Opening Doors to Early Literacy Workshops
-programs for very young children-
by
Dr. James L. Thomas

#1 "Ready to Read"  
wiki site: rtor.pbworks.com
Early literacy, what children need to know about reading and writing before they actually learn to read and write, is crucial to success. Participants will learn about the six early reading skills, how they relate to brain development, and basic ways to integrate them into daily life. Participants will be able to define the meaning of “early literacy”; list the six essential early literacy skills and describe ideas to incorporate them into daily routines; practice ways to read picture books that dramatically increase language development; and understand and apply the dialogic reading method when sharing a picture book.  
(Participants are requested to bring a picture book.)

#2 "Language Play for Infants" (newborn to 12 months)  
wiki site: itsybitsybabies.pbworks.com
Little ones quickly become willing participants when they watch an adult focusing attention directly on them. Typically non-walkers and non-talkers engage with their eyes and ears and react with smiles and intense staring. They want stimulation. Therefore, pleasant, joyful, memorable ways to accomplish this goal need to be planned and provided to promote awareness of themselves and others. The fast-paced program of body movement, songs, yoga, and signing may be replicated using the same or adapted sequence in a library setting, at home, or in a child care environment. Participants will learn ways of organizing a setting that will be conducive and age-appropriate; providing content that will maintain interest and engage little ones; sharing activities such as songs, body movement, and books; and encouraging exercise and signing activities. Three offerings of this program will be discussed: “Baby, oh Baby: Books, Signing, and Songs for Expectant Parents”; “Itsy Bitsy Babies for Mothers and Others”; and “Man in the Moon for Male Caregivers.”  
(Participants are requested to bring a teddy bear and a blanket.)

#3 “The Young and the Restless: Activities and Ideas for Captivating and Communicating with Ones”
wiki site: toddlericon.pbworks.com
Young children learn quickly and easily by watching and participating in age-appropriate, meaningful, and well planned activities. The format of these activities may be applied to any locale, even the home environment. Activities based on research in learning theory that have been successfully put into practice with one-year-olds will be demonstrated, practiced, and discussed. Participants will learn ways of introducing concepts such as alphabet, counting, shapes, and colors; developing self-concept; applying selection criteria for “developmentally appropriate” book titles; using rhythm, movement, and songs in everyday events; integrating foreign languages with real objects; encouraging exercise and signing activities; and providing an opportunity for kinesthetic experiences.

#4 “Making Story/Circle Times Memorable for 2s, 3s, and 4s”  
wiki site: 2s3s4s.pbworks.com
Young children deserve to experience age-appropriate books that demonstrate early literacy skills. When such titles are presented using unique and creative techniques, this increases the likelihood that children will grasp language patterns and encourage usage in their everyday lives. Participants will learn how to identify books appropriate for each age; to present books in memorable ways; and to use songs and signing to extend story/circle times.

Note: Each participant receives a CD containing words and music to all songs shared.

The presenter has 30 years in youth services as a public school elementary and secondary librarian, a university professor for 17 years in a graduate library school, and most recently 12 years of experience teaching and working to promote early literacy awareness with adults and their little ones. The specific programs for very young children were developed over these past years while practicing in the Pacific Northwest/USA where Dr. Thomas was a children’s librarian and program specialist for these age groups.

In October of 2009, he, along with two colleagues, traveled to Australia giving nine workshops of "Opening Doors to Early Literacy" in Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra, Tasmania, and Melbourne, for local public library children's departments and child care facilities. The summers of 2010 and 2011 he returned for a total of 20 weeks at the invitation of the state library governments providing 147 workshops and 54 demonstration story/circle times on early literacy skills throughout the country.

Please contact Dr. James L. Thomas c/o his email address earlyliteracyworkshops@live.com for inquiries, references or bookings.

Handouts can be sent well in advance of each presentation for duplication.  
Dr. Thomas is certified as a "Professional Master" with the Texas Trainer Registry.