

FAMILY LITERACY: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S
ACQUISITION OF LITERACY SKILLS THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE
COACHING INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

Family Literacy: Parental Involvement in Children's Acquisition of Literacy Skills through a Collaborative Coaching Intervention

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For many years, parents have played an important role in helping their children to acquire literacy skills, with little attention given to their voices and experiences. As a consequence, not enough is known about the parental home literacy strategies that can be engaged to consistently promote the successful acquisition of literacy by children. This study sought to understand the experiences of parents in their efforts to assist their children, and to determine how parents can be assisted, through a process of coaching, without encroaching on the naturally occurring day-to-day home literacy practices. The inquiry focused on the experiences of two low-income, single parent mothers, who were determined to improve the literacy development of their children. The study is anchored in the qualitative case study design, and used interviews, conversations and reflective journal writing, as the main techniques for data collection. The deep rich data gathered, were written in two main stories to highlight the literacy beliefs, experiences, concerns and desires of each participant. The main themes identified in the data, pointed to major findings dealing with issues of parental involvement, communication, parental expectations, parenting, value of literacy, change and family literacy constraints. My understanding of the themes and issues, and the many lessons learned, resulted in me having a deeper appreciation for the role of the family in fostering literacy development, through the engagement of everyday routine activities and events. The findings in the inquiry resulted in recommendations being made for school administrators and teachers, literacy coaches and parents, all designed to positively impact the practice of family literacy. This inquiry will add to the body of knowledge concerning the practice and theory of family literacy, and will serve as a useful guide for family literacy practitioners, parents, school personnel and fellow researchers.

Key words: family literacy, coaching, parental home literacy strategies, parental literacy beliefs and practices,