Developing a Reading Centre to Improve Young Children’s Attitudes towards Reading

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Abstract
The research conducted at a child care centre in southern Ontario addressed the following questions: 1) which activities offered at the reading centre engage and interest participating children aged three to five years? And 2) how do participating children’s attitudes toward reading, measured by their responses to survey questions, compare before and after their participation in the reading centre? Ten children participated in the study. Both the recorded observations and two Reading Attitudes Surveys (completed before and after introducing the reading centre) illustrated an improvement in the reading attitudes of the participating children.

Introduction
Schooling experiences should be interesting, familiar and encourage interaction and play (Christie, 1990; Walker & Spybrook, 2011). As language is the basis for thinking and learning, it is essential that our learning institutions provide children with an opportunity to build a strong foundation for literacy learning. Researchers Dail and McGee (2011) support the claim that “quality preschool experiences” can further develop children’s vocabulary as well as oral language skills (p.162). Language skills are developed as children interact and talk about a wide variety of texts. In schools, teachers who use the “read aloud” method as well as using picture books to model reading, apply good teaching strategies that support the development of such literacy skills (Dickson and Smith, 1994 as cited in Dail and McGee, 2011). While using these, and other high yield reading strategies, research also clearly shows that establishing literacy centres can help develop literacy skills such as “reading, writing, speaking and / or listening skills” (Maurer, 2010, p. 354).

One of the challenges in today’s schools and child care centres is determining the optimal approach to support struggling readers. The best time to develop these strong literacy skills is when the children are still at the pre-school /kindergarten level. In a study conducted by Bailet and associates (2009), critical literacy skills, such as print and letter knowledge skills, were found to be underdeveloped among 220 prekindergartners. Their study found that additional, explicit instruction of “critical emergent literacy skills” supported the literacy development of this group and increased their literacy skills. Most Ontario school boards use remedial support programs where students are engaged in purposeful early print activities. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has implemented several programs such as the “Early Intervention Program” and “Reading Recovery” program (TDSB, 2011) in order to meet the needs of struggling readers.

According to recent reports “…Ontario Grade 3 and Grade 6 students who say they like to read has declined significantly over the past decade” (Levenson, 2011). Can these attitudes be improved with the introduction of literacy / reading centres both in
schools and day care settings? Reading centres, if made available in various public locations may also reach communities who lack the resources, funding and programming in early literacy education. Research clearly supports that it is important for the Ontario Government to address the importance of teaching young children early literacy skills, as it leads to the successful experiences in schooling we all wish our students to have (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2006/2007).

But if many of these skills and attitudes need to be developed even before the children enter kindergarten, what can be done at early learning centres and daycares to enhance the right mindset for literacy learning? The purpose of this paper is to identify the impact one model reading centre has on the development of pre-school children’s attitudes towards reading. The subjects were preschool and school age children attending a not-for-profit child care centre in Southern Ontario. Specifically, the paper will address the following questions:

1) Which activities offered at the reading centre are found to be engaging and interesting to participating children aged three to five years?
2) How do participating children’s attitudes toward reading, measured by their responses to survey questions, compare before and after their participation in the reading centre?

Children who are engaged and interested in reading activities may learn and/or improve early literacy skills. Child care centres, in addition to schools, can be a valuable place where children can develop literacy skills.

Methods

Participants and site

The qualitative research study was conducted, as part of my graduate studies, at one of the child care centres in Southern Ontario. Sixteen children were invited to participate in the study and ten parental permission forms were received in total (please see Appendix A for the sample information and/or permission form). Out of those ten, six were boys and four were girls. Three children (two girls and one boy) were members of visible minority groups.

Ten permission forms were returned. Over the course of three weeks, I observed how the children engaged with the reading centre, their interest level in the activities at the reading centre and their general attitude and behaviours towards reading. I recorded my observations using anecdotal notes.

The study was conducted in two parts: First, a larger sample of children was used to collect data on changes in reading attitude. The participants were ten children whose parents/guardians consented to the study. Second, four children were chosen, purposively, in order to provide a more intensive case study. I chose an equal number of boys and girls to have a gender balance in my research. These four children had completed the initial survey and were present on the day of the first official start of the reading centre. These children would be used to gather information as to what activities are found to be engaging and interesting. In the paper, I will refer to them using pseudonyms.
**Data sources and analysis**

All students were able to access the activities in the study. I observed all participating children, in particular, four children who were chosen purposively. For the purpose of the analysis, I determined that if I observed children engaging in reading activities for more than a few minutes, I considered this to illustrate engagement. If I observed children who had commented in a positive way I considered this to illustrate interest. Also, if children used body language in a positive way (e.g. sitting closer to me during a read aloud), I considered this to illustrate interest.

My observations were recorded in the form of anecdotal notes. I chose this method of collecting data because it was one way of accurately detailing the events and happenings of my visit. I would visit at least two or three times a week upon which I would take notes both during and after my visit. My observations included any questions I asked the four children and/or all participating children, comments from these children and a description of their level of engagement and interest in the activities.

Before initiating any activities, I administered the Reading Attitude Surveys to any participating children present on that day. A total number of seven surveys were completed out of ten children whose permission forms were collected. The survey consisted of ten questions about their reading attitude, reading interests and experiences (please see Appendix B for the Reading Attitude Survey). At the end of the study, the same survey was conducted with the seven children who had completed the initial survey. The children who did not complete the surveys, but had permission to participate in the study, were still part of my observations to collect data on activities found to be engaging and interesting to children while my main focus was concentrated on the four students I had chosen to observe closer. The survey provided some feedback on the children’s attitude towards reading that I would not have perhaps gathered strictly on observations alone.

The overall purpose of the survey was to determine how the children felt about reading and to compare these results to determine if the reading activities each week made a positive impact on their overall attitude. An article by Denice Hildebrandt (2001), called *There’s Nothing Good to Read (In the Library Media Center)* contained a sample of a reading inventory survey from which elements of the survey in this study were adapted. Hildebrandt’s article discussed the challenge in getting kids to read at the library. Despite efforts to make a library more attractive to children (by purchasing new books, making colourful signs, book talks), she reports that children were of the opinion that no books interested them. Hildebrandt posits that one solution lies in knowing more about the daily life of the students; including understanding what they are interested in. Based on this hypothesis, I chose questions for the survey that would give me some insight into the children’s obstacles to reading; whether that might be boredom or lack of confidence. I wanted to know where and when they are most likely to read, for example, if they mostly read at home then their parent(s) are likely to influence their ability to maintain interest in reading activities, regardless of their exposure to reading at the childcare centre. These questions were asked again at the end of the program in order to record any changes in attitude as a result of developing the reading centre. For example, the following questions were included in the survey:

- Do you know how to read? (question #1);
- Do you have a favourite book? (question #9)
Research context

In this research, the role of the reading centre is not to replace, but to complement, the already existing literacy program that the child care has developed for this age group. The reading centre in this study is one approach that may be used in any educational and/or learning setting.

As a participant-observer in this study, my role was to: 1) teach children and staff about the purpose and goals of the reading centre; 2) encourage children to participate in the reading activities at the centre; 3) guide staff and children through the activities; and 4) observe children during my time in the classroom. Each week I visited at least two to three times for a half hour or hour in the afternoon. Occasionally I visited unannounced to observe children in the room, to gather any feedback from the staff as well as to greet children and encourage them to access the reading centre. Each day, when I was away from the classroom, a staff member would read a book during circle time as well as encourage children to access the reading centre. I recorded any feedback given to me on a regular basis while observing the children.

The reading centre provided a learning space in which children could access reading activities all the time, not just during the structured literacy time provided by the staff. The reading centre was one approach to stimulate interest in reading and attempt to engage children in reading activities. Three themes were explored, each for one week: colour, shape and texture. I provided books from the Toronto Public Library (audio books included) as well as other resources from home. Walker & Spybrook (2011) describe how the researcher intentionally places objects and materials at the reading centre in order to “establish a print-rich environment in which both open-ended and constrained exploration of literacy are encouraged” (pp.89-90). By providing these resources mentioned above, my goal was to also increase their awareness of reading activities they could participate in.

Theme of colour

For week one on colour, I chose books that were colourful and/or had colourful illustrations. For example, I included the popular book The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle. Another reason I included this material was because Diane indicated on the initial survey that it was her favourite book. The reading centre itself consisted of a table, nearest to their circle time carpet, containing activities and books. I prepared an Eye Spy game for the students which enabled them to find objects of a certain colour print the name of the colour and object together and post it in the room. The activity was not routinely practiced in the room; however, the colours of other objects had been labelled by staff, such as the blackboard. I chose this activity because the majority of children indicated in their initial survey that they liked playing games more than reading. This survey result motivated me to create the activity which might stimulate interest in reading if included in a game first.

Another activity was to read labels that had the name of objects currently at the reading centre. For example, “blue ball” was written on a label below a ball I brought in. I wanted to bring objects that the children might like to hold or play with. Other objects included a purple pop up frame, a colourful scarf and a pumpkin. Children who chose colourful objects around the room could label them (with support) and place them on the reading centre table. This activity enabled them to decorate the reading centre sign which
gave them the opportunity to help contribute to developing the reading centre. There were colouring sheets they could work on, such as colouring cars (a self-identified interest of the boys’) and different colour by number sheets. They also had access to colourful play dough to trace large letters and numbers.

Theme of shape
For week two on shape, I chose Fire Engine Man by Andrea Zimmerman and David Clemesha to help show pictures of shapes. The fire truck takes the shape of a rectangle and the houses take the shape of a square and so on. When I visited the child care centre the first time, I noticed the boys were building toy structures. This book also stimulated boys’ interests because it had to do with vehicles. I developed an activity to help children learn more about shape and to stimulate their interests in reading: matching shape objects with their names, which were printed on cards. This activity involved children having to read the cards. I provided a shape booklet for them to refer to different shapes and their corresponding names if they needed some more support. In thinking about what boys may traditionally like, I brought in little shape monster booklets, where they could design their own “monster” shape. I observed that the boys liked Thomas the Tank Engine™ and the girls liked playing with dolls, therefore, I provided some shape templates for them to practice colouring, drawing and printing, such as a star shape, a story train organizer, and a doll dress shaped like a triangle.

Theme of texture
For week three on texture, I read aloud When Autumn Falls by Kelli Nidey. This book is about how one knows that fall has arrived because the leaves fall from the trees. I set out objects they may think would be interesting to rub crayons over such as a leaf, a CD and a toy figurine. They could also attempt to do some writing on their art sheet. Some children were familiar with the activity from their experience with visual art either at school or at the child care centre. In addition to this activity, I provided a sorting game where one or more participants may be engaged in finding objects around the room that are “smooth and soft” or “rough and bumpy”. I provided a poster for them to touch and feel all the objects representing different textures.

Data Analysis
Activities that are found to be engaging and interesting
Using my anecdotal notes, I searched for all the vocabulary and action words as well as names of activities that children used to describe being engaged and interested in one or more activities at the reading centre. Some of these key words were the “Eye Spy” game, “colouring”, “reading”, “objects”, “crayon rubbing”, “audio book”, “playing”, “walked”, “friend”, “sat”, “helped”. I also highlighted names of the four children I would specifically be observing as well as the staff who worked in the room in order to make reference to situations and comments that would provide information about the engagement and interest of children.

Changes in reading attitude
The Reading Attitude Survey was used to compare changes in reading attitude, before and after developing a reading centre in the room. This comparison applied to the
seven participants who completed the survey. The survey was used to provide additional information about each child in terms of his or her attitude towards reading. The survey also gave me the opportunity to get direct feedback from the children that I may have not otherwise receive having spent time in the room while guiding them through activities and observing them.

Findings

Activities that are found to be engaging and interesting

The children showed an interest in the reading centre. I believe a large part had to do with staff (including myself) encouraging them to access the reading centre and participate in activities. The positive experiences children had when participating in activities at the reading centre may have contributed to improving the children’s attitudes about reading. The children would always crowd around me ready to begin games that were interactive; where they could move around or play a special role.

During the week of colour, it had been raining one day. My time with the children was extended. I decided to initiate the Eye Spy game. Had I simply read aloud the whole time, I believe I would not have generated much interest from the group because they needed to get their energy out. I encouraged all participating children to pretend to be detectives. Wyatt and Diane were both searching for objects around the room and attempting to spell each on the label provided to them. Diane, who was intimidated with the task at first, read out loud two words from a label. I asked Wyatt to find one more object (something green) around the room, which he did, and later printed the name on the label provided. I told him to put the object he found on the table to display for his peers. By doing this, he took ownership of his learning. Other children were working together to find as many objects of a certain colour. Brian asked if he could play too. Later in the game, when the other participating boys in the room wanted to play something else instead, both Brian and Wyatt would stop playing the Eye Spy game and join their peers to build structures. I asked these boys, which included Brian and Wyatt, to help me tidy up a few items near the reading centre, during which they discussed some of the objects found during a previous Eye Spy game. Both Brian and Wyatt were looking at the labels to do with objects around the room. I observed Wyatt, sitting next to his peer holding onto The Very Hungry Caterpillar book saying, “I want to read it first”. His peer wanted to read it as well but Wyatt demonstrated his intention to go first by holding onto the book.

During other visits, I observed Wyatt and Brian playing with cars and planes they made out of materials from the classroom while Lindsey and Diane would either sit at the table to draw and colour or play house in another area of the room. Diane had picked up a scarf that was at the reading centre and wrapped it around her like a dress. At times Brian would glance at what was being provided to play with at the reading centre. Brian wanted to colour a page that had Lightning McQueen® on it. Perhaps he was motivated to take a colouring sheet in the first place because there was something to colour that he was interested in. He was also particularly interested in the Thomas the Tank Engine™ audio book that I had. I also observed that Brian wanted to hold the flashcards I brought to the reading centre. After a few seconds he proceeded to play with Wyatt and two other boys who were all involved in building structures.
During snack time, when all the children sat together, we would “chit chat” about the week’s theme and I would draw their attention to the reading centre. On one occasion, Lindsey announced the colours on her cookie. We had previously spoken about the many colours around the room.

During the week of shapes, I observed Brian looking at the pictures with his peers and talking about each train and the story. By including colouring sheets and other activities the children were interested in, with the same subject matter as the reading material, they were more motivated to open a book at the reading centre. Children engaged in activities their peers were doing. I observed children looking at books if one of their peers was already looking at a book. For example, Diane and Lindsey wanted to have a turn at colouring the reading centre sign. On another occasion, Lindsey wanted to make her own shape monster booklet, just like her friend Diane. Brian, who was reluctant to visit the reading centre, completed a “story train” by drawing pictures of what happened in the beginning, middle and end of the Thomas the Tank Engine™ story he read. Lindsey, during the theme of shape, showed me her monster shape booklet she had made and was so proud of. She wanted to bring it home.

During the week of texture, a child asked me if she could touch the objects on the poster I had created for the texture theme. I reminded all the children that they had access to all the activities whenever they had free time. At each visit, I reminded them that their efforts in reading labels, looking at pictures and so on were all part of reading. At the end of my visit one afternoon, Wyatt asked me to stay and said, while pointing to the reading centre, “Can we keep it?”

Changes in reading attitude

The following table yields the results of the pre- and post- survey. All numbers represent the participants responding to the survey (out of seven total participants). Questions five through ten contain other responses from participants in addition to stating or nodding “yes”.

Table 1: Reading Attitude Survey (Before and after developing the Reading Centre)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Before Reading Centre</th>
<th>After Reading Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you know how to read?</td>
<td>Yes 1</td>
<td>Yes 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think reading is easy?</td>
<td>Yes 2</td>
<td>Yes 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you think reading is boring?</td>
<td>Yes 4</td>
<td>Yes 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you like listening to stories?</td>
<td>Yes 7</td>
<td>Yes 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you read at home?</td>
<td>Yes 3</td>
<td>Yes 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you read by yourself?</td>
<td>Yes 0</td>
<td>Yes 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you read books when you are waiting for (mom/dad) to pick you up?</td>
<td>Yes 3</td>
<td>Yes 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you like playing games better than reading?</td>
<td>Yes 5</td>
<td>Yes 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you have a favourite book?</td>
<td>Yes 7</td>
<td>Yes 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you want to read every day?</td>
<td>Yes 2</td>
<td>Yes 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey results appear to show an improvement in reading attitudes among participating children. Because of the small sample size, it is inconclusive still whether the development of the reading centre had in fact improved the attitude of the children. It does however, allow for some analysis.

The second survey showed that only one child thought reading was boring as opposed to four, in the first survey. The other children may have found some or all activities engaging and interesting or they may have been influenced by some other experiences either at home or somewhere else. Some children indicated that they read at home. One child responded to question five by saying “I have a pen that talks.” The pen he is likely referring to is a tool that reads words out loud as it scans a page in a special book just made for it, like the Leap Frog® Tag™ educational toy. Parental involvement may have played a big role in children’s interest in reading. Results of the survey showed that parents were reading to children at home. The same child, who responded about the pen, had said in the second survey, “My Mommy does [read to him]”. Another finding was that five out of seven children indicated they had a favourite book at home, which could also have a positive affect on their attitude towards reading.

In the second survey, seven children preferred to play games more than reading. Playing games and reading should not be conceived as entirely separate as children in this study were engaged in reading activities if the activity was in the form of a game (e.g. “Eye Spy” game). It also suggests that playing games is important to this age group and can be one way in which children may be more motivated to read. On the other hand, children participating in the survey might not have associated the “Eye Spy” game with reading and thus, still think of reading as looking at a book and also a quiet activity I believe some of the activities at the reading centre, such as the Eye Spy game and the sorting game, might have contributed to these results. I had hoped to, first of all, to teach them that reading not only consisted of reading words in a book but also looking at pictures, labels, numbers, signs, and so on. The other challenge was encouraging them to understand that they were all capable of reading in some way and that reading could be fun. Literacy and play go hand-in-hand for mutual benefit; play centres, as an example of another type of literacy centre, gave children opportunities to have “authentic and meaningful experiences with emergent reading and writing” (Christie, 1990, p. 545).

The survey also shows that children were not likely to read on their own, due to the fact that they might be used to someone else reading to them or that their perception of reading was still picking up a book and reading the words which in this case, they would have difficulty reading longer words and sentences. On the second survey, Diane was asked whether she could read by herself and she said she did not know. This may suggest children’s perceptions of themselves as good readers may be one factor influencing their experiences with literacy/reading centres. For example, had she spent more time at the centre, would her response have been more positive?

Discussion

My primary limitation was the small sample of participating children. My second limitation was the young age of the participants. It was difficult to determine, because of these factors, whether the results were conclusive and whether the participating children were able to understand the goals of the research and the purpose of the reading centre...
itself. When children were away from their peers, they appeared to be more likely to pursue their own interests instead of being influenced by popular opinion. This also leads me to wonder whether children’s attitudes were also dependent on other children’s attitudes towards reading. Overall, time was limited and on many occasions I spent time re-organizing the reading centre to make it more accessible as some articles were misplaced, or out of reach from other children who would come by to visit. Interviewing children could have provided a deeper perspective into children’s attitudes towards reading, as well as what they may be engaged and interested in.

The children accessed the reading centre’s activities when they found it interesting to them. Each week’s theme provided a practical framework from which I could choose children’s texts and activities to go with their fundamental reading and knowledge base. The staff and I played an important role in maintaining the interest of the children and in educating them about the different concepts. The survey results show an improvement in the reading attitudes of the participating children, even though it was a smaller sample of participants. My hope is that developing a reading centre at this child care centre may have had a positive experience on these children.

Further exploration of the impact self-esteem and self-confidence has on children’s reading attitudes, and their own perceptions of themselves as good or poor readers, would be useful contributions to the existing research in this area. Perhaps children’s own perceptions of themselves as good readers or not, influenced the participation in the reading centre, in my particular study. For further studies, more time spent in the child care centre is necessary in order to deepen the awareness of how a reading centre may impact participation.

Designing a reading centre necessitates exploring the implementation of a reading centre. For example, authors Walker, Allen and Glines (1997) believed that enabling children to partake in the development of a reading centre would increase their attention and participation in activities at the reading centre. This approach would be of particular value in a school system where teachers may want to take inventory of their students’ interests in making informed decisions about what and how to teach.

Literacy centres help teachers address any topic from primary through to intermediate learning settings, including English as a second language instruction, French instruction and special education programming. They can be set up to further reinforce the skills and attitudes toward reading that a teacher is working on with his or her students. One such example in my study is how I wanted to gear the reading centre towards children at the preschool level. I chose an Eye Spy activity that complemented the interests of the age group I was working with. A teacher in a special education classroom might find this particular activity useful especially if his or her students were learning at a lower grade level. In addition, a grade six teacher may set up a reading centre to enable students to explore different types of non-fiction books and complete reading activities to address topics in the Science and Technology curriculum.

This study suggests that reading skills can be taught at child care centres and using literacy centres to teach basic reading and writing skills is one way to engage children. Child care centres are important places, along with homes and schools, in providing children exposure to skills in early literacy. I hope this paper contributes to the understanding of the importance of child care centres and their potential as important learning environments for children.
References


Library books


Other resources
www.crayola.com
www.fisher-price.com
http://familycrafts.about.com/od/paperdolls/ig/Paper-Doll-Dresses-and-Skirts/
http://www.aisr.cistron.nl/online_curriculum/holland_online/resources/story_map_templates.html
http://mrskilburnkiddos.wordpress.com/miscellaneous/color-activities/
http://mrskilburnkiddos.wordpress.com/math/shapes/
http://disney.go.com/cars/
http://www.thomasandfriends.com/ca/Thomas.mvc/Home

Author Biography
Monica Carey is a teacher at the Toronto District School Board. By the end of summer 2012, she will complete her Master of Education studies in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at OISE / University of Toronto. Monica has an interest in special education programming and literacy programming in inner city schools.
Appendix A

Greetings Parents/Guardians:

My name is __________ and I am a student completing my Masters in Education at _______. I am also a parent of one child in the toddler room. __________ is allowing me the opportunity to conduct a study on literacy in order to fulfill the requirements for a course I am currently enrolled in. I invite your child to participate in this research. The purpose of this research is to identify, if any, the positive impact one model reading centre may have on the development of a positive attitude towards reading among the preschool population at this centre. The role of the reading centre is not to replace but to complement the already existing literacy program that the child care centre has developed for this age group.

Specifically I will be addressing two questions: 1) Which activities at the reading centre are found to be engaging and interesting to preschoolers aged three to five years? and 2) How do participating children's attitudes toward reading, measured by their responses to survey questions, compare before and after their participation in the reading centre?

Each week I will develop the reading centre and the activities that will go along with it. It will be theme-based. Your child will have a chance to explore the activities at the reading centre as well as complete a survey both before and after the three week study. The survey is several statements about reading that your child may either identify with or not (please see copy of survey). I am also going to be observing preschoolers participating in the activities at the reading centre, taking notes of any comments and using this information as part of my data analysis later on.

I would be very grateful if you were willing to have your child take part in my research project. Participation is entirely voluntary, so it is up to you if you would like to sign the consent form below. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have, if you contact me at: ______________.

Thank you in advance for your support!

_________________

Date: _____________________

I ______________________ give consent for my child ______________________ to participate in this study conducted by __________.

_________________ (signature)

I ______________________ do not give consent for my child ______________________ to participate in this study conducted by __________.

_________________ (signature)
Appendix B

Reading Attitude Survey

First letter of child’s name: _____    Date: ___ /___ / 11

I will ask you some questions about reading. Please answer yes or no (or shake your head “yes” or “no”) for each question. I will help you finish this survey. You do not have to do this survey. You can stop anytime.

1. Do you know how to read? ________________
2. Do you think reading is easy? ________________
3. Do you think reading is boring? ________________
4. Do you like listening to stories? ________________
5. Do you read at home? ________________
6. Do you read by yourself? ________________
7. Do you read books when you are waiting for (mom/dad) to pick you up? ________________
8. Do you like playing games better than reading? __________
9. Do you have a favourite book? ________________
10. Do you want to read every day? ________________

Notes: _______________________________________
___________________________________________
___________________________________________

Some ideas for questions taken from “But There’s Nothing Good to Read’ (In the Library Media Center),” by Denice Hildebrandt, Media Spectrum: The Journal for Library Media Specialists in Michigan, Fall 2001, p. 34–37.
Appendix C

Reading Centre Resources and Activities

Week 1 - Colour theme:

Books brought in from the Toronto Public Library:
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, Eric Carle
*Anansi the Spider*, Gerald McDermott
*Dogabet*, Dianna Bonder
*Green Eyes*, Abe Birnbaum
*My Very First Book of Colours*, Eric Carle
*My Box of Colour*, Lorianne Siomades
*Black on White*, Tara Hoban
*Red, Blue, Yellow Shoe*, Tara Hoban
*Fox in Socks*, Dr. Seuss

Activities:
Eye Spy colour game
Reading labels at the reading centre
Finding colourful objects to display at the reading centre and labelling them
Using play dough to trace large letters, numbers (ABC, 123)
Colouring pages, colour by number from Crayola.com
Decorating the reading centre sign
Colour flash cards

Week 2 - Shape theme:

Books brought in from the Toronto Public Library:
*All About Shape*, Irene Bates
*Shapes At Home*, Lisa Bruce
*What Shape Is It?*, Bobbie Kalman
*The Twins’ Blanket*, Hyewon Yum
*Fire Engine Man*, Andrea Zimmerman and David Clemesha (teacher read aloud)
*We Share Everything*, (sound recording) Robert Munsch
*Thomas and The Rumors* (sound recording), Awdry, W. Railway series et al. (played for all to hear)
*Circus*, Lois Elhert
*Canada 123*, Kim Bellefontaine
*When Autumn Falls*, Kelli Nidey
*Go-go Gorillas*, Julia Durango and Eleanor Taylor
*Daisy Gets Dressed*, Clare Beaton

Other:
My shapes book, printable pages of shapes from Fisher-Price.com

Activities:
Match name of shape (printed on cards) with corresponding shape object
Creating shape monster booklets, online source
Story train template (beginning, middle, ending of story), online source
Star and dress templates to print name or decorate, online
Decorate reading centre sign

**Week 3 - Texture theme:**
Books brought in from the Toronto Public Library:
*Callout: Let’s Go to the Beach*, Coquette Publishing and Pierre Brigand
*Wow! Said the Owl*, Tim Hopgood
*Three Little Kittens*, Paul Galdone
*Baby Touch and Feel Zoo’s Who*, Roger Priddy
*What is Texture?*, Stephanie Fitzgerald
*When Autumn Falls*, Kelli Nidey
*Baby Touch and Feel: Farm*, Dorling Kindersley Pub.

Activities:
Poster: 1) Things that are soft and smooth: egg, floss, paper, smooth side of a dish sponge, plastic cup 2) Things that are rough and bumpy: Lego piece, course side of a dish sponge, fabric from a chair, toy figurine.