Creating Sharing Time Conversations: Parents and Teachers Work Together

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Role of Oral Language

• “Oral language is the foundation for literacy. Children construct their understanding of the written word based on their oral language skills and their knowledge of the world around them.”

(Teale & Sulzby)
Making Changes

• I asked the teachers, What is it you want out of sharing time?
• They adapted the published program to their own goals and introduced it in their adaptation of the published program had several benefits:
  – It created a predictable structure for parents and children.
  – It allowed them to implemented a structured oral language program in their classroom.
  – It stimulated new ideas, motivating students to organize their thoughts and speak in complete sentences and encouraging parental involvement.

Parental Reactions

• Although a few parents questioned the need for a new sharing time structure—saying things like, "Why couldn’t a child just bring in a new toy to share, as older brothers and sisters had in the past?—most responded enthusiastically to the new opportunities to help their children with a school assignment and to talk to them regularly about age-appropriate subjects.

Problems Created

• Because children and parents prepared eagerly for the morning ritual, sharing time now consumed far more of their already full kindergarten day.
• Many parents responded to the teachers’ letters by writing notes for a child’s performance or trying to help the child to write. One teacher explained, “They (meaning the parents) think of it as a project rather than a conversation. School was a paper-and-pencil task for them, and they interpret school requests through the lens of their own experience.”
Impact on Student Self-Esteem

• The teachers believed their kindergarteners learned far more about listening in sharing time now that their classmates had something interesting to say. They reported that students waited eagerly for their turns to share, for their moment in the sun. For example:
  • ...one child who was scheduled to have her tonsils taken out on her regular sharing day...insisted that her mother allow her to stop at school on the way to the hospital so she wouldn’t miss her turn for sharing.

New Relationships Formed

• Perhaps just as important as what the children learned is what parents and teachers learned. With my assistance, the teachers organized parent forums to explain their ideas about sharing and homework. These forums became a place for informal conversations and the exchange of ideas.

Celebration
For More Information...

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Questions?

Thank You