

# LEADER'S GUIDE



## Learning Together

Newspaper Activities for  
Children in the Primary Grades



# Learning Together

## Newspaper Activities for Children in the Primary Grades

### GRADES ONE - THREE

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**T**his project provides suggestions and materials for local Newspaper In Education professionals to use in conducting up to four 90-minute programs for parents. These programs should help parents learn new ways to use the newspaper to encourage their children to read, talk and think. Educational research confirms the important role parents play in helping their children learn and use language. Parents often want information and advice on how they can encourage their children to read and express their thoughts clearly.

The newspaper is a source of reading material for both adults and children. Newspapers are available in many homes and contain information on a wide variety of subjects for people of all ages, interests and experiences. Newspapers also are convenient tools for parents to use in modeling reading behavior, encouraging conversation and extending children's awareness of people, places, things and events.

Newspapers are often considered most appropriate for experienced readers, but their use should not be limited. Although most children in grades 1-3 will not read the newspaper independently, they can benefit from shared reading activities with a parent or other interested adult. The activities in this project are designed to help parents understand how to use the newspaper to stimulate discussion, foster conversation and build on children's interest in people and events.

Participating in a Learning Together workshop(s) may help establish "minimum participation standards" under the Audit Bureau of Circulation's NIE-Home Delivered rule and thus increase circulation. For information on the NIE-Home Delivered rule, visit the ABC Web site at [www.accessabc.com/bylaws1/members.htm](http://www.accessabc.com/bylaws1/members.htm), or call your local auditor.

# Components

## **1** LEADER'S GUIDE

This guide provides resources for planning and carrying out special Learning Together parent programs. Conducted by the local NIE professional or by a school reading specialist, these programs will train parents to use the newspaper with their children. The focus of each program is family communication—using the newspaper as a source for reading, talking and thinking.

The programs described in this publication target families of children in the first through third grade. Many NIE programs like to include home school parents when conducting these workshops. Many of the activities can be used with nonreaders or early readers of any age. Activities focus on developing spoken language—an important first step in reading.

The Leader's Guide contains outlines for four sample 90-minute programs. Leaders may choose to use one of these programs or a combination of two or more. A local school principal and/or reading specialist should be involved in determining which activities to use for a particular workshop. Leaders also may develop original programs. A key point for all leaders is to develop programs that meet the needs and interests of the parents in the audience. Leaders should feel free to tailor-make each Learning Together session in their own personal styles. The goal here is a successful presentation, one that will stimulate parents to repeat some of the learning activities at home with their children.

## **2** PARENT BOOKLET

This booklet describes activities which parents and children can do when reading the newspaper together. These activities encourage parents and children to read, talk and think together. The booklet also suggests activities that children may try on their own. At the close of the Learning Together program, each parent should receive a booklet to take home.

## **3** MODEL LETTERS

Included in this Leader's Guide are two model letters promoting the program to parents—one from the principal and one from the PTA/PTO that can be adapted to local programs

and sent home. Also included is a model letter to teachers, describing the purposes of the Learning Together program and its teaching techniques, in the hope that teachers will support the program and reinforce parents' efforts. All letters should be reproduced on the appropriate letterhead. (See pages 8 to 10 of this guide for model letters.)

# 4

## **PUBLICITY FLYER FOR PARENTS**

This flyer is designed to attract parents to the Learning Together program(s). There is room for listing the place and time of the Learning Together evenings, and it can easily be duplicated by the program organizers. (See page 11 of this guide for a sample flyer.)

# 5

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Public service announcements for both newspaper and radio can be used to promote the Learning Together program. A separate in-paper promotional advertisement can be found on the CD with this program. (See page 12 of this guide for sample public service announcements.)

# 6

## **MODEL PROGRAMS**

This Leader's Guide contains four model programs, each covering distinct target areas:

- (1) to aid parents in using photographs to promote conversation with their children;
- (2) to show parents how to select newspaper articles to read with their children;
- (3) to show parents how to use the newspaper to promote family conversations and
- (4) to help parents in choosing topics to interest their children in independent activities.

Included with the model programs is a sample agenda that session leaders can follow, plus step-by-step suggestions for running a successful Learning Together event. Each model program offers several activities to encourage parent participation on the premise that parental enthusiasm during the session will spill over into the at-home activities that parents plan for their children.

# 7

## MODEL STATEMENTS TO PARENTS

Included in the Leader's Guide are model statements to parents, offered as a way to help Learning Together programs introduce and conclude the sessions they run. Statements reinforce the premises of Learning Together—that reading is worthwhile and important, and that children who see their parents reading will be more inclined to do so themselves. (See pages 26-29.)

# 8

## TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

With the three sample transparency masters provided (pages 30-32), Learning Together leaders will be able to add visual impact to their introductory and concluding remarks. Session leaders are encouraged to develop other transparencies to suit the needs of the programs they run. (We do not encourage the use of PowerPoint presentations unless you plan to take all necessary equipment with you.)

# 9

## EVALUATION FORM

The sample evaluation form, located on page 33, should be duplicated and distributed to parents who attend Learning Together programs. The information on the form can provide program leaders with ideas and suggestions for future sessions.

If this workshop is being used to help satisfy the “minimum participation standards” of ABC, the workshop leader may want to distribute order forms for parents to receive the newspaper delivered to their home.

# 10

## STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

In order for students to have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need, these 12 standards are included.

# 1

## Planning Guidelines for Program Leaders

- ★ Contact a local elementary school and ask to meet with the principal and reading specialist. Describe to them the content and purpose of a Learning Together presentation and gain their support for the program.
- ★ Several weeks before the Learning Together program is to take place, schedule a meeting(s) with each of the sponsoring groups and determine who will take various responsibilities for the meeting.
- ★ Ask both the school principal and the PTA/PTO president to be present at the Learning Together program to welcome participants. Ideally both a reading specialist and an NIE professional will be present, although either one alone could lead the session.
- ★ Decide the topic of your program. This Leader's Guide includes outlines for four different topics. Leaders may choose one topic, or make selections from two or more. It is possible to present a different workshop on each of four evenings. Include this information in your publicity.
- ★ Formulate a budget for your program. Determine who will cover expenses for duplicating publicity materials and parent brochures, and who will contribute funds for incidentals, including refreshments. The more direct assistance the newspaper can provide, the less strain on the school budget.
- ★ Select a convenient time and place for the program. The best meeting locations have round tables and chairs large enough for adults to sit in comfortably. School resource rooms, libraries, media centers and, occasionally, cafeterias are ideal. Make sure the meeting is scheduled for a time that is convenient for parents who will be attending.
- ★ Determine which parents may attend the workshop. Does the school want to limit attendance to parents from that school? Can home school parents or parents from other schools within the district attend? Any parents from the circulation area of the newspaper?
- ★ Begin publicizing the program. Promote it in your newspaper, either through ads or articles or both. (Limit in-paper promotion if the workshop is limited to only parents of one school.) Adapt the public service announcements included in the Leader's Guide (page 12) and send them to local radio stations. Call local television talk shows to schedule appearances by one or more members of the sponsoring organizations. Copy and distribute flyers to all parents of children in grades one to three of the sponsoring school. Post flyers in other locations where parents are likely to see them. Tell teachers about the program and ask

for their cooperation. (See sample letter to teachers on page 8.) Have the school principal and PTA/PTO presidents write a letter to parents (samples on pages 9 and 10) encouraging participation in the Learning Together program.

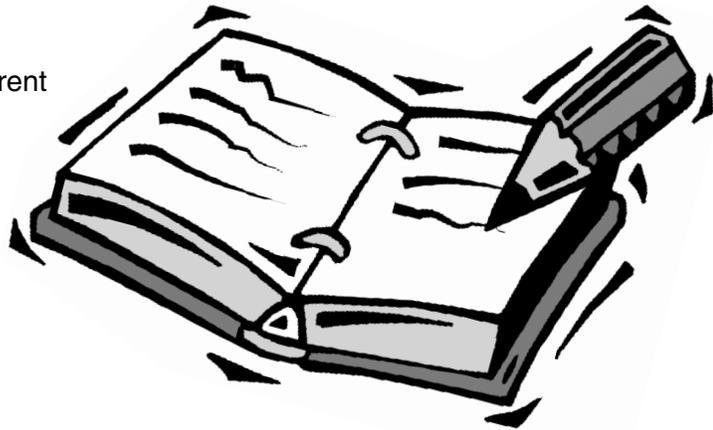
- ★ Decide whether to preregister participants. Although preregistration makes planning easier, it may discourage last-minute attendance. If you will preregister, decide who will be responsible for receiving and processing the forms.
- ★ Determine the optimum size of the group. In a large school, you may need to hold more than one program.
- ★ Determine who will be responsible for refreshments, if any, and what will be served and when it will be served.
- ★ Assemble all the materials you will need for the program. These include:
  - One copy of the newspaper for each participant.
  - One copy of the Parents Booklet for each participant.
  - Overhead projector and screen, if you plan to use one.
  - Optional materials as required by individual programs (bulletin board, markers, scissors, gluestick, etc.).
- ★ Prepare an evaluation form and make sure you have enough copies for each participant. A sample evaluation form is included in this guide, page 33.
- ★ Begin promptly and end on time!
- ★ Work to create a relaxed, informal atmosphere.
- ★ Thank all parents for participating.
- ★ After the program is over, call or meet with other sponsoring groups to evaluate the success of the workshop. Decide if you should schedule additional sessions.
- ★ Let the NAA Foundation know how your program went! Drop us a note at:  
NAA Foundation, 1921 Gallows Road, Suite 600, Vienna, VA 22182 or e-mail  
levir@naa.org.

# 2 Parent Brochure

**Note:** Although this Leader's Guide refers to the Learning Together parent meetings as either programs or workshops, you may want to refer to a meeting as "Learning Together Day," "Learning Together Rally," "Learning Together Evening" or some other creative title. Parents are likely to attend a meeting that will provide them with easy-to-use, enjoyable and interesting information on using the newspaper to help their children learn.

## PARENT BOOKLET

The program's CD also contains a parent booklet, which can be printed exactly as it appears or customized with the name and logo of your newspaper or NIE program.



# Model Letters

## MODEL LETTER TO TEACHERS

(On newspaper or NIE letterhead)

(Date)

Dear Educator:

The (newspaper name) and (any co-sponsors) are sponsoring a Learning Together program on (date) at (location) from (time) to (time).

***Learning Together: An Activity Workshop for Children in the Primary Grades*** is a national program designed to help parents learn new ways of working with their children to foster good reading habits and improved reading skills. The program is sponsored by the Newspaper Association of America Foundation and this newspaper.

As a teacher, you are a vital part of the Learning Together effort. During the session, parents will learn effective techniques for working with their children. The newspaper will be used as a primary resource; activities that are both enjoyable and educationally sound will be presented to parents as ideas for further efforts at home. You can reinforce the work parents are doing and answer questions that they might ask.

Please join us next (day of week) as we train parents on methods to use at home with their children. If you would like further information about Learning Together or about using the newspaper in your classroom, please call me at (your phone number). Thanks so much for your help.

Sincerely,

Name, title

## MODEL LETTER TO PARENTS FROM PRINCIPAL

(School Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear (name of school) Parent:

It is my pleasure to invite you to an important program—***Learning Together - An Activity Workshop for Children in the Primary Grades***. This meeting has been planned for the parents of our first-, second- and third-grade students on (day of the week, month, date, time) in (room number/name) at (location). This program will offer practical advice and specific methods to help you help your child develop good reading habits at home by using the newspaper.

Since reading is the most basic skill for students—and is the foundation for all future learning—it needs to be reinforced often at home, especially in the early elementary years. ***Learning Together*** has been carefully designed by reading specialists to introduce parents to simple, enjoyable ways to complement the school's program and strengthen your child's reading skills. The newspaper, inexpensive and readily available, will be the reading material for the program.

***Learning Together***, planned to last about an hour-and-one-half and led by (name and title of leader), applies to all parents—whether this is your first child or you're a veteran elementary school parent. We will all learn, and I am sure you will enjoy it. Every parent attending will receive a resource booklet with solid suggestions for talking together, reading together, thinking together and for projects children can do on their own with the newspaper.

I look forward to seeing you on (day of meeting). Please contact me or (session leader) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Principal

## MODEL LETTER TO PARENTS FROM PTA/PTO

(Date)

Dear (name of school) Parent:

As parents, we all want to know how we can help our children do better in school. We know that we have an important role to play in our children's learning and that we are our children's first and most important teachers.

To help us with that important responsibility, the (name of school) PTA/PTO is cosponsoring a special program for parents of first-, second- and third-grade students. ***Learning Together: An Activity Workshop for Children in the Primary Grades*** will be held on (date) at (time and place). The workshop will show you simple things you can do at home to help improve your child's reading skills. You will learn practical, enjoyable and easy ways to use newspapers to talk, read and think together.

You also will receive a booklet that explains other activities you can try at home with your children. Newspapers are used in most of the activities; they were selected for this program because they are inexpensive, readily available and contain something of interest to everyone—even young children. Newspapers are used in many classrooms at the (name of school) School. (Name and title) will be the presenter for this workshop.

We hope you will join us for this one-and-a-half-hour event. If you have questions about this program please call me at (telephone) or call the presenter (name, title, phone). Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

(Name, Title)

# 2 1 Publicity Flyer



**Learning Together**  
Newspaper Activities for  
Children in the Primary Grades



**Learning Together** is a free program to show you how to use the newspaper to improve your child's reading skills in grades one, two and three.

- ★ **Fun and easy-to-use activities**
- ★ **Teacher-developed, parent-tested**
- ★ **Use the newspaper to read together, talk together, think together**

**YOUR  
NEWSPAPER  
LOGO  
GOES  
HERE**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information call: (name, title, phone)

**Learning Together** is cosponsored by the Newspaper Association of America® Foundation, (name of your newspaper) and (any other sponsors).



# Public Service Announcements

## 30-SECOND SPOT:

Parent—do you want to help your children do better in school? A free program, **Learning Together**, will show you fun and easy ways to use the newspaper to help improve your child's reading skills in first, second and third grade. The programs will be held at (location) on (date) at (time). For more information call (telephone). That number again is (telephone).

## 60-SECOND SPOT:

Parents – helping your first-, second- and third-grade children develop a love of reading may be the most important way to help them do better in school. Now a free program will show you ways you can use your newspaper to help improve your child's reading skills. The program, called **Learning Together**, will be held at (location) on (date) at (time). Every parent attending will receive a resource booklet with solid suggestions for talking together, reading together, thinking together and for projects children can do on their own with newspapers. These suggestions have been developed by teachers and parents, so they are enjoyable, easy and educationally sound.

Again, the **Learning Together** program will be held at (location) on (date) at (time). For more information call (telephone) That's (telephone).



# 6 Model Programs

This Leader’s Guide outlines four 90-minute programs. Each program focuses on a different aspect of children’s language development.

**PROGRAM MODEL 1: Getting the Picture**  
 How parents can use photographs and other visual material from the newspaper to promote conversation and develop thinking skills.

**PROGRAM MODEL 2: Reading Together**  
 How parents can select newspaper articles to read with their children; how to encourage children to talk about what they have read in the newspaper.

**PROGRAM MODEL 3: Talking Together**  
 How to use the newspaper to spark family conversation and encourage children to express their ideas clearly.

**PROGRAM MODEL 4: Exploring Topics**  
 How to choose topics that interest children; how to use newspapers to stimulate curiosity and extend knowledge.

<b>SAMPLE AGENDA:</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Resources</b>
This model agenda presents a general outline that can be adapted for use with any Learning Together program included in this Leader’s Guide. In selecting activities to be used with a group, allow approximately five to seven minutes for participants to complete the activity and allow additional time for sharing. The size of the group will determine the amount of time needed for sharing information.	15 minutes	Greetings and introductions	Program sponsors Program overview Program leaders Sample introductory statements Transparency 1 Transparency 2
	10 minutes	Icebreaker	Samples enclosed
	50 minutes	Using the newspaper with children at home	Leaders may choose activities from those suggested in the program models, or develop their own activities. Choose two or more activities suited to the needs and interests of the audience.
	15 minutes	Summary	Sample concluding statement Transparency 3
		How to follow up	Parent Booklet: <b>Learning Together</b>
	Evaluation	Evaluation form	

## **MODEL PROGRAM 1**

### **Getting the Picture**

#### ***Background Information***

Newspapers contain photographs and illustrations that can encourage children to develop ideas and stimulate conversation. In this program, parents will learn how to use visual materials in newspapers to promote discussion and reading. Each participant should have a newspaper.

In meeting necessary standards for the English Language Arts established by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, these activities are particularly effective in meeting Standards 3, 4, 7, 8 and 12 (listing of the standards is found on page 34 ).

#### ***Getting Started***

Parents can work alone or with a partner. Direct them to scan the newspaper, finding photographs and illustrations. Then parents will list the kinds of information included in these photographs and illustrations. The list might include: popular entertainers, athletes, ordinary citizens, politicians, accidents, weather maps, household items, cars or foods. Participants will then share their lists with a partner and talk about one or two pictures that most attracted their attention. Afterwards, parents can choose to follow one or more of the activities below:

#### ***Activity 1***

Parents will examine photographs of people in the newspaper and choose one that would most interest their children. (Point out that sports photography is often the most popular with children.) They must identify the persons in the photograph and tell a partner why that person is newsworthy or why they selected this example for their children.

In the group, discuss ways to use this activity with children. Suggestions:

- ★ Parents ask children to scan today's newspaper and select an interesting photo. Parents ask children what they know about the people in the photo and why they selected it. Parents read the accompanying caption or article to the children and together talk about any new information learned.
- ★ Children cut a photo out of today's newspaper, mount it on a larger piece of paper, and write the name of the person(s) on the paper. Children can talk about the people in the photograph and then dictate ideas to parents to write a story about the photograph. Older children can be encouraged to write their own stories about the photograph. These "news" stories can be displayed on the refrigerator, the door of the child's room or given to friends and relatives.

### **Activity 2**

(Leaders should remind parents that the ideas children produce are more important than complete accuracy in spelling and punctuation. Parents can make incidental observations about words the child knows how to spell, but should concentrate first on the ideas the child has to offer.)

Have parents draw a simple picture or a floor plan of their home or apartment and label each room. Direct them to scan the newspaper for pictures (in advertisements or news photographs) of 10 items they have in their home. They can cut out these pictures, placing them in the appropriate room on their floor plan.

Discuss how this activity may be used with children. Suggestions:

- ★ Parents can direct children to draw a picture of a room in their house. Children find ads in today's newspaper that show pictures/drawings of things that might go in that room: "Can you find a bed?" "A TV?"
- ★ Children choose pictures or drawings from today's newspaper of one or two items they would like to add to the household and paste them in the appropriate places on their pictures.
- ★ Children can choose one item found in today's newspaper to add to their household. Ask why the child would choose that one item.

### **Activity 3**

Parents select a photograph from today's newspaper that shows an action scene. They should cover the caption so the photo can be analyzed visually without benefit of words. With a partner, have them look at the picture and talk about what is happening, then speculate about what happened before and after the photo was taken. Finally ask them to read the caption and discuss ideas to add to their interpretations. Remind the parents there are no wrong answers.

Discuss how action photographs in today's newspaper can be used to stimulate discussion. Suggestions:

- ★ Parents should encourage children to react spontaneously to the picture before making comments or pointing out additional information to youngsters. Then parents can explain that the caption adds more information. Parents can read the caption or ask their child to read the caption to them.

- ★ They should ask other questions about the photo as well:
  - “What do you think happened before this picture was taken?”
  - “What do you think will happen next?”
  - “What would you do if you were there?”
  - “What do you think people are saying?”
  - “How do you think these people feel?”
  - “What picture might they print about this incident in tomorrow’s newspaper?”
  
- ★ Parents can involve even very young children in this activity. Ask children to tell you the names of things they recognize in the photograph.
  
- ★ Play a game to improve your power of observation. Parents and children should carefully look at the picture for a minute or two. Then cover the picture and take turns telling each other everything they can remember that was in the picture. (Children are often better at this game than their parents, so they may request this game often!)
  
- ★ Children can draw pictures of what happened before or after the photograph was taken. They can write their own stories to captions for their pictures, then share their work with family or friends.
  
- ★ Vocabulary is often the key to taking standardized tests. Challenge your child to name as many parts of an item in the photograph as possible. For example, a car has many parts: wheels, trunk, hood, windows, etc.

## **MODEL PROGRAM 2**

### **Reading Together**

#### ***Background Information***

Parents play the most important role in helping their children develop a lifelong interest in reading and in encouraging their children to read for pleasure and information. In this session, parents will learn how important it is to read with their children and will develop ways to use the newspaper to support their family reading.

In meeting the necessary standards for English Language Arts established by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, these activities are particularly effective in meeting standards 1, 3, 7, 9 and 12 (a listing of the standards is found on page 34).

#### ***Getting Started***

It is important for parents and children to read together. Point out that they have a tremendous influence on their children's reading patterns. When parents and schools work together, children can develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime.

Identify several advantages of using the newspaper for reading activities at home, and provide comments from the group about the role of the newspaper at home. List the advantages on an overhead projector, flipchart or blackboard. These advantages might include:

- ★ Convenience
- ★ Variety of subjects—something for everyone
- ★ A way to encourage children to learn about subjects that are new
- ★ Photographs and illustrations to stimulate interest
- ★ When parents read the newspaper, children will think reading is a “grown up” activity—it becomes more attractive.

Each participant should have a copy of today's newspaper to use in one or more of the following activities.

### **Activity 1**

Parents will scan today's newspaper to locate a story or report that would interest their child. In discussing their choice with the people at their table or in a small group, they should explain why they made that selection, how they would introduce the story to their child, and indicate which parts of the story they would read aloud.

Invite each participant to share their ideas with the group. (Do not require each participant to take part. Remember, not all parents read at the same level.)

Discuss ways to adapt this activity to use with children. Suggestions may include:

- ★ Parents may read an article about a local event or organization. Children should retell the story in their own words. Parents may write down the story if they wish.
- ★ Parents may read an article from today's newspaper about their child's favorite sports team. Or they may look for an article about a boy's or girl's team from the high school nearest to their home. The child will describe how the winners and losers may have felt.

### **Activity 2**

Parents will turn to the comics section in the newspaper. Do their children read the comics? Which comic strip is their child's favorite? Which is their favorite?

Parents should discuss ways to use the comics to stimulate their child to read. Suggestions might include:

- ★ Children may choose a favorite comic strip. Cut off the captions and have the children write new ones.
- ★ Encourage your child to read a favorite comic strip every day and talk about what is happening in the episode. What do they think may happen tomorrow?
- ★ Select a time when it is convenient for family members to be together. Take turns reading and talking about favorite comics.
- ★ Cut out a favorite comic strip that your child thinks others would enjoy. Make a scrapbook to give as a gift on a special occasion. Include information about what your family is doing.

### **Activity 3**

- ★ Ask your child to describe what comic strip characters are doing. What action is going on in the comic strip? What do you think the characters are feeling? What might they be thinking? Can you describe the character so someone else would recognize them without being able to see the comic strip?

Parents will read a local news story, and then discuss with the people at their table or in small groups about ways the story could affect their family.

Discuss why it is important to talk with children about local news affecting their lives (school news, elections, community events, crime). Invite volunteers to talk about how they might discuss a story or other local news with their children.

Encourage parents to watch the local television news with their children. The next day see if any of those same stories appear in the daily newspaper. How are the stories alike? How do they differ?

### **Activity 4**

Many newspapers include special features for young readers. If your newspaper has such a feature, use examples of today's or this week's feature to remind parents to watch for it and read it with their children. Other information that parents may want to share with their children includes:

- ★ School news
- ★ School lunch menus
- ★ Information about children's athletic events
- ★ Announcements of free programs
- ★ Church or religious organization events
- ★ Weather reports

### **MODEL PROGRAM 3**

#### **Talking Together**

##### ***Background Information***

Family conversation helps children develop thinking skills and spoken language. It also offers them a chance to explore their thoughts with people who care about them. In this session, parents will learn how talking helps their children's language development and will explore new ways to use the newspaper to promote family conversation.

In meeting the standards for the English Language Arts established by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, these activities are particularly effective in meeting Standards 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, and 12 (a listing of the standards is found on page 34).

##### ***Getting Started***

Discuss the importance of parents and children talking together and the benefits of these conversations for both children and adults. Invite members of the audience to tell how they encourage conversation with their children.

Identify advantages of using the newspaper to stimulate discussion with children. Ask the parents to list things in the newspaper that would be good discussion starters. They might include:

- ★ The wide variety of items (comics, movie reviews, television listings, letters to the editor, etc.). A typical daily newspaper probably includes at least one item of interest to every member of the family.
- ★ Newspapers help children learn about important current issues.
- ★ Newspapers often provide more in-depth coverage of events than television or radio. Children can see that there are many sides to an issue.
- ★ Invite comments from the group about recent items in the local newspaper that have sparked conversations in their homes.
- ★ Each participant should have a copy of today's newspaper to use in one or more of the following activities.

### **Activity 1**

Parents will scan today's newspaper headlines and photographs about people in the news. Ask them to identify two or more people they think their children would find interesting. Have them discuss with a partner or small group why these individuals would appeal to their children. Would those individuals have the same appeal for adults? Remind parents that the newspaper can provide both positive and negative role models for children.

Suggestions for adapting this activity to use with children might include:

- ★ With the group, develop questions to stimulate and direct conversation with children. These might include:
  - "Why do you think this person's picture is in today's newspaper?"
  - "Do you think this person would be pleased to see this picture?"
  - "What can you tell about the person from this picture?"
  - "If this person came to our house, what would you say?"
- ★ Highlight a "person of the week." Family members can take turns choosing someone from the newspaper stories and pictures. Then everyone can gather information from newspaper articles, TV and radio reports to learn more about this person's activities. All members of the family should explain why their choice should be the person of the week.

### **Activity 2**

Newspaper stories often provide opportunities for readers to explore a range of emotions—enjoyment, sadness, anger, sympathy and so on. Have the parents scan the newspaper to find two incidents that evoke different emotions, then discuss the examples with a partner or small group.

Suggestions for adapting this activity to use with children might include:

- ★ Parents will look for pictures that show people's expressions. Ask children how they think each person feels. Look for pictures that make children feel happy and sad. Then ask questions like, "What makes you happy? What makes you sad? Why does this picture make you feel that way?"
- ★ Children can be encouraged to cut out pictures of people who are happy and make a display of them. They can do the same for people who are sad. Display the artwork on the refrigerator or a family bulletin board.

### **Activity 3**

Point out the weather page in today's newspaper as a source of ideas for conversation. Ask parents to discuss how they use the weather page. Do they check to see the weather in other parts of the country?

Have parents make a list of people their children know in different parts of the country.

Suggestions for adapting this activity for use with children include:

- ★ With your child, look at the weather page in today's newspaper to see what effect the weather will have on the activities of their relatives or friends living in other places.
- ★ Look at the weather forecast and ask your child to select appropriate clothes for school or play.
- ★ Ask your child what changes in clothing would have to be made if you lived in the warmest place shown on today's weather map? In the coolest place on the map?

## **MODEL PROGRAM 4**

### **Exploring Topics**

#### ***Background Information***

The newspaper offers something for everyone—stories about sports, entertainment, politics, food, human interest, people, fashion, books, games, money and more. Newspaper stories often include the latest information on these subjects. Choosing topics that appeal to children reading about them over time is a way to encourage children to read the newspaper, extend their knowledge and develop new ideas and interests.

This program will help parents identify ways to explore topics in depth by using the newspaper. The specific topics and activities will, of course, be determined by the interests and abilities of the children, as well as the material available in today's newspaper.

In meeting the standards for the English Language Arts established by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, these activities are particularly effective in meeting standards 3, 7, and 12 (a listing of the standards is found on page 34).

#### ***Getting Started***

Parents will identify topics or themes that interest their children. Record these suggestions on the chalkboard, flipchart or overhead projector. Working alone or in small groups, parents should look through the newspaper to find articles that relate to those topics.

This activity should help parents realize that information on a given topic may appear in many sections of the newspaper. Information about pets, for example, might appear in the following places:

- ★ Classified ads (lost and found, pets for sale)
- ★ Community events (pet shows, informational meetings)
- ★ Local news (problems with pets in the community, proposed regulations)
- ★ Feature stories (focus on a famous or unusual pet)
- ★ Columns about pets or animals
- ★ TV listings (programs about animals or pets)

Discuss ways parents can encourage children to use the newspaper to sustain interest in a specific topic. Parents can:

- ★ Scan today's newspaper and point out articles on this subject to their children.
- ★ Take time to read and talk together about the articles.
- ★ Help children develop a file or scrapbook of information.
- ★ Take the child to the library to find other information on the topic.
- ★ Look through the TV listings for programs on the subject.

Parents should also remember to allow children to assume some of the responsibility for locating information and deciding what to do with it.

### **Activity 1**

Choose a topic such as pets. Discuss ways parents could use information in today's newspaper to help their children explore this topic. Develop charts listing advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of pets (cost of pet, cost of keeping a pet, space required, special care, local laws, etc.). Have children use their imaginations in discussing pets. "What would happen if we had an elephant for a pet?"

Ask children to pretend to be a pet they would like to have. Ask a child to tell a story from the point of view of the pet living in your home.

If children have a pet they might discuss how the weather may affect the pet. Children can learn responsibility for caring for a pet through some of these discussions.

### **Activity 2**

Parents will scan the newspaper for information about the community. The newspaper often includes listings of free events that may be of special interest to families. Families may want to keep a list of places in their community they would like to visit. On a special day the child could pick a place from the list to visit with the family.

### **Activity 3**

Have parents scan the newspaper for science information that may interest their children (space, robots, dinosaurs, the human body, weather). With a partner or in small groups, parents should discuss why these science topics would interest their children. Have the group share ideas on ways parents can help children learn more about the science ideas presented in the newspaper.

Parents might help their children develop a personal science notebook or journal for clippings and their own ideas about science. Pictures and headlines could be made into a collage.

# 7 Model Statements to Parents

These statements include suggestions for ways to introduce and conclude parent programs. Leaders should use these statements as background information, adapting their specific comments to the needs and interests of the audience.

*Sample:*

## **GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Be sure to introduce yourself, your co-presenters, the school's principal and the PTA/PTO representative at the beginning of the program. It is a good idea to ask all "official" representatives of other sponsoring groups to say a few words.

To introduce this program, ask parents to identify one thing that would help their children do well in school. Most will probably answer, "a love of reading." Explain: Children who enjoy reading can learn more about any topic that interests them. Parents can help their children develop this love of reading. Reading books to them often helps instill the reading habit. Another way is by reading the daily newspaper to and with your child. When your children see you reading, they learn many important things:

- ★ Reading is worthwhile and important.
- ★ Reading is something adults do every day.
- ★ People sometimes read to learn something.
- ★ Sometimes people read things just for fun.

As your children watch you read the newspaper, they also will learn that people respond to what they have read in a variety of ways: they read things aloud to others; they talk about the ideas; they invite others to read an interesting article; they laugh about things that are funny; they clip and file important information; they make telephone calls and sometimes they write letters. In short, people do not just read, they do something with what they have read.

*Sample:*

### **ICEBREAKER ACTIVITIES**

- ★ Have parents look through today's newspaper and find an article they think their child would enjoy. Have parents tell about the articles and why they would interest their children as they introduce themselves to the group.
- ★ Ask participants to introduce themselves to the group by telling which section of the newspaper they read first.
- ★ If the group is large and many participants do not know each other, develop a short scavenger hunt for items to be found in today's newspaper. Divide the participants into groups and let them see who can find all the items first. Items might include: today's date; someone who looks happy; a map of this state; a picture of a young person; a comic strip with an animal in it; etc.

*Sample:*

### **STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AT HOME**

Here are some reasons why reading at home with your children is so important.

- ★ Parents who read to and with their children demonstrate the importance of reading.
- ★ Parents are a key factor in developing a child's lifelong interest in reading and can help their children develop the habit of reading.
- ★ Parents who use a variety of reading materials (newspapers, books, magazines, recipes, directions, etc.) with their children provide experiences and vocabulary necessary for successful reading.
- ★ Children from homes where reading is important do better on standardized tests.

*Sample:*

**STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING WITH CHILDREN AT HOME**

- ★ Conversation with children stimulates their already natural curiosity. It answers their questions, encourages them to ask more and boosts their appetite for learning and their vocabulary.
- ★ Children learn about themselves and others through conversation.
- ★ Talking with children helps them clarify their ideas and helps them think more clearly.
- ★ When children talk with adults, they learn new words. They also may gather ideas that will help them develop reading and writing skills.

*Sample:*

**STATEMENTS ABOUT USING THE NEWSPAPER AS A SOURCE OF READING MATERIAL**

- ★ Newspapers present information on a wide variety of topics. There is something to interest nearly everyone.
- ★ Newspapers are inexpensive, convenient sources of information.
- ★ People read newspapers for different reasons: to learn something new; to check a fact; for self-improvement; for financial planning or for enjoyment. Children who see their parents reading the newspaper also can learn many different uses for reading.
- ★ The variety of stories in a newspaper encourage family discussion on a wide variety of topics.
- ★ By reading the newspaper, children learn more about local, state, national and world affairs.

*Sample:*

### **CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

Tonight we have tried only a few ideas for using the newspaper with your children. The booklet ***Learning Together*** includes several more activities that you can do at home with your children.

I hope you have begun to see that newspapers can be used with children who are learning to read, as well as with experienced readers. Whatever your child's reading ability and interest, you can use the newspaper to help encourage reading.

Here are some general suggestions to make your newspaper time more enjoyable:

- ★ Plan a regular time for reading the newspaper.
- ★ Let your kids see you reading the newspaper. Talk with them about what you are reading—the weather, TV listings, book reviews, advertisements, etc.
- ★ Read aloud and discuss articles that may interest your children.
- ★ If your newspaper includes a feature for young readers, watch for it, and read it with your children. Point out examples of children's art. Encourage children to illustrate and write about ideas in the children's section.
- ★ Ask children to find articles that interest them and talk with them about their own interests.

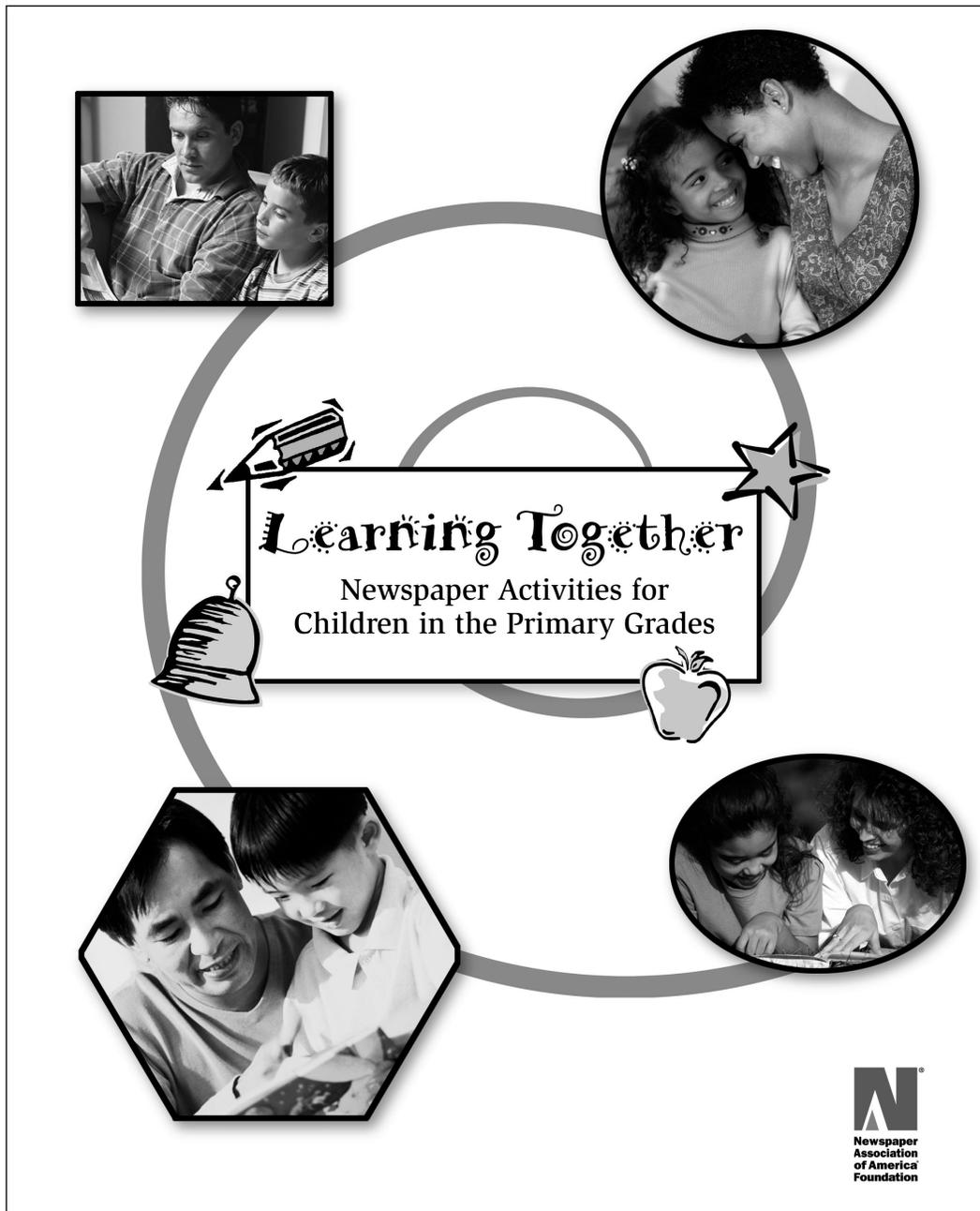


# Transparency Masters

A collage of newspaper headlines, in a variety of topics and type sizes, emphasizes the range and wide appeal of content in the newspaper:



Use the **Learning Together** logo to stimulate conversation about the importance of parents and children reading together



**Learning Together**  
Newspaper Activities for  
Children in the Primary Grades



**N**  
Newspaper  
Association  
of America  
Foundation

Key points to conclude your *Learning Together* program.

★ ***Read aloud to your children***

★ ***Talk about what you're reading***



★ ***Read the newspaper regularly***

★ ***Let children choose what they want to read***

★ ***Read together***



# Learning Together Evaluation Form

Please use this form to let us know your thoughts about the Learning Together program. Return it to the person who conducted the session. The ideas and suggestions you provide will be used in planning future Learning Together events.

**How did you hear about the Learning Together program?** (Check all that apply)

Notices from your PTA/PTO, school principal or reading council

Newspaper articles or advertisements

Radio or television announcements

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you plan to use any of the ideas and activities suggested by the Learning Together program leader?**

Yes  No

**Please indicate your overall impression of the Learning Together program you attended.**  
(Check one)

Excellent  Very Good  Average  Fair  Poor

**What suggestions do you have about the use of newspapers by parents and young people that might be included in a Learning Together program in the future?**



# Standards for English/Language Arts

*Created by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association.*

The vision guiding these standards is that all students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society. These standards assume that literacy growth begins before children enter school as they experience and experiment with literacy activities—reading and writing—and associate spoken words with their graphic representations. Recognizing this fact, these standards encourage the development of curriculum and instruction that make productive use of the emerging literacy abilities that children bring to school. Furthermore, the standards provide ample room for the innovation and creativity essential to teaching and learning. They are not prescriptions for particular curriculum or instruction.

Although we present these standards as a list, we want to emphasize that they are not distinct and separable. They are, in fact, interrelated and should be considered as a whole.

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, and classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, interactions with other readers and writers, knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, word identification strategies and understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language and genre to create, critique and discuss print and nonprint texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions and social roles.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion and the exchange of information).