
14. Why do you think it is important to talk about early literacy to this adult literacy group?
15. For your work, what do you want to learn more about?

APPENDIX D: DETAILED PARENT INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Bold type indicates answers given in final interview (November 2001)

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
Talk to me about what changes there have been in your life this year.	She understands pronouns and how to make sentences in English. Her child at crèche understands how to count. He likes to read. The children at school, if they see her reading they take their books and read. They did not do this before. They help each other. Her husband needs help from her like letters from Home Affairs. He is maybe testing her to see what she has learnt. (laughs)	She likes reading. Her child in crèche is changing – he knows how to write his name, he knows how to count. He is cleverer than children at school are because they stay at home a lot. She sees a difference between the child who goes to crèche and the children who go to school.	She used to stay at home now there is a difference because she can write in Zulu and knows about punctuation. Her children now ask her to help with homework. She used to tell herself that she only has to help children when they go to school, now she understands that she must help them when they are young.	She has learnt that it is important to read to children and to sit and talk to children. She is worried about money as her husband doesn't bring money very often – sometimes brings R50.
Date of birth	1968 (33)	1968 (33)	1959 (42)	1965 (36)
Place of birth	Centoc w Hospital	Qulashe (close to Reichnau Mission)	Mpumlwana	Mpumlwana
Where did you grow up?	Ndulwini, moved to Mpumlwana in 1988 when married	Qulashe, moved to Mpumlwana when married in 1986	Mpumlwana	Mpumlwana
What did you like about growing up there?	The Zulu dancing and gardening	The forest was near, easier to fetch wood	I liked going to school.	The Zulu tradition of handwork, making mud blocks, cutting grass for thatch. From a poor family so these things have helped me.
What did you not like about growing up there?	Housebreaking by members of the community	There was no road	Fetching wood because it disturbed me when it was time to go to school.	Nothing, there was no housebreaking.

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
If there was one thing you could change in your life, what would that be? Changed to what would you do if you won the Lotto?	Take my children to better schools. Improve my home.	Renovate my house. Sponsor the crèche to feed the children so they don't need to take food from home because some others do not have good food.	Renovate my house. Take children who have passed matric to study more.	Buy clothes for children Improve my house Take children to tertiary schools
Marital status	Widow Husband died in 1990. New partner is a bus driver. She lives alone with her children	Married Husband unemployed Lives with husband, children, mother in law, brother in law, cousin in law	Married Husband works at Spoornet in Durban Lives alone with her children	Married Husband has temporary house-building work in Durban Lives with children, mother in law, wife of brother in law and her children, child of husband's sister
Paid work	None	Some money from sewing pinafores	Some money from ordering and selling clothes	None
Where do you get money to buy food etc	R400 a month from husband's workplace. No child maintenance as I have not had time to go to the Dept of Welfare.	Sewing Selling vegetables from my garden Child maintenance grant	(see above)	
Children & ages	Zimisile : June 1989 (boy) Thenjiwe: June 1993 Zamokhule: Sept 1997 (girl)	Zibokyakhe: 1987 Thuthuko: 1989 Mabutho: 1992 Zwelethu: 1995 (boy)	Mhlonipheni: 1998 Lungisani: 1997 (boy)	6 children Youngest: Thutukani (1995) Mthembeni (1998) (boy)
Std passed	Std 3 Parents took her out of school to look after cattle	Std 5 No high school near	Std 4 No money to continue	Std 4 Mother a single parent and had no money
Interests	Watching TV (has one at home) Cleaning her house	Working in the garden Cooking Reading	To learn and know English	Attend adult school Sewing

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busiswe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
Hopes	To pass at adult school to be equal to others in the country, Children must get more education than she has. She will try for this with “all her power”	To get more education and become a teacher	(see above)	To improve education
Life in 5 years	To be employed, maybe as a cleaner	To complete at school	To sew To speak English	Continue at school and pass and complete. Tell others how important education is
Started in adult literacy group	1997	1997	2001	2001
3 things learnt since start of class	Write an address Complete forms Not interesting to take a book and read it now it is interesting	Complete forms How to talk to someone in English How to differentiate between male and female when speaking English		
3 things learnt this year (2001)	Maths To make sentences in English More Zulu – she reads and knows punctuation	About herself How to write and translate into English Punctuation	Write in Zulu Punctuation	How to keep children safe from robbers Fill in forms Capital letters
Why do you want to learn to read (read better)?	I want to be a teacher	I want to learn English	I didn't complete school and now I can go to adult class to improve my knowledge.	Did not get opportunity when young, now I want to learn.
Important learning from early literacy workshops or expectations	Described an activity: looking for matching item in the newspaper	How to help a child recognise letters of the alphabet	Gain some knowledge about how to speak English	See other students happy so I decided to join them
What do you want to learn more about?	English and maths because I don't know them well	English	English and maths	Zulu and maths

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busiswe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
Daily events (previous Friday)	<p>Woke at 5am Open windows Take keys and matches and go to kitchen to make fire Fetched water from nearby tap Put water to heat for children to wash Washed the children Prepared for those going to crèche Make lunch Planted beans in garden Make mud to plaster the rooms Collected wood from the forest Bathed Went to bed</p>	<p>Woke at 6am Washed (tap on site) Cooked Went to adult school Washed clothes Cleaned house Prepared supper (phutu and imfino) Ate Slept</p>	<p>Woke at 7am Washed (water from nearby pipe) Went to Masimbeni to sell clothes she had ordered. Ate Washed Slept (Older child cooked)</p>	<p>Woke at 5.30am Prepare children for school Prepare children for crèche Preparation includes washing, checking books and checking the time) Adult school Fetch wood Cook supper (phutu and potatoes) Sleep</p>
What did you do last Friday?	<p>Woke up Washed Took taxi to Ixopo to check pension Returned, did not feel well because the pension was not there. Cleaned Cooked supper</p>	<p>Woke up and prepare for school children Cooked food: imfino and phutu Prepare to go to community garden Prepare food for supper: rice and chicken pieces. Prepare to go to sleep Looked at Bona with small child Went to sleep</p>	<p>Woke up Washed Drank tea Started to clean the floor Made Zulu beer (because her husband was due home from Durban) Did the washing Relaxed, took a book and read. Prepared supper Washed Slept</p>	<p>Washed young child Took child to crèche Cooked Washed herself Went to adult class Cleaned the church Went home Fetched firewood Cooked phutu and imfino for supper</p>
Weekend events	<p>Cleans house Washes clothes Church on Sunday morning Irons on Sunday afternoon</p>	<p>Gardening Church on Sunday morning</p>	<p>Washing and preparing for church (on Saturday) Church on Sunday morning</p>	<p>Church on Sunday morning</p>

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
Other responsibilities	Sewing Study lessons from school	Gardening Fetching wood from forest	Gardening Fetching wood from forest	Gardening Making brooms Makes dishes from
What are you good at doing?	Cooking Baking	Gardening	Fetching wood (I am very strong)	
What are you good at doing?	Cooking Washing	Gardening Sewing	Collecting firewood	Making bricks
What is the most difficult part of your day?	As a widow there are things that are difficult to get because she has no power –things for the home, school, Christmas time. When her cattle or goats are lost or if her house is broken into.	When she meets a person who speaks English. Said she did like to try and speak English. Fetching firewood.	When she has to build at home	When her husband has no job and she can't give her children food. When they ask she doesn't know how to answer.
What is the most difficult part of your day?	To smear my house with mud. Collecting firewood.	Collecting firewood	Collecting firewood	When she doesn't know what to eat. She visits her mother to see if she can get something from her.
Best/easiest part of your day	Cleaning Cooking	Washing	When reading	Making blocks for building a house
What is the best part of your day?	Gardening	Gardening	Washing	Coming to adult school
Interactions with pre-school child	Washed child Gave him packed snack Walked to crèche (if Thandeka is there she takes him to her) Brought him home at 1 Ate lunch	Washed child Looked at magazine and asked about the different colours	Washed child Fed child	Sends to granny to ask for something

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
List the three most important things you do with/for your pre-school child	Wash her clothes Read a book to her Make her packed lunch for crèche	Wash Dress him Teach him to write and draw	Look at pictures in books Teach him to pray Goes with him to church on Sunday	Wash him Feed him Keep him warm when it is cold
Tell me three things you do with your child that you think are very important.	To read a book Ask him to collect things like towel, soap to see what he knows To cut pictures Even when she is busy he asks her to cut pictures and talk about the picture. She asks him to wait if she is very busy.	I keep him clean I teach him to read and write I play e.g. I run races with him	She borrows books and reads to her child. She plays with him – she put 5 things on a table, hid one and then waited to see if the child could say which one was missing. If she is tired then she encourages him to read a story himself.	Teach respect To read and write and notice different things. Colours
What does your pre-school child do all day?	Goes to crèche Plays with a ball Eats Fetches the cattle, alone if near the house · If far, goes with brother.	Crèche. There he reads, counts 1 to 10 and writes vowels, draws. At home he plays with a ball and motor car	Goes to crèche Plays and shows what he learnt at crèche. Plays with toys made from wire. Counts papers (not clear)	Plays with other children and his brothers, swinging on ropes.
What does your pre-school child do all day?	Wakes up Washes, eats Goes to creche Plays with other children Goes to collect cattle Reminds mother to read a book or magazine, they are joined by other children in the family Eats and sleeps	Gets up, washes, eats Goes to crèche Plays with balls and wire cars Prays and sleeps	Wakes up, washes, eats. Goes to crèche. Plays with other children. In the evening he talks about crèche to his mother. He teaches his younger brother what he has learnt. Sleeps.	Wakes up, washes, eats Goes to crèche. Talks about what he did, pretending and showing her what they did. In the evening reads books, washes, sleeps.
What does he like the best?	Reading books. His favourite book has a tractor and a truck – Isibasibashi	Playing	Playing with his wire car	Drawing

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
Who does your pre-school child spend most time with? What do they do together?	Friends from next door. They collect tins and make a house and play families.	Plays with neighbour's children. Plays with a ball, making toys with wire. The older children make for the younger ones. The little one collects the wire and gives it to the older ones.	Crèche Plays with brothers and sisters	Crèche Friends and brothers
Who would help you with your pre-school child	This is her duty A neighbour would help	Husband	Write a letter to husband	Mother in law
What do you expect your pre-school child to do at home to help	Fetch things eg water	Fetch things from another room. If child were female, she would fetch water and go to the forest to fetch wood. When asked about gender difference: because these are things for a girl to do.	Go to tuck shop to buy bread	Nothing Older children help her with younger children
Should you read stories to pre-school children	Yes	Yes	Yes (because a child will understand will if she hears it from her mother)	Depends on a child's mind. If she has a quick mind then you can.
When you read a story, tell me how you sit, what do you do?	My children sit next to me and I hold the book in my hands so they can see it.	My child sits next to me so she can see the book. Sometimes she sits on my lap	My child sits next to me to look at a book.	Next to her so he can see the book (see later when she says she does not read to her child)
If yes, how old will a child be when she first wants to listen to a story?	Will understand well when 7 years old	2 years old	3 year old can concentrate and understand	As above
If yes, do you tell your young child stories?	(Tells her about a trip to Ixopo ie gives information in case others ask)	Yes	Yes	Sometimes granny tells stories

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
<p>You told me you read stories to your child. Do you still read stories? More/less/same What has changed since we last spoke?</p>	<p>See above</p> <p>Borrow books once a week.</p>	<p>She continues to tell her child stories. She is telling him more stories, even new ones.</p>	<p>She reads to him before he goes to sleep. Other children listen, even the baby and he now knows many things.</p>	<p>She didn't think it was important but now she does because it makes his mind to be open.</p>
<p>Do you look at discussion cards with him? What do you think about these? What does he think?</p>	<p>She does borrow them. Her child was confused about a picture because a man had a scarf on his head and he wondered if it was a man or woman. He likes the cards.</p>	<p>She likes them. Her child enjoys them because he sees things he doesn't understand and he asks his mother.</p>	<p>She doesn't borrow these. Not clear why.</p>	<p>Yes, her child likes it, he likes to talk about the pictures</p>
<p>How do you sit, what do you do, where is your child, who else is there?</p>	<p>My child sits on my lap and I sing.</p>	<p>My child sits next to me.</p>	<p>Child sits in front of me and looks at me.</p>	<p>In front of me and I look at him</p>
<p>What stories does she like the most?</p>	<p>About Mary who comes late at school.</p>	<p>Story about something not real.</p>	<p>Traditional</p>	<p>Traditional stories</p>
<p>What stories does she like the most? Does she have a favourite book/story? Does she ask you to read to her?</p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>He likes fantasy. Favourite book is Mfihlo – in the story the mother sings and now her child asks her to sing. They read books in the evening and the older children also listen.</p>	<p>His favourite book is Bansibegula and Hands</p>	<p>He asks her to read to him. Favourite books is Bolekile</p>

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
What does she do when you are telling a story	She laughs at that story.	He likes to listen	He listens	They like it. Her child listens but she has a problem speaking and other children laugh at him. But others in her family have the same problem so she doesn't think it is an illness.
Do you look at books with your young child	Yes and asks her to listen. Sometimes she goes away and when asked why she says "Oh I forgot to listen."	Yes	Yes	No
If yes, what stories does she like the most		The story about coal and beans from a book of stories in English.	Bona magazines (FLP via her aunt Thoko)	
If no, why not				No books and she did not know that she could read a book to a five year old.
Do you have books at home?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Do you have books at home? What are these?	Library books She has bought a newspaper (Ilanga and a magazine (Bona). This is the first year she has ever done this.	She has books from the library at the group and at the pre-school. She changes books every week.	Books borrowed from the group and the crèche. Also the Bible.	Books from the group and the crèche. Changes these once a week.
If yes, what are they	School books Books made from Read/right pages Bona magazines (from FLP)	A level 2 English book from adult literacy class Bona magazines Books made from Read/right pages (from FLP)	Bona magazines (from FLP)	N/a
Where do you keep these books?	In the cupboard	In the cardboard (box) on the floor	On top of the table	
Does your child ever get a book on her own? If so, what does she do with it?	The books are too high although he knows where they are. When friends come with books he asks me to read them to him.	Yes. He looks at the pictures.	Yes. He turns the pages and looks at the pictures.	

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
Does your child ever look at a book on her own? When? Show me what she does.	Yes, he opens it and if he likes a picture then he asks her to cut it out. She told him they do not cut from books, only magazines. Sometimes he makes the books dirty so she asks him to sit on a mat to read.	She does look at books on her own. Sometimes she even sits on the grass.	Sometimes she takes a book. She sits on a mat on the ground to keep clean.	He does but he only looks at the pictures.
Does your child go to crèche	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What does she do there	Learns to play Sings Reads	Read Write Learn colours	Parts of the body Singing Prayers	Parts of the body
What does your child do at crèche? What does she learn?	Learns to ask permission to go to the toilet and knows that he must wash his hands afterwards. He knows the parts of the body.	Learnt colours, writing, drawing pictures and talks about the picture. She helps him.	Counts Storytelling Parts of the body	Drawing, colours, writing, counting
Why do you send her to crèche?	All my children started at crèche Needs a place to leave him She doesn't have a quick mind so this will help	To prepare him for school	To prepare him for school	To prepare him for school
What hopes do you have for your pre-school child? What kind of person? What sort of work?	He gains more knowledge e.g. he tells me what he is learning like jumping, washing hands and praying before eating. I want him to be a secretary (clerk).	For him to be innocent and respectful. I want him to be a doctor.	I hope he gains more knowledge e.g. learning parts of the body in English. I want him to be a secretary (clerk).	To be better when he goes to school. I want him to be a teacher
What will help her become this sort of person?	I help him to write.	I ask questions like does he like to help sick people.	I sit down and tell her if she goes to crèche and goes further she will become a secretary.	Help him with homework and tell him it is important to be educated

Information	Bongiwe Zondi	Busisiwe Dlamini	Fikile Dlamini	Delisile Zondi
What will stop her from becoming this sort of person?	I don't know if he wants to be a secretary. I don't know his mind.	Money	Money	
Has the crèche changed in the last year? What are these changes?	There are pictures on the walls. She sees that if the teacher is going to be absent, she tells the committee. She tries to be punctual.	There is a new building. It is nice and warm.	There is even a cupboard, a potty seat and pictures on the walls.	Many things. There are pictures on the walls.
What is the best thing about this group?	The spirit, we are one.	People help one another when someone does not understand something.	Communication. They work together, those who are ahead help others. Even if she is absent the others tell her what happened and help her.	This is a nice group. They like their work.
What is the worst/most difficult thing in the group?	Sometimes there is difficulty but the teacher repeats and then helps us.	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing
Tell me about writing in your journal? Does it help you? How? Why do you enjoy it?	She likes it because it reminds her to help her child.	Her child likes the pictures. It has helped her learn how to talk to children and to work with her child. He saw a big house in the first picture and he liked it.	She likes the journal. She likes talking to her children about the pictures. If her child does not understand something she asks.	She forgets to write in her journal. She only remembers when she sees me.
Is there anything else you would like to tell me?	There are problems at the primary school, teachers are absent.	When her child heard the tape he wanted to know how the children got into the tape.		

Bold type indicates questions and answers in the final interview (November 2001)

APPENDIX E: DETAILED ADULT LITERACY TEACHER INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Bold type indicates questions and answers from the final interview

Questions	Zimbili Dlamini	Phumuzile Ngubo
	1978 (22) Single, lives with parents, brother and her child (March – 1 year 10months) Std 10	1977 (24) Single, lives with parents and child (March – 1 year 6 months (her own father died this year) Std 10
Interests	Watching TV (at home) Favourite programmes are Generations and news. Gospel music. Travel. Plays netball	Playing football
Plans/hopes	Have more knowledge about adult classes and continue to be an adult teacher. Build a house even if not married. Plan a good future for my child, I would like him to become a doctor.	To be married and have another child. Working and have money. Continue teaching adults.
Describe yesterday	Woke at 6.30am Wash myself and prepare to go to a meeting at Ndodeni. Had the meeting. Came home and did washing for herself and her child. Prepared supper for the family. Bathed her child. Bathed. Slept at 8.45pm	Woke at 5am. Go to kitchen to help mother make vetkoek that she sells at the school. Wash myself. Go to a meeting about adult school. Eat. Clean house. Play football. Cook supper. Write report. Sleep at 7.30pm
What do you do with your child?	Bath, feed, when she is away her mother looks after her child	He spends a lot of time with other family members as she is often away and her mother is out a lot. When at home she washes him.
Should you read stories to your pre-school child?	Yes because “ a child understand parents well than a teacher”.	Yes
How old will a child be when she first wants to listen to a story?	When they start to tell you what they do outside you can start telling stories and help improve them to talk. Look at books – maybe when she started to differentiate between things. When she wants to tell you things she has seen.	5 years old. If you want the child to listen you must show pictures and do activities so that she can concentrate.
What do you expect your pre-school child to do at home to help?	He can fetch things for me	He is too young

Questions	Zimbili Dlamini	Phumuzile Ngubo
Weekend events	Church on Sunday Play netball after church on Sunday Cleans the house	Church on Sunday. Meetings at Marilyn's house about the community garden.
What was the most important thing you learnt on your course?	I learn why it is important for the adult to go to school as well as the child to go to school. Me at home my parents are illiterate and they didn't give me advice when I finished school. I think if parent is literate they can show which is right and wrong. They will see the importance of education.	How you teach adult and it is not the same as you teach the child eg in a circle and talk to us, you don't say you are wrong.
What has been the most successful thing you have done since your training?	I ask the people to come to school, they heard me and they are coming.	I have talked to the priest and he announced it in the church and I felt proud and people came to register.
What was the most successful thing you have done this year?	The success of the learners makes me happy. The unit on Water – some people got cholera but it is easy to prevent but they did not know how. I helped them. The unit on the crèche: they were afraid to tell each other to build the crèche and I pushed them.	The unit on Crime because there were more learners at that time. They enjoyed it and I enjoyed the bigger class.
What has been the most difficult?	Many people they don't like to write an assessment because they think it is a test. They wanted lessons before they write the assessment.	Nothing
What has been the most difficult this year?	Stage 1 learners are very lazy and this makes me unhappy. I ask myself where do I go wrong?	The drop out of learners
Which part of the lesson do you enjoy the most?	Haven't done a lesson yet – busy setting up new group and assessing learners.	None done yet.
Which part of the lesson do you enjoy the most?	When I ask questions and they answer, because it is where I help shy people.	The activities, when they are grouped.
Why was this?	N/a	N/a
Is there any part you don't like?	As above	None done yet.
Is there any part you don't like?	Marking work because when it is wrong they are not happy.	None
Why is this?	N/a	N/a

Questions	Zimbili Dlamini	Phumuzile Ngubo
What do you understand by the words “early literacy”?	I think it is where the education before children come to school or the crèche.	I think it is to teach the child in home or crèche before they go to school. When they go to school they have more knowledge.
What do you understand by the words “early literacy”?	The whole development of the child. This is good when it is started early rather than when you are old.	I think of the child. I think of adults that teach the child at home.
What do you understand by the words “adult literacy”?	This is the education for the people who are the adults who have not being going to school and those who have been half at school.	It’s a learning of adult people. Learning about their needs and how to write their names.
What do you understand by the words “adult literacy”?	It is the added development of people. The person knows many things without reading and writing.	I am thinking of people who need me to help them.
How do you think you will be able to bring the two together into a family literacy group? Describe some of the things you will do.	I think I will help parents when they are coming with a problem with their child and advising them. It can be a lesson talking about people at home and sitting with the r child talking about things at school.	As I am teaching the parents so they will help their children so adult and early literacy combine.
How do you think you bring the two together into the family literacy group? Describe some of the things you do.	It is working v ell, some problems – some parents used to teach children at home and when they send them to crèche they learn another way. I encourage them that they can help them at home for when they come to crèche. They did not see that young children can go to crèche.	It doesn’t work well because I work with men and they don’t live with their children and they do not see the need to teach their children.
Why do you think it is important to talk about early literacy to your adult literacy groups?	Important because adults will encourage their children to go to school.	As above

Questions	Zimbili Dlamini	Phumuzile Ngubo
For your work, what do you want to learn more about?	There are some problems the adult will come with in the class, I want more information to avoid the adult leaving the school. Maybe when a mother is having a problem with her children (discipline – my word) they don't like to listen to what she says. Operation Upgrade will give us more information and help us solve the so adult is not disturbed.	These people who stop at Std 8 and 9 because it will be hard for me to teach these people ie the different subjects.
For your work, what do you want to learn more about?	How to teach English and numeracy. I would like to continue with ECD course because it will help with my learners and it helps me with my own child.	English. English for myself and ECD because I am in family literacy so I need to know more.
What changes have you seen in your learners?	Some in Stage 4 had no confidence but now they have confidence. Stage 1 people can write and read their names. They can choose their own names among others.	In Stage 1 they didn't know how to write their names and short sentences and now they do.
What changes in the way they do things with their children?	They now know the importance of sending children to crèche. They see the importance of seeing time spent with their child. At first the child would say "help me" and they would say they are busy now they know it is important.	N/a
How do you see your future?	I want to continue and I am happy	I like the changes (child to child)

Bold type indicates questions and responses in final interview (November 2001)

APPENDIX F: DETAILS OF THE FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT

THE FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT REPORT TO FUNDERS: DECEMBER 2001

Family literacy is still a fairly unique concept in South Africa. Our project, begun in March 2000, is an attempt to draw on family literacy initiatives in other parts of the world and develop practice relevant here. Our main aim is to encourage young children and their adult carers to see learning to read as a shared pleasure and a valuable skill.

For young children to become literate reading and writing must be introduced into their lives as desirable and enjoyable skills. Adults who care for them, parents and teachers, guide them and by example demonstrate the importance of literacy.

Our project operates in rural areas of the Southern Drakensberg in KwaZulu-Natal around the small towns of Creighton, Underberg and Himeville. Mpumlwana, Ndodeni, Makholweni, Stepmore and Loteni are areas of spectacular beauty, as one would expect of a world heritage site. However roads are very bad, there is no electricity, women walk for miles to fetch wood, taps are shared. There are few opportunities for paid employment, with women sometimes working short term for low wages on local or national government projects such as "Working for Water" or on a school building site. Despite these problems there is a determination in many of the women to improve their own level of education and work for a good future for their children.

When we started the project we found many adult carers of young children unable or uncomfortable reading to, or helping their children learn to read. In many homes there were few or no books and opportunities to use other resources such as advertising and signs, absent or ignored.

In the last twenty months, we have seen changes that are exciting and witnessed families reading together for pleasure. Adults have developed their own literacy skills and have started small income generating projects. Parents in one group are building a crèche. Children read to other children. Books for adults and children have been produced and small library boxes exist in pre-schools and for adults. Women stay on after classes to discuss the books they have read.

The Family Literacy Project was shortlisted for the UDV/Guinness Adult Literacy award, has been used on Radio Netherlands website, and has hosted researchers, journalists and visitors both from abroad and within the country.

SUMMARY

2000 Family Literacy Project established

- Four family literacy groups meet regularly to discuss how adults support and develop literacy skills in young children.
- Links between parents and early childhood development sites are strengthened.
- 35 early childhood development practitioners receive training in the promotion of early literacy skills.
- The results of a participatory rural appraisal inform plans for 2001.

2001 Family Literacy Project continues to develop:

- Five women receive training in adult literacy, participatory practice and early childhood development
- These women facilitate seven family literacy groups that meet between two and four times a week.
- Units of study are developed to ensure that adult literacy skills are linked to issues of importance to participants.
- Early literacy is embedded in the units of study

- 49 women register for and pass ABET Level 1 readiness examinations
- Income generation projects begin, as a result of discussion in the groups
- Library boxes placed in all groups
- Book clubs initiated by group participants
- Library boxes placed in eight pre-schools adjacent to the groups
- Short course on early literacy developed and attended by 16 pre-school practitioners
- Bursaries obtained and support given to 15 women to enrol on Unisa courses on early childhood development
- Short course on early literacy developed for parents
- Workshops held in the local maternity ward and books presented to mothers and new-born babies
- Workshops on reading held for older children
- Holiday sessions on storytelling held for children affected by Aids
- Books and a tape for adults and children developed with group members and distributed to all participants:
 - Prepare your child to read (isiZulu and English)
 - Parents and young children (isiZulu and English)
 - Stay Healthy – HIV/Aids (isiZulu and English)
 - Siphos Mother's Brother's child (dual text: isiZulu and English)
 - Ezweni (dual text: isiZulu and English)
 - Ngezandla (dual text: isiZulu and English)
 - Original songs and stories recorded on tape in isiZulu and English
- Books in production:
 - You and your child (isiZulu and English)
 - Gugu's Day (dual text: isiZulu and English)
 - Building Resilience (isiZulu and English)

FAMILY LITERACY GROUPS

These grew out of the meetings held in pre-schools and crèches for parents of young children. Initially, discussion focussed on ways in which parents provide early literacy experiences and develop, for example, eye hand co-ordination, shape and colour recognition, use of imagination, identifying and naming feelings, handling a book and of course the stimulating of a love of books and stories.

During the participatory rural appraisal conducted in October 2000, women said they wanted to improve their own levels of literacy. Some were grandmothers who had never learnt to read and write others were women who had left school in Std 3 or 4 because of poverty. Some parents wanted to learn or improve their English.

Each of the four groups selected a woman they wanted as their family literacy group facilitator. These women were trained by Operation Upgrade to teach basic adult literacy, they attended a short course on early literacy run by the project co-ordinator, enrolled on a Unisa course in early childhood education and were trained by a Reflect co-ordinator to use participatory tools in their work. These women are uniquely trained and have proved to be committed and dedicated to supporting women and children in their communities.

"Considering that most tutors and facilitators struggle to get to grips with one approach they have been trained in during the first few months, what these women have achieved is remarkable." (FLP Evaluation October 2001)

The number of groups was increased from 2000, to seven in 2001. This was in response to neighbouring pre-schools and crèches requesting family literacy be brought to their parents.

At monthly team meetings the family literacy group facilitators plan their units. Each unit is made up of eight workshops or lessons. The topics are chosen from the needs identified by the women during the participatory rural appraisal in October 2000.

Topics covered in 2000 included HIV/Aids, Water, Crime, and Early Childhood Development.

Topics for the first half of 2001 are Environment, Abuse of the Elderly, Child Protection, HIV/Aids, Culture and Special Days.

There exists in the unit model a link between the unit topic and the early literacy activities. In the past there have been good workshops delivered by the ECD support workers. However at times these have not happened at a time most appropriate to the group. Now that the family literacy group facilitators have received training in early childhood development and early literacy in particular, they will not have to rely on anyone else to deliver this session. As they know their own groups and are aware of the context, they will be able to make very clear links. They will ensure that there is more support for adult literacy activities that include children.

Record keeping must be continued and more closely monitored. Facilitators have commented on poor attendance but when the records were scrutinised during the evaluation, attendance levels were not as low as expected. The reason for this may be that the facilitators hope for 100% attendance. When people have been absent, team members have visited them at home. Reasons given for non attendance have been, for the most part, valid and include illness, pension days, short term work contracts, harvesting, planting, house repairs. What is of concern is that there has been an overall drop out of 28% over the year. This is a problem common to adult literacy groups especially with women for whom literacy is often seen as a personal goal and low on the list of household priorities. Measures to counter this drop out will include more discussion during the enrolment period. It is also possible that with certificates awarded for examination success that this will motivate people to maintain regular attendance. If the results of the UNISA study show that children are benefiting from their parent's attendance this may be a motivating factor. Maintaining regular attendance is a goal but we must not lose sight of the many other responsibilities of the women and the effect this has on their lives. We accept that we have to work within these constraints.

Each group has a library box. Books are exchanged once a week. Taking the lead from one of the groups, all groups except one now extend one of their weekly sessions to include discussion of books. This is a move forward as at the beginning of the project adults were focussing on skills such as filling in forms and reading signs rather than seeing reading as a pleasure. One woman commented that she now reads a book to take her mind off her problems. In addition, women report that their children pick up a book and sit alongside them when they are reading. The continued provision of books and support for the book clubs must be a priority as the benefits of this are obvious.

Plans for the future include

- Linking adult and early literacy. The group facilitators will lead the sessions on early literacy. There will be continued and extended use of journals to record parent-child interactions. This has proved to be popular and stimulates free writing. It also engages the children in a literacy activity, i.e. talking about pictures, events and stories.
- Provision of materials: In addition to learner materials (purchased from Operation Upgrade), new books must and are being developed to give adults relevant material at an appropriate level. Books already developed will continue to be an important resource as these have been well received and have not yet been completely worked through. All materials have been and will continue to be developed with members of the family literacy groups.
- Teaching of English: There will be training for the facilitators in the teaching of English. With most women in all groups now competent in their own language, they want to learn a new language. A decision has been taken that women will be encouraged, where appropriate, to continue to develop their isiZulu to ABET Level 2 in addition to beginning to learn English.
- Teaching and support will continue for women who have yet to reach ABET Level 1.
- Workshops by other team members or outsiders as these are reported to have been a stimulus and encouragement to the groups.
- More books for the libraries. The need to provide books is obvious and this has been reinforced by the excitement shown by both adults and children each time a new delivery of even three or four books is made.

- Ways to use newly developed skills, for example in the establishment of community notice boards. These will be erected at community halls or local shops and maintained by those women who have completed ABET Level 1.
- A team member other than the co-ordinator will produce the project newsletter. This team member has attended a short course on journalism skills and will now be able to interview group members and support them to write short pieces for the newsletter. The newsletter has stimulated the writing of letters and this must be continued, as it is an opportunity for group members to demonstrate new skills.
- Team members who successfully complete the ECD certificate course will be enrolled on an ABET certificate course with UNISA.

CHILD TO CHILD

These activities began with a workshop on reading for an existing “growing girls” group in Mpumlwana. This was very successful and children of between 8 and 16 were given books to read to younger siblings. There have been follow up workshops and the group also attended a storytelling session by the well-known Gcina Mhlope when she visited the project.

Building on this experience, workshops have also been held as part of the holiday programme at the Zamani Children’s Centre for children affected by Aids. These proved very popular.

One family literacy group almost closed because of a farmer’s unwillingness to provide transport for his workers to the sessions. This left the facilitator with spare time that she used to run break-time sessions for children at the local primary school. These proved popular and will be continued.

We are sure, and research in other countries bears this out, that children working with other children builds self-confidence in both the reader and the listeners. This approach also reinforces reading in the home and at school. Some of the primary schools are lively while others we work near offer what appears to be very dull programme. We hope to spark or build on children’s interest in books that will be, in some cases, nurtured by the schools.

Many children are affected by HIV/Aids and we have been involved in holiday programmes at the Zamani Children’s Centre at Centocow. Because of the large numbers of children, sessions have had to be repeated to accommodate them all.

The group facilitators, to ensure continuity between this and the parent interventions will provide the child to child support. Extending into this section of the community is seen as contributing to the possibility of a “critical mass” effect where more and more people, young and old, are talking about the importance of reading and other literacy activities.

Topics to be covered in the sessions will mirror those of the family literacy groups so that links between family members can be nurtured. Planning for these sessions will be done alongside planning for the units with preparatory work done by the project co-ordinator.

Where possible, children can contribute to the newsletter and the community notice boards planned for 2002.

Plans for the future include:

- Establishment of child to child groups alongside all family literacy groups. These will follow the same unit topic or theme as the family literacy group. Parents and children can discuss a topic and share information and materials.
- Members of the child to child groups encouraged to read to and with younger siblings. Research in other countries has shown this to be beneficial to both reader and listener.
- Family literacy group facilitators supported to run groups of this age children. They will draw on their experience of using participatory tools to stimulate discussion.
- Reading corners set up so that children can read in their own time. This will be in primary schools close to the groups.
- Contributions by children to the community notice boards and project newsletters.
- Involvement in the holiday programmes at the Zamani Children’s Centre.

PRE-SCHOOLS AND CRÈCHES

Involvement in and close links to the pre-schools and crèches proved to be a strength in the establishment of the family literacy project. Regular workshops were held with parents on site and this broke down barriers between teachers and parents with the latter spending time watching activities and discussing children's work. As the family literacy groups became more organised and focussed, these links weakened. This must be addressed and changes made to the programme to re-establish what was a positive relationship. It is important to maintain good links because of the influence of the pre-school teachers in the community and also to encourage more parental participation in the running of the pre-schools.

Books have been given to eight pre-schools and crèches operating near the family literacy groups. Some of the teachers have been trained and organise stimulating activities, others are offering a very basic although caring, childminding service. However none of the sites have done very much to encourage children to borrow books. Storytelling and free reading times do take place to a greater or lesser degree in all of the sites.

In the evaluation conducted in October 2001, parents and teachers both commented on how much the children had learnt and developed over the year. This is to be expected but it is interesting to see what parents and teachers comment on. There is emphasis on cleanliness, important but not a direct focus of this project. All commented positively on how children are showing an interest in books and storytelling and know how to handle a book.

In 2002 we have to build on the groundwork laid in 2000 and in some ways not taken forward with great effect in 2001. This will be done by working closely with the pre-school and crèche staff to ensure that children are encouraged to borrow books and that this is seen as important by the adults. Reading during free choice time in the daily programme must be presented in an exciting way with the book area made attractive and inviting. More activities to develop early literacy skills must be discussed and ways of offering these to children must be explored.

Plans for the future include:

- Approaches to library use that will encourage more children to borrow books on a regular basis. Small rewards of a book, pencil, extra reading time etc could be introduced to motivate children to borrow and read books.
- Support and training for teachers on how to integrate more stories into the daily programme. This should be in addition to the present end of the day story time.
- Regular parent days where parents and teachers meet to look at and discuss work done by children.
- Children involved in their own use of books, this through charts maintained by the children and regular storytelling sessions.
- Encouragement of child to child programme in the neighbourhood or within the school.

BOOKS FOR BABIES

This programme consists of weekly workshops for mothers to be and books for mother and baby on discharge. There is good support for the programme by hospital staff who administer the distribution of books. Women come from a wide geographic area to St Apollinaris Hospital to deliver their babies. The women are told where their nearest family literacy group is in case they would like to join.

A member of the Family Literacy Project team runs the weekly workshop. The workshop starts with discussion around illustrations showing adults involved in early literacy activities with babies and young children. Mothers are encouraged to see their important role in developing early literacy skills and a love of books in their children. The workshop includes advice on how to make a book from scrap materials. The books the mothers will receive on discharge are discussed. Many of the mothers are teenagers and parenting skills are discussed although to a lesser extent than the early literacy component.

OUTREACH

It has been the aim of the project to share information with other groups that want to replicate or use the programme. This has happened to some degree with our workshop outlines used in crèches, an ABET project, a community group and an ECD training programme. The work of the project has been used as a case study in training sessions in Southern Africa. Books developed by our project are being used by other organisations, in particular that on HIV/Aids.

It is not the aim of the project to expand but rather to continue to share knowledge and experience with others for them to use in their own way.

Two pre-school associations have been formed in the areas in which the project operates. The formation of the association in the Centocow area was initially discussed during the participatory rural appraisal in October 2000. Two project team members visited crèches in the area and have worked closely with the committee of the association. The other association has operated without the assistance of the project but crèches in which we work are members of the association.

It is also important to create awareness in the areas in which the project operates. This will raise the profile of literacy activities as well as be an encouragement to project members. The newsletters produced in 2001 were distributed only to project members and elicited a positive response with many letters being written to the project. As members now have more literacy skills it is time to take the newsletter to a wider audience as well as making sure that members make more of a contribution to it.

Plans for the future include:

- Newsletters. These have been produced for project members but should now be aimed at a wider audience. This could be a local group, schools and displayed on the community notice boards.
- Community notice boards as described earlier under Family Literacy Groups.
- Open Days where others from the area can watch and listen to project members singing about or presenting in a dramatic way their learning and vision.
- Links with pre-school associations. The strong link with the Centocow association will be maintained with team members running training sessions on early literacy. One pre-school has been selected by the association as a site for a family literacy group. Our project will support this initiative where possible.
- The project co-ordinator is a member of the national ECD Standards Generating Body and will continue to make contributions on early literacy and parental involvement.
- Project books are displayed by a number of organisations including TREE, Operation Upgrade and NASA. This is in an effort to make more widely available the thinking of the project as well as provide material in both isiZulu and English.
- Contact will be made with Radio Ukhozi and publications such as Ilanga and Bona to provide the spread of information on family literacy.
- Family Literacy groups have been listed with provincial government ABET structures although it is not clear yet what this will mean in practice. This has been done through Operation Upgrade.
- SANLI, the national literacy initiative, has been approached to offer training to people wanting to set up their own adult literacy groups alongside pre-schools. There have been organisational delays in this initiative but when they are resolved we can re-establish contact.

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MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

From the start of the project it was apparent that there is little printed material at a level appropriate for the adults with whom the project works. There is some material in English but very little in isiZulu. Few storybooks for adults or children were set in rural areas, and few available in isiZulu.

In 2001 several books were produced by the project. A first draft was developed by the project co-ordinator. An adult literacy specialist edited this draft. The draft was translated into isiZulu by an adult literacy trainer. Both drafts were sent to group members who underlined words and phrases that they found difficult. Changes were made to the draft. Illustrations were commissioned and design and layout agreed on.

The material has been well received by group members and those participating in the 'child to child' and 'books for babies' work. The material complements the unit topics and is used to stimulate discussion and literacy activities.

Worksheets for adults are currently being developed in English and isiZulu and these will relate to the booklet on HIV/Aids. These are being designed by NASA staff and will help clarify issues and provide literacy practice.

The latest booklet, *You and your child* contains material taken from activities in the family literacy groups. The storybook *My Day* was developed by the project co-ordinator and one of the family literacy groups. Both these initiatives and the inclusion of names of the group members, who read the drafts, have led to great excitement within the groups. People feel a real ownership of the material and are proud of their contribution to printed materials.

Other material developed has been a short course on early literacy. This has been delivered to two groups of pre-school teachers. It is available for any other group to use.

Workshop outlines for parent groups on the topic of early literacy have been developed and are available in English and isiZulu. Several other groups have made use of these and more are going to receive them in 2002.

Plans for the future include:

- Story books and related activities for young children
- Readers for adults on topics relevant to them and their children
- Adult literacy worksheets to accompany existing and new readers

CONCLUSION

In a project such as this where we respond to opportunities and try to solve problems, it is difficult to predict the activities and not deviate from the plans. We can continue to plan, implement, review and respond.

Given the success of the family literacy groups this year, these will continue and the child to child programme is only just beginning and has huge potential. The links with the pre-schools and crèches must be strengthened and extended and work in 2002 will guide us to a more effective way of working.

The HIV/Aids pandemic will influence what we do. We have spent time in the groups discussing this issue and will continue to do so. The child to child programme is another way of reaching a vulnerable group and providing information and guidance.

APPENDIX G: EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

The following information was taken from the workshop outlines used by Zimbili Dlamini with the Mpumlwana family literacy group. This is the group attended by the four women selected for the case study.

The unit on early childhood development was delivered in May 2001. This topic was chosen to extend adult's understanding and interest as it plays such an important part in the project.

Zimbili began by asking what a six-year-old child should know and be able to do. The women were then divided into groups to discuss where the child would best learn the skills listed. This could be at the crèche, at home or in both the crèche and at home.

The next lesson was on how to write a business letter. The class activity was to write a letter to a school to ask them to enrol a child, or a letter to a neighbour to motivate her to send her child to crèche.

The third lesson focussed on the role of the parent in her child's development and included discussion on how children learnt different skills.

The next lesson focused on the importance of having a crèche in the area. The owner had reclaimed the crèche building but by the end of the lesson a group member was chosen to work with the community to ask the chief for a site for a new crèche. The group also spent time looking at the costs of running a crèche.

The supplementary reading for this unit was the book "Parents and young children". This book is one of several developed and produced by the Family Literacy Project. It was written in English and translated into Zulu suitable for readers at ABET Level 1. It introduces the idea that parents have a vital role in helping young children develop skills and attitudes. It includes ideas for activities for parents and young children to do together at home.

The unit on water was presented in August 2001 and the lesson on early literacy focussed on how adults must care for children in and near water. Zimbili listed four steps in her discussion beginning with a reminder of how to make a sugar solution for children with diarrhoea and moving on to ask about the dangers of water and how to protect children from these dangers. The activity for the Stage 4 learners was to write a poem for children with a focus on water.

The unit on HIV/Aids was presented in September 2001. The team decided that it was not appropriate to talk to very young children about HIV/Aids but instead to talk about issues around the topic. They decided to focus on the importance of a healthy diet.

The objectives for this lesson were that adults would understand the importance of a healthy diet, how certain foods help people who are HIV positive, and how to help their children understand the importance of eating healthy foods. Zimbili wrote that she would ask parents to explain how they were going to teach their children at home about healthy food.

The supplementary reading for this unit was "Stay Healthy" a booklet developed and produced by the Family Literacy Project. It was written in English and translated into Zulu for readers at ABET Level 1. It covers different aspects of HIV/Aids, including how to care for young children affected by the pandemic.