

JUMP START TO READING

Cleveland Elementary School
Clayton, North Carolina

Jump Start to Reading was designed by our Action Team, and implemented by our school staff. Our goal in planning this activity was to increase shared reading at home for kindergarten and first grade students, and to provide parents with knowledge about reading skills and to encourage them to help their children learn at home. We began the practice during the 1998-99 school year, and plan to continue it for the next two years.

Two Reading Recovery teachers conducted a workshop to discuss effective reading strategies with parents of K-1 students and regular classroom teachers. Two enrichment teachers planned storytelling sessions to entertain the students while parents were trained to help their children develop an appreciation of literature. After the training session, teachers opened their classrooms to 53 families for shared reading. Each child was given a new book, *When I grow Up* by Mercer Mayer. In collaboration with the Raleigh newspaper, *News and Observer*, each parent was presented with a guide to success in school.

Jump Start to Reading cost our school approximately \$300. Our Action Team used funds received through a county-wide parent involvement grant. This cost could be decreased by using volunteers to read to students or present strategies, and by pairing with business partners to have books donated.

This practice provided interaction between our parents, teachers, and students. It also allowed for collaboration between a community agency and our school. Our students had a lot of fun listening to the storytellers, and parents asked many important questions about concerns they have for their child's reading development. Parent comments indicated an appreciation to the school for planning and implementing this practice, and our formal evaluations indicated that the practice was a success!

We hope to improve our participation rate next year by surveying parents about the best times to conduct workshops. We would also like to extend our practice to measure how much time our parents and students are reading together at home by asking them to record the number of books, pages, and minutes they read.

We want each child to have a "jump start to reading," and we hope this practice will be useful to other schools in their partnership programs.

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