



The  
Exposure Gap  
and what  
YOU can do  
about it.

A Guide for  
Parents and Families



**KidZKount** *Strengthening Families for a Better Tomorrow*  
Placer Community Action Council, Inc.

# What is the EXPOSURE GAP?

Research shows that by the time children begin kindergarten, significant differences in literacy, language, early math, and reading skills already exist between children from differing socio-economic status.

The best way for children to develop language and literacy skills is to be exposed to language all the time. Reading and conversations between parents and children help children gain an understanding of the world and develop a rich vocabulary. They help children learn new concepts and build critical thinking skills.

Talking to children in a positive, meaningful way affects your child's language and social development. Encouraging feedback helps children feel good about themselves and their abilities, and teaches children to express themselves in a healthy and confident way.

On average, children from lower socio-economic status families show less developed skills in the areas necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond.

**This gap has nothing to do with how smart children are!**

**This gap doesn't mean that children from lower socio economic status families can't succeed in school!**

**EVERY child can learn and succeed at the highest levels!**

What does all this mean?

YOU  
ARE  
YOUR  
CHILD'S  
MOST IMPORTANT  
TEACHER!

If your child is going to be ready to succeed in school and in life, parents and educators must work together as partners to close the Exposure Gap!

# What you can do to help PREPARE YOUR CHILD TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL~

Here are four things your family can do to help close the Exposure Gap and prepare your child for long-term success.

1

## Use Positive Discipline

Re-direct your child by explaining what you would like him or her TO DO, and why it is important, instead of simply saying what NOT to do.

**After you help me clean the table, we will have room to draw pictures.**

**You played quietly while I fed the baby. Thank you, now we can play with your blocks.**

**Thank you for sharing your toys with Miguel. I'm so proud - you even let him play with your new truck!**

What you can do:

Praise your child when he or she is behaving well. Don't just say "No!" Help your child to understand why you want him or her to behave differently.

Say THREE positive statements for every one negative or correcting statement.

# 2

## **Provide Language-rich Experiences**

Rich and diverse experiences expand children's understanding of the world around them. Talking to children as they experience the world teaches children vocabulary and shows them how to share thoughts and ideas.

**What fruits and vegetables do you see? Look, there's an eggplant!**

**I was so happy today because your grandpa called and said that grandma is feeling better. Today, she was able to go to the store.**

**On Sunday, let's go to the park and practice kicking your soccer ball. Maybe Poppa will teach you a new kick...he was a star on his team growing up.**

**Your teacher sent me a note and said you learned about shadows. What can you tell me about shadows?**

### **What you can do:**

Talk to your child as you do everyday tasks. Name the steps in the activities, and objects you are using to complete them. Add new words and concepts as your child grows!

Introduce your child to different skills and activities. Give your child opportunities to try something that he or she has never done before!

# 3

## **Establish Family Routines**

Consistent family routines strengthen relationships and help children learn to regulate their behavior. This self-regulation is critical for school success.

**Let's turn off the computer and come have dinner. I want to hear about your day!**

**Let me show you on the clock. See, it says 8 o'clock. That means you need to be in bed.**

**First, it's bath time. Second, we'll read a book. Third comes good night kisses. Then you go to sleep. Night-night!**

### **What you can do:**

Eat meals together EVERY night. If your entire family can't be together, sit down with your child when he or she eats, so you can talk and visit.

Put your child to bed by 8:00 p.m. EVERY night before he or she comes to Head Start. Keeping to a night time schedule is good for you, and good for your child!

# 4

## **Read with your child!**

Cultivate a love of reading and literacy. Reading with your child can develop a connection to learning that will last throughout his or her education.

**What do you think is going to happen next in the story?**

**I bet you must know that book by heart already...but, yes, let's read it again!**

**Let's go to the library and pick out some books.  
Maybe we can find a new one about dinosaurs.**

### **What you can do:**

Read a book for at least 20 minutes, every night with your child before bed, or at another time that works for you.

Limit your child's "screen" time to no more than an hour a day - too much television and computer time doesn't give children time to develop their imaginations or engage in self-directed play.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

~Use Positive Discipline~

~Provide Language-rich Experiences~

~Establish Family Routines~

~Read with your Child~

YOU can make a difference in your child's education and help close the Exposure Gap.

If you are doing these FOUR things, keep up the great work!

If you are not doing all of these things, pledge to start -  
today!

IF YOU SPEND

# 20 MINUTES

Reading to your child every day...

You will read  
120 hours in a year,  
240 hours over two years, and  
YOU can close 25% of the  
Exposure Gap!

### *A Parent Speaks...*

*Head Start has helped my son to learn new things which are preparing him for Kindergarten, as well as the chance to socialize with other children his own age. By being a part of Head Start I, as a parent, have learned positive ways to deal with my son when there is a problem at hand. The staff has been wonderful; they are there to help my family in any way possible and are willing to listen to any concerns or suggestions I may have, then do their best to address them promptly. Head Start has been supportive towards my family including me going to college. If it wasn't for Head Start my son probably wouldn't be advancing as well as he has. He is excited and ready for school!*

*My family cannot afford to place our children into a private preschool and we are truly thankful for finding out about Head Start. Once we were accepted, Head Start welcomed my family with open arms.*

*The caring individuals that help are not only appreciated by my family but other ones as well. Head Start truly makes a positive impact on the lives of every family they are able to embrace. Another terrific thing that Head Start promotes is family involvement and male involvement. My husband and I have both tried our best to be involved in our children's lives so it is great to know that Head Start does not try and shut us out, they welcome parents and family members to be involved and engaged with early learning (like reading, math, and social skills) which is terrific for all the children in the class! The education and learning tools provided to the children and the families are well worth it, knowing that they are creating a better future for the lives of the children and their families. I as a parent have enjoyed watching the growth of not only my child, but the other children as well. Thank you Head Start. . . Head Start definitely works towards a better future for all!*

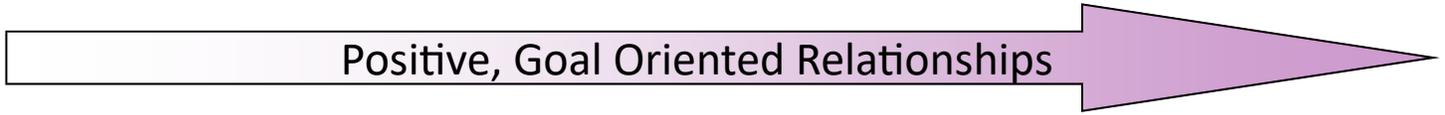
*Sincerely,*

*Lietzah Daniel*

*Parent and Policy Council Representative*

*Ready Springs Head Start / State Preschool*

# Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



Program Foundations

Program Impact Areas

# Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

Positive, Goal Oriented Relationships



**Family Well-being**

**Parent-Child Relationships**

**Families as Lifelong Educators**

**Families as Learners**

**Family Engagement in Transitions**

**Family Connection to Peers and Community**

**Families as Advocates and Leaders**

Children are ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade

Family Engagement Outcomes

Child Outcomes

## Our mission

Empower children and their families to maximize their full potential through opportunities for growth and change.

If you need help with any of the four steps, ask us!  
The KidZKount staff is here to help.



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Visit: [kidzkount.com](http://kidzkount.com)