

Project DADS: Training Fathers in Early Literacy Skills Through Community-University Partnerships

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Abstract

In the United States, mothers participate in literacy activities with their young children more often than fathers. However, fathers have recently begun to assume a larger portion of this role. This report describes Project DADS (Dads as Developmental Specialists), a parent involvement-training project that serves fathers and other male caregivers interested in participating in early literacy activities with their child(ren). Project DADS provides seminars under community-university partnerships in the areas of early social interaction, school home involvement, reading books, prewriting and writing, environmental print, storytelling, and technology. This report describes a recent community university partnership and the preliminary results of training conducted under this partnership for 19 fathers in New Mexico. Also discussed is the Project's training efforts in developing community-university partnerships in California.

Introduction

When USA Today asked adults to recall who read to them when they were young, only 7% reported that it was their fathers; in contrast, 56% said that it was their mothers (Hall & Parker, 1999). This finding is consistent with the literature

on practice and applied research in children's literacy which has traditionally focused on mother child, not father child, interaction (Marvin & Mirenda, 1993). The lack of focus on male involvement is unfortunate in view of Levine, Murphy, and Wilson's (1993) research on exemplary programs:

Father involvement has important implications for early childhood programs. It suggests that programs can make a positive contribution by helping fathers—or other men—develop a warm, comfortable relationship with their children. And it suggests that how men relate to children is influenced by how they think and feel about their role, how others perceive them, and whether or not they have a support system. (p. 9)

A lack of male participation in literacy development also seems unfortunate in view of more recent data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). These data indicate that “children do better in school when their fathers are involved in their schools, regardless of whether their fathers live with them” (p. 77).

Fortunately, the level of male involvement in their children's lives has dramatically changed during the last half decade. As Goldsmith (2000) has described it, “fatherhood is in a renaissance” (p. 94). There appear to be several reasons for this perceived shift. Goldsmith recounts a recent study conducted by the Radcliff Public Policy Center that indicates a growing desire today among men for a level of intimacy with their children that their own fathers never achieved. Bailey (1997) speculates that the increased involvement is due to a larger number of women in the workplace. Berger (2000) points to a growing number of single fathers. An additional contributing factor is a continued emphasis from state and federal levels for family involvement in early intervention and preschool programs for children with disabilities and those who are at risk (Ortiz, Stile, & Brown, 1999).

The trend toward fathers' involvement in their children's literacy development is reflected in the findings from a study of 47 father child pairs in Southern New Mexico (Ortiz et al., 1999; Ortiz & Stile, 1996; Stile & Ortiz, 1999). The researchers found that fathers were engaged in a wide variety of literacy activities. Some fathers engaged their children in activities involving environmental print such as reading road signs, logos on the sides of buildings, and billboards. Others reported that they read TV ads, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, maps, telephone directories, or technical manuals with their children. One father child pair read interactive children's stories on the Internet. Many of the fathers and their children were also engaged in writing activities such as coloring and tracing letters. Fathers' involvement in early literacy activities was attributed to a desire to give their children a head start for school and to develop a close relationship.

Community Partnerships

Public Policy

The need to reduce the dropout rate and improve students' academic success was addressed by many professionals and governmental organizations during the 1990s. The links among home, school, and parental involvement are recognized as extremely important in increasing academic achievement. This recognition of parents as their child's first teachers and of the contributions they continue to make throughout the child's education is supported through research (American Association of School Administrators, 1991; Boyer, 1995; California Task Force on School Readiness, 1988; Center for the Future of Children, 1995; Coleman, 1997; Henderson & Berla, 1994). This emphasis on parental involvement began with a report from The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). In *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, the Commission states,

You bear a responsibility to participate actively in your child's education. You should encourage more diligent study and discourage satisfaction with mediocrity and the attitude that says "let it slide"; monitor your child's study habits; encourage your child to take more demanding rather than less demanding courses; nurture your child's curiosity, creativity, and confidence; and be an active participant in the work of the schools. (p. 35)

Public and political sentiment towards parent involvement contributes to this positive support. A report from the U.S. Department of Education (1986) emphasized the "curriculum of the home," saying, "Parents can do many things at home to help their children succeed in school . . . They do this through their daily conversations, household routines, attention to school matters, and affectionate concern for their children's progress" (p. 7).

Relative to literacy development and parent involvement, *America Goes Back to School, Partner's Activity Kit, 1996-97*, emphasizes these two areas as important challenges for the nation (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). The Department of Education (1966) published a booklet to help parents tutor their children. The booklet, titled *Read Write Now: The Partners Tutoring Program* (1996), includes a myriad of suggestions that parents can use to help their children develop early literacy skills. And, Binkley's (1988) *Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Parents Can Do*, emphasizes the importance of parents in the reading process:

Learning to read begins at home. Just as your children naturally learned to talk by following your example, they may naturally learn a great deal about reading before they ever set foot inside a school building. (p. 1)

Once thought necessary only for high-risk students, such as children with health problems, disabilities, neglect, and abuse, it is now agreed that all children need the support of family involvement in their education.

The Role of the University

Colleges and universities have historically been involved in the community partnership matrix by establishing research and teaching centers devoted to the study of children (Berger, 2000). In 1911, the University of Iowa instituted a child study center for the purpose of investigating the “best scientific methods of conserving and developing the normal child, the dissemination of the information acquired by such investigation, and the training of students for work in such fields” (National Society for the Study of Education, 1929, p. 286).

Initial efforts at distributing research findings to parents took place during the 1920s when programs in parent education were offered throughout Iowa. Following in Iowa’s footsteps, the Yale Psycho-Clinic and The Merrill-Palmer School of Homemaking contributed to the study of children and the understanding of the development of parent education (National Society for the Study of Education, 1929). Much like these early pioneers of child and family research, Project DADS (Dads as Developmental Specialists) at both California State University, Fullerton and New Mexico State University disseminates valuable research data on parent involvement in the form of published journal articles, brochures, newsletters, book chapters, and presentations made at international, national, regional, and state conferences.

Project DADS: Defining Community-University Partnerships

Project DADS staff defines a community-university training partnership as “collaboration between support systems and the priority that each school and community agency place on preparing the local populace for academic achievement.” If, for example, a local school feels little need to have parents in their classrooms or involved in the children’s education, then the partnership between the university’s parent training project and that school is defined as distal or consultative at best. On the other hand, a community-university partnership is defined as close or strong when a working relationship is developed on the belief that together they can increase student academic achievement through parent involvement and training. Various questions are asked from the outset to insure a match between the project

and the school/community agency. Whom do school and community agency personnel wish to serve? How do they wish to serve them? And, through what training method do they wish to accomplish this? Project DADS staff takes a proactive role in assisting schools and agencies in answering these questions. The project's staff members actively contact non-profit agencies, school administrators, and parent support groups to determine if training in early literacy skill-building is an area of need or interest. If there is a positive response, the wheels are set into motion to conduct a "needs assessment" of the parents that the community agency or school serves. Phone calls are made, letters mailed, and meetings held for the purpose of determining parent interest in the training.

After determining a need for Project DADS training, fathers are contacted and asked the times and days that the training will be convenient for them. Training seminars are scheduled and fathers are informed of the first and subsequent sessions. The responsibilities of Project DADS trainers include seeking school, agency, and parent input, arranging the location and time of the seminars, administering the training, and offering periodic post-training classes.

In another type of training partnership with local schools and community agencies, Project DADS staff may be contracted to "train the trainers." Through this method of parent training, no direct contact is made between fathers and Project DADS staff. Instead, Project DADS trainers work with school personnel and agency staff in preparing them to work directly with the fathers. They go through an intensive training program, which consists of 6 to 7 three-hour meetings. At the end of the training, school personnel and agency staff contact parents and schedule times and days to deliver the curriculum. The "train the trainers" model is often preferred based on the premise that school and agency staff are more familiar with the families than Project DADS staff. This familiarity allows parents to feel comfortable and, therefore, more receptive to suggestions and new ideas.

Project DADS trainers have found many benefits to developing a community-university partnership:

- Schools, universities, and community agencies become familiar with the neighborhood "family cultures," thus allowing them to better serve their needs.
- Parents learn many viable ways to become involved with their children's education and literacy development.
- Children's academic achievement increases.
- Parent training is based on theory-driven "best practices."
- Collaborative relationships between schools, communities, and families are established and maintained.
- Funding for training emanates from a number of sources, such as local schools, universities, and community programs.

- Parents have access to resources from universities, local schools, and community agencies, such as computers, information packets, and childcare services.

The Project DADS Model

Project DADS is a joint venture of California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) and New Mexico State University (NMSU). Funding for CSUF's Project DADS has been obtained through local school districts and intra- and extramural university programs. The New Mexico Department of Health currently funds NMSU's Project DADS, while earlier funding had been obtained from the New Mexico Department of Education and Eastern New Mexico University's Center for Teaching Excellence.

Project DADS has undergone a metamorphosis. What initially started as a brief, two hour-a-month informal chat with fathers on the importance of their role in early literacy activities has now grown into a major training program. Project DADS is now in its seventh year of operation. The project's model consists of nine components; seven of these components are specific curriculum training modules. "Recruitment" and "Authentic observation" will be discussed first, followed by the seven curriculum modules. Lastly, assessment of the project will be described.

Recruitment

Recruitment is the initial component of the DADS model. The typical process is to contact local programs serving young children, such as schools and private organizations, to determine interest in the training. If interest is indicated, a follow-up meeting is arranged to discuss various issues such as scheduling, incentives, and recruiting fathers. Specific details from the most recent New Mexico partnership will be discussed below, with a brief description of the California State University, Fullerton partnership to follow.

Authentic observation

An optional second step in the DADS model is authentic observation (Trussell-Cullen, 1996). This component has been retained to permit the project to observe male literacy activities in the home prior to training for baseline purposes. The authentic observation component has not been employed to date due to difficulties experienced in the recruitment of desired numbers of fathers for training and deadlines imposed by funding agencies.

The Curriculum Training Modules

Social interaction. Project DADS staff trains fathers to engage in social interaction (e.g., singing, talking, and playing) with their young children as early as the first month of infancy. For example, fathers learn to use reciprocal play in relation to emerging developmental milestones. During this segment, fathers brainstorm and share their responses to sample milestones that they learn to treat as cues from their children. Play activities organized around milestones such as naming objects, imitating, and scribbling provide positive language opportunities that become the foundation for later reading and writing.

Reading books. Most early childhood professionals (Kupetz & Green, 1997; Soundy, 1997) recognize the value of reading books to young children. Based upon their research, Allison and Watson (1994) suggested that caregivers begin to read to newborns during the first three months since the sound of the reader's voice while being held seems to be very comforting to such young children. As reported by Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985), reading to young children has been found to be the single most important activity for building later reading success.

In addition to obtaining an introductory level knowledge base in the benefits of reading to young children, participating fathers receive suggestions on selection of books, guidelines for reading such as choosing times when children seem most alert (e.g., bath time), and sources of children's books such as local public libraries, bookstores, and garage sales. Upon conclusion of this segment of training, fathers choose a gift from among an array representing 13 types of previously discussed children's books. If a follow-up training session is involved, fathers are asked to read this book to their child and to reflect upon the results of the assigned reading activity at the next session.

Prewriting and writing. In this segment, fathers learn that prewriting activities involving grasping can begin as early as the first month when the thumb grip emerges. To help ensure that fathers apply this portion of the training, the project gives fathers a prewriting kit that consists of materials assembled at local craft stores that can be used for prewriting activities such as tracing lines, coloring, and copying shapes. Fathers also learn to complement the formal writing instruction provided at school by creating a writing center at home. During this segment, instruction is provided on how to recognize children's readiness for writing, the use of child-sized furniture, how to teach children appropriate posture, positioning of paper for left- and right-handed children, and how to teach young writers to hold a writing instrument (Utah State University, 1998a).

Environmental print. In addition to reading books, young children have exposure to other sources of print in their environment. DADS staff trains fathers to

engage their children in planned or spontaneous environmental print activities in:

- the home (cookbooks and food containers),
- the media (television and internet),
- recreation and hobbies (sports cards and crossword puzzles),
- the private sector (billboards and marquees), and
- the public sector (historical markers and highway/road signs).

School-home interaction. Fathers learn that participation in their children's education results in benefits such as improved student achievement. Project DADS staff provides the fathers with options for levels of participation, examples of involvement at each level, and engages trainees in self-assessments of actual and desired levels of participation.

Technology. Participating fathers learn that low-tech and high-tech applications can be used to promote literacy across all other areas of the DADS training. Economical low-tech reading applications such as board books with accompanying story cassettes are introduced. High-tech applications that are discussed include communicating with teachers via e-mail (i.e., home-school interaction) and promoting writing by using word processing. At the conclusion of the technology training, fathers receive handouts listing appropriate web sites for parents, children, and teachers including those that are specific to literacy.

Storytelling. Fathers are encouraged to develop literacy and pre-literacy skills through storytelling activities. The importance of communication between parent and child through storytelling is emphasized. Storytelling helps parents and children to see the relationship between prior knowledge and experience, and how this connects with the larger world of text and print. Family histories and life experiences are examples of stories that fathers can share with their children.

Project Assessment

To determine the impact of Project DADS, the fathers participating in the training are assessed in two phases. The first assessment phase takes place at the initial training session. A pre-test is given to the parents to assess their level of knowledge and experience in early literacy practices. They are also asked questions on child-care responsibilities, involvement in literacy experiences, and academic achievement expectation as they relate to parental values. The information collected allows project staff to work with fathers' current level of knowledge, training, and beliefs toward reading and writing with children. Curriculum is then modified when appropriate.

The second assessment phase is administered during the last training session. Fathers are asked questions about the information they have received during specific parts of the training. The questions attempt to measure how much information

has been retained. The dads are also asked to express at least one new way they can share an early literacy experience with their children. This is to determine if fathers have synthesized the training material and can apply it outside the context of the training classroom.

A Recent Partnership in New Mexico

TRESCO TOTS-A Community Agency

TRESCO provides services to non-school aged children and adults in Central and Southern New Mexico. TRESCO TOTS is a home-and center-based early intervention program funded by the New Mexico Department of Health. TOTS currently serves over 300 families in three counties. TRESCO is an acronym formed by blending the Spanish word for three and the first two letters of the word counties. TOTS is formed by blending the initial letters of TRESCO Outreach and Training Services.

Children are eligible for TOTS if they are between birth and three years and have a developmental delay in one or more areas of development, or exhibit an established biological, medical, or environmental risk of developmental delay. Goals and objectives for children enrolled in TOTS are designed to promote development that permits them to engage in daily routines and activities appropriate to the home and other everyday settings such as school and the community (Utah State University, 1998b).

The Project DADS and TOTS partnership agreement called for Project DADS to provide trainers, prewriting kits, and children's books, using funds supplied by the Department of Health. TOTS and Project DADS shared the costs of duplication and preparation of instructional materials such as transparencies. TOTS provided the meeting rooms and audio-visual equipment, recruited fathers for training, and provided incentives for attendance. In addition to arranging literacy development training for their male clients in Las Cruces and Anthony, TOTS helped arrange training for two additional New Mexico early intervention programs by inviting Project DADS staff to present the model at a regional meeting hosted by TOTS in Las Cruces. As a result, DADS also delivered training to fathers at the Mescalero Apache Community Center in June 2000.

Project DADS staff always insists that community programs provide incentives such as meals during training sessions. The community programs provided meals during all training sessions conducted in 2000. Breakfast burritos and enchilada lunches were provided at Anthony TOTS. Pizza and foot-long sandwiches were served at Las Cruces TOTS. At the Mescalero Apache Community Center, train-

ees were treated to a potluck lunch featuring American Indian dishes. Incentives are considered necessary because of the difficulties experienced recruiting fathers for training activities. Recruitment of fathers is difficult for a combination of reasons. These include the lingering perception that literacy is primarily the mother's role and the thought that parent group skill training, such as Project DADS, only meets the needs of about 20% of parents whose children are involved in special programs (Kroth, 1985).

Preliminary Results

Project DADS contracted with the New Mexico Department of Health to train 30 fathers between Spring 2000 and 2001. To date, 19 fathers (63%) have completed training and 17 have participated in follow-up interviews. Preliminary results indicate that 100% of the interviewees have applied the training and found it useful. In the area of reading, the fathers reported that they are now reading books to their children at bedtime as well as other times throughout the day. Their environmental print activities include reading billboards, street signs, comic strips, magazines, and cereal boxes. In the area of prewriting, fathers reported that they are using the materials supplied by the project to work on grasping, scribbling, and drawing shapes. Fathers and their children are also working together writing names, letters of the alphabet, and numbers. One hundred percent of the interviewees said they would appreciate additional training in literacy development. When one father was asked what type of additional literacy training he wanted, he replied, "Everything! I was the youngest in my family and have never had to take care of children before."

Project DADS in California

California's Project DADS is approximately three years old. An extension of the New Mexico Project, it has grown tremendously since establishing itself at California State University, Fullerton. Housed at the Special Education Department, Project DADS is seen as a tool to remediate and curtail the academic underachievement of at-risk and special needs students in early literacy development. Currently, funding for the project comes primarily from university and local school sources. The project's staff also volunteers their time to assist schools and agencies with little or no funding. A director, assistant director, and various graduate assistants staff the project.

A principal of one of the local elementary schools in Orange County has allowed Project DADS to work primarily at its site to train parents and collect data. During the two-year partnership, the project and school have mutually benefited in various ways. Because 65% of the school's student population is Hispanic/Latino, train-

ing and research is conducted from a multicultural perspective. Also, students at CSUF who are majoring in education, social work, and child development are given opportunities to work with trained staff in parent training sessions. To date, short parent surveys have been the commonly used tool to gather data. However, plans are being finalized to conduct a longitudinal study whereby Project DADS staff will follow a cohort of at-risk (based on test scores) kindergarten students for five years. The fathers of these children will receive training to determine the impact of the project on children's academic achievement. The cohort of students will be matched with a control group of similar students. In the past, project trainers have provided training to fathers whose children were enrolled in Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades. Each training session lasts approximately two hours with 15-minute breaks interspersed throughout this time period. Pizza is often provided for dinner, and coffee and rolls are offered during breaks.

Project DADS has also received a warm welcome from other school districts within the Southern California region. Community organizations, such as Head Start and the Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled, have shown increased interest in Project DADS. In addition, there are plans to seek state and federal funds to initiate the development of a national training center.

Serving Diverse Populations

The goal of Project DADS is to assist fathers in recognizing the importance of their involvement in children's education, particularly in early literacy development. The project's underlying philosophy is that the training is only as effective as the need it meets. In meeting this need, the project is sensitive to parents and children from diverse populations. This includes parents of children with special needs or at-risk, and families from diverse cultural backgrounds. In actual training sessions, Project DADS staff modifies the curriculum to the nuances of the family culture.

In addressing diversity, initial training seminars begin with each father's current reading and writing interest, that is, their "literacy comfort zone." For example, if a father feels uncomfortable reading a Harry Potter or Three Little Pigs book to his 10-year-old daughter in English, then Project DADS trainers will recommend that he read these materials in his native language. The staff members may also suggest other types of reading materials he might use. This may include both children's and adult literature. This is based on the idea that if father and child share a joint interest in the literature they are reading, as well as communicate in a language they both feel comfortable speaking, the activity will likely be engaged in for longer periods of time (Ortiz, 1992). The projects staff takes into account the following factors when

working with fathers:

- The reason fathers participate in reading and writing activities,
- The type of literacy materials that fathers and their children engage in,
- The strategy fathers want to use in sharing reading and writing activities with their children,
- The significance of personal and familial needs on the reading and writing process, and
- The role that Project DADS can play in assisting fathers to accomplish these goals.

The Impact of Culture

To understand parent involvement in early literacy activities, project staff examines the families' culture within the social, economic, and political contexts of their everyday lives (Taylor, 1997). Taylor addressed the importance of supporting family literacy programs based on cultural diversity:

It is essential that literacy programs recognize and honor not only the diversity of literacies that exist within families, but also the communities and cultures of which they are a part. The culture of the community and the experiences of the families who live in the community are an essential part of all literacy programs. This implies that program developers should respect local definitions of problems, needs, resources, and preferred courses of action. (p. 4)

When Project DADS trainers work with fathers, they must realize that engaging in reading and writing activities can take many forms for many reasons (Ortiz, 2000). For example, a father can read about the political turmoil in his homeland, the baseball scores of his favorite teams, a storybook to his child, and the current job ads, as well as write letters to a relative and his child's teacher – all to achieve separate but specific goals. Project staff encourages fathers to share each of these reading and writing activities with their children. Family literacy should be viewed as activities continually in flux, being changed and modified by a number of economic, social, political, familial, and personal factors to fit the need of the moment. Reading involves gaining knowledge in an area of one's choice. This knowledge includes the culture of the family that by its very nature is woven into the fabric of everyday life.

Working with parents of at-risk and special needs children

The importance of developing literacy skills in at-risk and special needs chil-

dren is paramount to Project DADS. In particular, attention is given to the child's learning needs and how this is affecting the acquisition of specific literacy skills, such as letter recognition, word comprehension, and pronunciation. Children with disabilities face great risks in relation to literacy development because of low parental expectation levels. For example, Light and Kelford-Smith (1993) found that parents of young children with disabilities ranked making friends and the development of communication and self-care skills above literacy development, while parents of their non-disabled peers gave literacy a higher priority.

In working with fathers who have children with disabilities, Project DADS staff recommends that they collaborate with teachers and other school professionals to outline workable plans in addressing their children's literacy needs. They are asked to share these plans with project trainers so that they can make appropriate recommendations during training sessions. Although it is commonly assumed that academic learning concerns are addressed at the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings held at the school, staff members encourage parents to meet with teachers during the year and ask questions regarding strategies they can use to help develop their children's reading and writing skills. For example, the speech pathologist may suggest various ideas on how to structure reading-aloud activities for children who stutter. A physical therapist can address gross and fine motor exercises that aid in grasping objects, such as pen and paper. And the special education teacher can suggest ways to work with hyperactive behavior, thus helping the child to remain seated while reading a book.

Project DADS staff encourages parent-teacher collaboration and suggests ways to help children develop literacy skills. Parents should be given all available information on how they can minimize the effects of the disability on their children's developmental process while at the same time building a positive bond between parent and child. Literacy skill-building strategies are offered to fathers with this twofold objective in mind. This is important because without fully understanding the impact of a disability on the learning process, parent involvement can result in a frustrating learning experience – for both parent and child. With guidance provided by teachers, agency staff members, and Project DADS trainers, shared reading and writing activities can be a fun and interesting learning experience for both the father and child.

Conclusion

As Trussel-Cullen (1996) has suggested, “the foundations of literacy are laid at home during the early years” (p. 176). The work described above outlines a parent-training model that, through a community-university partnership, attempts to lay the foundation of early literacy within the home environment. This paper

also provided a rationale for involvement of fathers in their children's early literacy development and described the Project DADS training model. Although these were primarily fathers of at-risk and special needs children, the strategies offered are very appropriate for children who are non-disabled.

There are two implications when considering fathers as "educators" of their young children in early literacy skills. First, school- and community-based programs addressing early literacy skill-building may wish to include specific strategies to assist fathers to help their young children improve reading and writing skills. Teachers and agency staff members can assist fathers in identifying activities that aid in the development of specific literacy skills, such as sentence construction, spelling, word recognition, and writing techniques. Fathers can participate in interesting and enjoyable ways to help their children understand the connection that exists between printed words and the words' function. Fathers can also serve as literacy role models and provide the motivation and encouragement to read. They can be encouraged not only to attend PTO, open house, and other school related functions, but share the significance of these activities with their children by reading about upcoming events through letters, flyers, and memoranda sent home by the school.

Second, with fathers as active participants in early literacy practices, children can view both parents as resources and "meaning makers" of their environment. For many parents, engaging in literacy is an everyday experience. However, parents may not realize the benefits that are associated with reading and writing in the presence of their children. In demonstrating and discussing the meaning in which literacy practices occur, parents assist children in understanding the function and purpose of print. Parents play a significant role in the education of their young children. Encouraging and supporting parents' efforts in helping their children take their first steps in learning to read and write is a goal well worth achieving.

Increasing the level of male involvement in early literacy programs can present quite a challenge. It is often difficult to recruit fathers to attend Project DADS training. This may be due to cultural and gender stereotyping or economic responsibilities in locations where, historically, fathers worked and mothers provided childcare. However, a shift toward increased male involvement in early literacy development can bring many rewards. Fathers can engage their children in a myriad of activities that impact reading and writing. Through the recruitment efforts of community-university partnerships and the delivery of a training module that is fun and interesting, parents can help their children learn to read and write.

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Successful partnerships draw on the skills and experience of early childhood professionals in diverse fields to provide holistic approaches to supporting children's learning and development (Kelley, 1996). Evidence indicates that children, families and professionals all benefit from partnerships in which knowledge and experience is shared (Wesley and Buysse, 2001; Tayler, 2006; McWayne, et al., 2008; Bruder, 2010). Collaborative partnerships support inclusive practice. Universally available services are inclusive of all children, including those with a disability or developmental delay and a description of Project DADS, a training program for fathers participating in early literacy activities with their children. show entire record " . Journal Title" Empowering fathers of disadvantaged preschoolers to take a more active role in preparing their children for literacy success at school. Reports & Papers. Approaches to family literacy: Exploring the possibilities. Other. Disclaimer: Use of the above resource is governed by Research Connections' Terms of Use. Project DADS provides seminars under community-university partnerships in the areas of early social interaction, school home involvement, reading books, prewriting and writing, environmental print, storytelling, and technology. This report describes a recent community university partnership and the preliminary results of training conducted under this partnership for 19 fathers in New Mexico. Parents involved with intentional literacy training reported that they gained greater information and used what was learned with their child more often in the home over parents who attended trainings without specific tools provided (Doyle & Zhang, 2011; Ortiz & Stile, 2002)" Providing Training to Fathers in Early Literacy Through Community-University Partnerships.