

Activities for Developing a Literacy-Rich Environment

Take Home Book and Activity Bag/Parent Pantry

Most families appreciate ideas and materials they can use to help their children develop early literacy skills. Through this activity children will:

- develop early interests and abilities in print
- enjoy participating in home literacy activities
- connect reading and writing with a variety of art, music and other experiences.

Directions: The following are ideas for making an assortment of take home activity packs for home use. Each pack should contain a list of the included materials, directions for using the materials, and a date for the return of the kit and all non-consumable materials to the classroom.

Take Home Book Bag: Fill a canvas bag or book bag with a stuffed animal (named by the children in the group or class), two or three books related to a particular theme or to the stuffed animal included, and a journal for a family member to record what the child says about his experiences while the animal was visiting. Encourage children to draw and write on a page in the journal, as well. Children will enjoy sharing their journal page with classmates when the bag is returned to school. Ideas could include a stuffed bear and books about bears—*Corduroy* and *Can't You Sleep Little Bear?* or a mouse and related books, such as *Country Mouse, Town Mouse* and *Noisy Nora*.

Take Home Literacy Sacks: Fill a container with a book and several art, music, movement or writing materials for children to use in responding to the book. For example, a plastic mouse cage could contain the book, *Mouse Paint*, and three plastic mice, white construction paper, three containers, and red, blue, and yellow paint for children to use in acting out the story through art.

Parent Pantry: The Head Start program in Quincy, Illinois has a *Parent Pantry* stocked with a variety of items, including diapers, health and beauty items, small toys, writing and art materials, and children's books. Families can check out book bags containing a book and suggested discussion questions and follow-up activities. Each family returning a sheet with a child's drawing and dictated sentence receives a \$.50 coupon to be used in the *Parent Pantry*. (Note: There is a maximum amount of coupons per family allowed each month.)