

# K-1 READING NIGHT

## Nicolet Elementary School Kaukauna, Wisconsin

The K-1 Reading Night started when our school principal, Nan Bunnow, got together with our reading specialists Julie Schwartzbauer and Lou Mae Russo, and teachers, Kris Mielke, and Marilyn Schmidelkofer. Frustration was expressed by parents and teachers. Parents wanted to help their children read and didn't know how. Teachers needed parents to be consistent with the method being taught at school.

Kindergarten and first grade teachers, including the English as a Second Language teacher and intern, worked together to coordinate the evening. The activity allowed our partnership team to focus on three of the six types of involvement. Parents communicated with the teachers about how to help their children learn to read and other concerns (Type 2-Communicating). Volunteers supervised siblings not involved in the program (Type 3-Volunteering). Parents learned how to help their children learn at home using the techniques taught by the teachers (Type 4-Learning at Home).

The staff started the event with the families attending a short session on how to guide their children's reading and writing development. Parents were given *Help Your Child Learn to Read*, a free booklet provided by the United States Department of Education, and other handouts that they could take home to use as a reference guide when reading and writing with their children. The parents were able to ask questions of the teachers and interact with their child in a learning environment. Parents were then asked to fill out a survey, before finishing the evening by going to the school library to pick out a book to read with their child.

Results were measured by the survey. Parents were asked questions about what they had learned; if the information presented was useful and easy to understand; if there was anything else they would like to learn; and if they would recommend the session to other parents. Overall, all parents involved were satisfied with the event. They were eager to learn how to help their children learn. Information presented was easy to understand and was found to be very useful. All parents surveyed said they didn't need any more information, and they would recommend the session to other parents.

The staff faced a few challenges in planning the evening. They wanted to keep the evening simple. They didn't want to overwhelm the parents with too much information at once. They also wanted to make the evening easy to attend so that all families could participate.

Some changes for next year might include having a presentation at the school open house. Staff would like to offer the session twice a year. Once at the beginning, and once at the end of the year, so parents can see the progress made. Including the second grade would also be a benefit to reinforce and build on reading skills.

Joyce Olson, Parent Liaison  
(920) 766-0441