

***Implementation of the Learning Basket Approach in Bucerias, Nayarit, Mexico***

***2002-2005***

***Review And Evaluation***

***Submitted to ICA-USA***

***By***

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# **Implementation of the Learning Basket Approach in Bucerias, Nayarit, Mexico**

2002-2005

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## ***Implementation of the Learning Basket Approach in Bucerias, Nayarit, Mexico***

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***2002-2005***

### ***Community Context: Bucerias***

The following report addresses the implementation and impact of the delivery of the ICA Learning Basket Approach in the neighborhoods of a mid-sized community in west central Mexico, in the state of Nayarit. This community for many years was an unremarkable community of farmers, workers, and families. Recent nearby tourist development has created quickly expanding access to service work, transportation, and technology. The community has become a point of access for many into an expanding economy, including many who are newly arrived from more heavily indigenous populations and more remote locations. In this way, this community represents many previously unconnected communities that are entering a more globally driven economy. Families are facing new economic expectations for themselves and their children, at the same time that educational levels and literacy rates are low among parents.

### ***The Learning Basket Approach***

Families and caregivers of young children, especially those in marginalized economic and/or cultural circumstances often lack information about practical means for cultivating children's learning and literacy. The Learning Basket Approach was designed to address this gap.

The *Learning Basket Approach* is based on four main concepts:

1. Parents and Caregivers are babies' first teachers and can come to see themselves and their children as eager and enthusiastic learners.
2. Children learn through play.
3. The first three years are extremely important in a child's cognitive and emotional development.
4. Simple objects can be a teaching and a learning tool when used interactively

The *Learning Basket Approach* uses practical tools, including a *Learning Basket* containing 18 learning objects, and a *Play to Learn* activity book containing over 150 activities for parents and



children to do together using the objects in the basket. A *Parents are Teachers* literacy manual provides parenting education and support through multicultural line drawings that stimulate conversation, critical thinking and problem solving while enhancing vocabulary. These three tools are used together to support and equip parents and caregivers to nurture learning and brain development with infants and toddlers through purposeful play. This learning approach is introduced to a community or program by practitioners who have been previously trained through a *Practitioners' Course*, which introduces the essential materials and concepts through a series of modules. It is intended that this course will equip local participants to assume leadership and provide Learning Basket group sessions to local parents, fellow teachers, or any other group who can benefit from the contents of the approach. A more detailed description of the approach can be found at [www.ica-usa](http://www.ica-usa) and in Appendix A.

### ***Evaluation Questions***

Implementation of the Learning Basket Approach in the community described above provides the opportunity to explore several important questions for future work of the Learning Basket Project. The preparation of this report was guided by the following questions:

#### Questions relating to international implementation:

1. What supports implementation of Learning Basket Approach in international settings?
2. Are there features of this implementation that seem to be salient for international implementation?
3. Do the data from this site indicate that the Learning Basket Approach can be successful across cultural and economic circumstances?

#### Questions relating to participant outcomes that were targeted for this implementation:

1. Does participation in the series of Learning Basket parenting sessions foster parent/child interactions of a type that are known to increase children's learning capacity?
2. Does participation in the series of Learning Basket parenting sessions foster confidence in parents that they are capable of influencing the learning potential of their children?

### ***Entering the Community: 2001***

The Learning Basket Approach was introduced into the community of Bucerias in Mexico through a network of already existing relationships. These relationships, developed over the previous 10-12 years, connected a small residential community of former ICA staff and friends



about 30 kilometers north of Bucerias with several influential local citizens. One of these local citizens arranged a demonstration of The Learning Basket Approach at the local health clinic, in the spring of 2001, on a day when mothers and babies would be coming to the clinic and when the local representative of the Mexican Department of Infant and Family Care would be present. One bilingual Learning Basket staff from Chicago gave the demonstration, introduced and assisted by a local ICA friend who had held a high government administrative post in the region. An additional Learning Basket friend who was also a member of the local ICA community attended as well. This demonstration attracted a number of mothers with their infants and toddlers, as well as the Doctora who directs the clinic

Immediately following the demonstration, the local citizens wanted to develop a plan and timeline to bring the Learning Basket Project to their community. This timeline stretched over the next year, and included some preliminary work in the fall and plans for a Practitioners' Course the following spring (2002). It was important in this planning to consider time needed for production and transport of materials, securing bilingual trainers who could travel to Mexico, gathering information about the community, developing funding sources, and coordinating with important local events and holidays.

### ***Preparing the Path***

For the implementation in Mexico, it was decided that the approach would target the following goal and objectives of the program at large:

Goal: Use parent-child interaction as a means of simultaneously enhancing the learning potential and literacy of infants, toddlers and their parents.

This is accomplished by meeting the following objectives:

- a. Teach parent practices that nurture children's learning potential.
- b. Assist non-literate parents to feel confident that they can teach their children.
- c. Use a parent's interest in their child and their concern for being a good parent to motivate learning.
- d. Build upon and enhancing existing skills in both adults and the children.

### ***Developing Local Practitioners***

Using program materials and an informal review of information gathered in this interviewing process, staff designed a weeklong Practitioner's Course. The intent of the training was two-fold:

- 1) To introduce the participants, who were mothers, grandmothers and aunts of infants and toddlers to the immense learning potential of young children, and how they might support that potential by using the *Learning Basket*
- 2) To support some of the participants to take on the role of Promoter of *Learning Basket* sessions with their neighbors.

Local contacts also committed to making or otherwise providing the contents for 10 Learning Baskets, and engaging their friends and family members in the effort. These baskets would become demonstration baskets for the future health promoters, who could use them to help other parents make their own baskets. Friends of ICA who were familiar with the community in Mexico committed to raising funds for materials and for the fees and transport for a team of trainers. Local ICA friends offered housing for training staff and setup.

In consultation with local contacts (a local civic leader and lead health promoter at the health clinic), specific dates and time were set for the Practitioners' Course, which would be held one week in March, 2002. There would be 5 two- hour sessions conducted Monday through Friday from 4:30 until 6:30. These would be delivered entirely in Spanish. This was a different model than previous delivery of the Practitioners' Course, but was designed with local circumstances in mind: weather, work routines in the community, and family routines such as mealtime and school schedules for older children.

A team was then assembled to deliver the course. Some of the team supported their own travel, ICA staff was supported by program funds, and donors funded materials and other travel and expenses. Local friends of ICA provided local housing. The full team included one bilingual ICA staff, two bilingual Learning Basket trainers and nurses from Chicago, and two ICA friends from Champaign, IL. In addition, two university students joined the team. Both had strong relationships to members of the ICA community nearby: one was a Mexican citizen doing



graduate study in early childhood education in the USA at the time, and the other was a local citizen who had just finished studying in the USA. The local civic leader and a local health professional, the representative of the Department of Infants and Families served as a link to the local community by joining the team daily and providing their home as a place for nightly debriefings.

#### Lessons Learned

What was in place or put in place that supported the initial phases of implementation?

- ICA staff and friends provided support with time, housing and money.
- Locally residing ICA friends connected to local influential citizens.
- Content, schedule, and materials were tailored to local circumstances.
- Local friends were recruited to provide participants, venues and materials

#### **Beginning the Implementation: 2002**

The Practitioners' Course was delivered from March 11 through March 15, 2002. This was intended to provide a group of local women with the practices and materials of the Learning Basket Approach, and hopefully to yield several of these women who would carry on as group leaders (practitioners) in their local neighborhoods. In this way, the hope and expectation was that the Learning Basket could become embedded in the community of parents throughout local neighborhoods.

A group of local women attended and brought their children with them to the training. Several walked long distances with their infants and/or toddlers. Each day the ICA friends who accompanied the training team organized activities for the children, who ranged in age from 5-months-old to 12-years-old. Each day the group of children grew larger; from 5 children on Monday it grew to almost 30 on Friday.

The major message of each of the daily sessions in the Practitioners' Course was that giving children attention through the medium of play nurtures their development as learners, and that parents can do this in simple ways.

Participation is displayed in the following chart.



Learning Basket Practioners' Course  
Bucerias, Mexico 2002

Participants (n=19)	Total sessions	11-Mar	12-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar	15-Mar
					No Data	
A	2	X		X		
B	2		X	X		
C	2	X		X		
D	4	X	X	X		X
E	4	X	X	X		X
F	2	X	X			
G	3	X	X	X		
H	3	X	X	X		
I	4	X	X	X		X
J	4	X	X	X		X
K	4	X	X	X		X
L	1					X
M	1					X
N	3	X	X			X
O	3	X	X	X		
P	1			X		
Q	1		X			
R	1		X			
S	1	X				
Total	46	13	13	12		8

As the chart indicates, a total of 19 women attended across the 5 days. Almost one third of these (6) who came once did not return. This was described by a local contact as typical of something new in the community and indicates curiosity but not immediate commitment. There were five women who came four days and four who came three days. By the last day, a core group had emerged, and all who attended four days were present at the last session. Because there is no data for one of the days, it is not known if there were more in those categories or if there were some women who came each of the five days.

The ceremony of closure on the last day of the training was attended by the local supporters and by the Mayor's wife and entourage. This was intended to give strength to the local commitment for the program. However, at the staff debriefing following the ceremony, it was mentioned by local supporters that several of the local participants were not clear about the political

implications of the attendance of the Mayor's wife. Because the Mayor's wife was present, some participants asked how this program was related to the politics of the community.

From the above description of events, several lessons emerge.

### Lessons Learned

What was in place or put in place that supported this phase of implementation?

- Accommodating all participants, even when it was possible that many would not turn out to be practitioners.
- Providing child care as a demonstration of the importance of a.) caring for children and b.) full attention of parents to the content of the course.
- Attendance could be erratic but a core group is likely to emerge.

What were some challenges in this phase of the implementation?

- Political context in the community can intrude unintentionally on the participants' willingness to commit to the approach.
- Many participants came to one or two session and did not return.

### *Methodology for reviewing 'Reflective Moments'*

#### *Instrumentation*

As part of the implementation, participants were required to fill out a short questionnaire called "Reflective Moments". This questionnaire had been designed as part of a more comprehensive evaluation system for The Learning Basket Approach and had been collected in most other programs where the Learning Basket had been implemented. (A copy of the Reflective Moments recording sheet, as well as a description of the evaluation system is available in Appendix B.) This simple questionnaire asks a set of questions that target intended outcomes of the Learning Basket Approach. These questions include probes for how the participants felt, what they learned, what they will use, when they felt confident, and what they liked. There were also some questions inserted that could give information back to the program about what might need to be changed or done differently. These last questions have not proved fruitful, and are currently undergoing some redesign.

*Reflective Moments* was designed to serve several purposes. First, it was intended to provide a model for reflection to the participants. Reflective practice in parenting has been associated with



a habit of continually thinking about what is being done and thinking about what might be improved.

Second, this reflection was also intended to provide information back to the program about what was happening to the participants, and the extent to which participants were hearing and assimilating the information and messages of the sessions. The interest here was in finding the extent to which parent attitudes and behaviors might be changing in a direction that could be more supportive of children's learning and brain development.

### ***Rationale***

In recent years, interventions aimed at affecting the learning potential of very young children have focused on parent behaviors. Evidence has mounted that changing parent behaviors is what will influence the child's learning potential. In many ways, the variable of interest is no longer the parent or the child alone, but the interactive dyad. A model of understanding early learning and development called the 'transactional' model (Sameroff & MacKenzie, 2003) has greatly influenced the way in which interventions are designed and assessed. The effectiveness of intervening in the interaction process as a learning context has been well documented. This model also has achieved a fit with current theory and practice about learning and brain development in very young children. Recent advances in neurological imaging have enabled scientists to document the positive effects of rich interactive contexts on early brain development.

*Reflective Moments* was designed to capture the influence that Learning Basket parenting sessions might be having on the parent/child dyad and on the interactions that are occurring within that dyadic learning context. The belief is that affecting these interactions will create the conditions for increased learning and development of the child.

(See [Appendix C](#) for a commentary regarding the challenges of direct measurement of child change as an effect of intervention.)

### ***Analysis***

The Learning Basket implementation in Bucerias from 2002-2005 yielded **273 individual records, or *Reflective Moments*, from 87 individuals over 42 sessions**. This represents 273 individual session attendances. Of the 87 individuals, 22 attended only once, which reduced the number of useful records to 251. These records form the bulk of the data available for analysis and interpretation in this report.



An initial visual inspection of the results of all 273 records indicated that three questions were consistently yielding responses that were neither informative nor discriminating of any characteristics of participants. First, the question regarding 'what was difficult' was producing a response that was overwhelmingly 'nothing'. This could indicate a response bias toward not wanting to mention anything that might indicate negative views of the program or practitioners. This is a common response bias where there is a perceived power differential between the respondent and the persons administering a questionnaire. A second question that did not yield any useful information asked 'how I felt today'. Participants could choose from a number of feeling states, and most chose several or all of those. This provided no information to discriminate between different responses. Finally, when asked 'what would you like to change' most again responded with 'nothing'. There also seemed to be some confusion about the meaning of this question. Some took it to mean 'what would you change about the course' and some took it to mean 'what you like to change about the way you are as a parent'. An additional question, 'today in the group I talked' failed to yield information that discriminated participants. Most responded with 'frequently' or 'sometimes' all the time. This question is only included in the analysis in one situation.

All responses were entered into a database (FileMakerPro©). Some responses were left in Spanish, but a bilingual ICA staff translated most of the data into English as they were entered into the database. They could then be sorted and grouped by date and by participant for each question. Responses could then be compared across and between dates and participants. Using 251 records, 42 sessions, and 65 repeating participants, the numbers did not allow for valid or credible analysis of differences between or across dates or participants. All responses were assembled as text data and analyzed by simple visual inspection and content analysis.

### **Reflective Moments 2002: Practitioners Course**

*Reflective Moments* were filled out and collected at four of the five sessions of the Practitioners Course in Bucerias in March of 2002.

Responses to each question were organized in the database and then further sorted into two groups. One group (A) contains the responses for those who had attended only once or twice (10 participants) and the other (B) for those who had attended 3 or 4 times. (Because information

was not collected for one of the sessions, these could represent participants who attended 4 or 5 times as well.)

The purpose of sorting into these two groups was to see if there are differences between those who came and did not become engaged with the program and those who came and became practitioners.

One difference is in the extent to which they report that they spoke up in the sessions.

When responding to the question 'today in the group I talked', those who did not return responded '*frequently*' at more than double the rate of those who became practitioners. Out of 11 responses to that question among group A (the one or two time attendees), 6 (54%) were '*frequently*'. In the other group, 6 out of 26 responses (23%) were '*frequently*'. This might indicate that those who did not come back felt that they had nothing to learn, or that those who stayed were willing to listen and interested in listening. Listening might be as good an indicator as speaking of who will become engaged with the program and continue as a neighborhood practitioner.

When asked what they did with confidence, the first group (A) left that response blank 5 times out of 14 possibilities, while group B left only one of those responses blank out of 32 possibilities. Group B mentioned '*answering the questions*', '*talking*', '*giving an opinion*' most frequently.

In general, the responses of all participants indicate that the intended lessons were transmitted in these sessions. In response to what I learned, several responded that they learned '*about brain development*', but the most frequent responses indicated that they learned '*how to be patient*' and about the '*importance of giving time and attention*' to a young child.

When asked what they will use, the most frequent response (9) was giving their child '*more time*'. They also mentioned '*being more patient*', and '*playing with objects*'.

In responding to 'what I liked' those who attended more frequently seemed particularly engaged with the role-play. Thirteen out of 32 possible responses directly mentioned '*the role-play or drama*'. For the other group, only 2 out of 14 possible responses referred to the role-play or drama.



## Lessons Learned 2002

- Many participants will come one time only when a new program is introduced into a community.
- Participants especially enjoy and remember the role-play activities, and hold the lessons that those role-plays reinforce.
- Those who see themselves as good listeners are as important (possibly more important) than those who see themselves as talkers.

### ***Staying in the Community: 2002, 2003***

Following the Practitioners' Course, there was no immediate implementation by those women who had attended. ICA staff and Learning Basket friends in the ICA community in Mexico were engaged in other work and concerns, but after a year with no implementation, it was decided to actively pursue the reasons for this, and to uncover what needed to be done to support the continuation of the program in Mexico. Several informal but intentional conversations were held by Learning Basket friends in Mexico with the local civic leaders who helped initiate the Practitioners' Course and several local women who had attended the course and shown serious interest in taking the approach to their neighborhoods. After some apparently incomplete understandings and issues of personal dynamics were addressed, it seemed that The Learning Basket Approach could be implemented in this community.

#### ***Local Practitioners***

The original core group of four women who attended the most sessions at the Practitioner's Course were contacted and recruited to begin sessions in their neighborhoods. The women included:

1. A woman who is a health professional, has served as the local contact with the health clinic and is known and respected in the community.
2. A young woman who has a small beauty shop in her living room. She is married and has small children.
3. An older woman who has two helpful daughters who participated in preparation of the materials.



4. A young woman of very modest means with 2 small children. She is related to the woman who is the health professional.

These four were involved in initial implementation in 2003 and some of 2004 as volunteers. The local ICA contact distributed the (donated) funds to these volunteers for materials. As time went by, the model changed, due to uncertainties about how the money was being used. Two women have continued the work in 2005 and 2006 and are paid the equivalent of \$10 USD per session as well as getting the money up front to buy materials.

### ***Local Materials***

During 2002 and 2003, one of the issues to be negotiated was the local acquisition of the baskets. Each mother who attended the last, or celebration, session and had been attending regularly would receive a basket. As the program was implemented, in most programs, the mothers made everything for the basket that could be sewn. Participating parents brought sewing machines to the sessions and the work was done in the group sessions. The practitioners made all the additional purchases locally, including plastic baskets. Practitioners' expenses included gas for shopping, snacks, and all sewing materials and purchased materials for baskets. The local volunteer ICA contact has kept informal records of expenses and has calculated that total local expenses per participant (who received a basket) were about \$55 USD. Play to Learn and Parents Are Teachers books have been purchased through donated funds, carried to Mexico by ICA friends, and were not included in this calculation. This calculation also does not include start-up materials or initial training team expenses, which were probably \$5000-7000 USD, not including donated housing.

#### **Lessons Learned 2002**

- Immediate follow up with participants and local practitioners is needed to begin the Learning Basket parenting sessions in a community.
- It is helpful to have a local ICA contact to support ongoing implementation by managing funds for materials, keeping records, and meeting with local practitioners to schedule and plan ongoing sessions

### ***Re-entering the Community: 2003***

Sessions were begun in the fall of 2003. As the participation chart indicates, it took on something of a scattered nature. Over 5 sessions, 22 individual women attended. Of these, three (3) attended all 5 sessions. Three (3) others attended 3 or 4 sessions. Sixteen (16) attended once or twice

#### **Learning Basket Participation Bucerias, Mexico 2003**

Participants (n= 22)	Totals	23-Oct	25-Oct	10-Nov	24-Nov	8-Dec
AA	5	X	X	X	X	X
BB	1	X				
C	3	X	X			X
CC	1	X				
DD	1	X				
EE	1		X			
F	2	X	X			
FF	1	X				
GG	1	X				
HH	1	X				
II	1			X		
JJ	1			X		
K	1		X			
KK	1			X		
LL	1			X		
T	5	X	X	X	X	X
U	3	X		X	X	
V	4	X		X	X	X
W	2			X	X	
X	2				X	X
Y	5	X	X	X	X	X
Z	2	X	X			
Total	45					
Total	45	14	8	10	7	6

### **Reflective Moments: 2003**

*Reflective Moments* were completed as part of a reflective process at the end of each session. They were then entered into the same database as previously described.

Because participation reflected such radically different attendance patterns, two groups of records were formed. Those who had attended three, four or five times were combined into Group A (n=6), and those who attended once or twice were combined into Group B (n=16).



When responding to 'what I learned today', the second group (B) seemed to respond more frequently in ways that were somewhat global. There were several responses that mentioned social aspects of the sessions, such as *'being with my friends'* and *'being with others and enjoying the company'*. Only two responses specifically mentioned objects in the basket, such as the colored balls and the blocks. *'Play'* was only mentioned once.

The group of participants who came more often (A) mentioned *'play'* specifically 5 times, as well as mentioning *'encouraging the baby'* and *'stimulating the baby'* and *'talking to the baby'*, which were not mentioned at all in the other group. Both groups seemed to have heard the message to *'be patient'* and *'pay attention'*.

When asked, "what will you use at home" eight of the infrequent attendees mentioned *objects in the basket*. In group A, one parent referred only to objects over five weeks of responding, while others mentioned *'patience'*, *'attention'*, *'more time'* and *'talking'*.

Both groups liked conversations, *talking*, games, *that everyone participated*, talking about the children, talking and chatting with the facilitators. They especially liked *'explanations that we could understand'*, and this was mentioned frequently in both groups.

What was done with confidence seemed to be expressed with individual variation. One parent who attended four times responded with a specific object each time. Another who attended five times responded with *'playing'* or *'reading'* each time. Out of a total of 45 responses, *'reading'* was the most frequently expressed activity that was done with confidence, and was mentioned eight times by 5 different participants. *"Listening"* was the response five times, *'playing'* four times, *'talking'* four times, and *'giving my opinion'* three times.

#### Lessons Learned 2003

- Reinstating a program after 18 months brings many who are curious to the program, and a few who will commit to all the sessions
- Responses on 'Reflective Moments' questionnaires seemed to vary more by individual than by frequency of attendance.
- The messages most heard had to do with exercising 'patience' or giving a child more 'attention'. The importance of play was learned but not expressed to a great extent.
- Confidence in 'reading' seemed to be important to these participants.



### Continuing: 2004

In early 2004, three series of parent sessions were scheduled.

### Learning Basket Participation Bucerias, Mexico 2004

#### Participants

(n=22) 5-Jan 12-Jan 19-Jan 26-Jan 2-Feb 11-Feb 18-Feb 25-Feb 3-Mar 10-Mar 24-Mar 31-Mar 5-May 12-May 19-May 9-Jun 23-Jun

AAA	4	X	X	X	X	X										
BBB	3			X	X	X										
CCC	4	X		X	X	X										
DDD	4			X	X	X										
EEE	3	X	X													
FFF	4	X		X	X	X										
GGG	1	X														
HHH	1			X												
MM	5	X	X	X	X	X										
Total	29															

OO	3					X	X	X								
TT	4					X	X		X	X						
UU	6					X	X	X	X		X	X				
WW	6						X	X	X	X	X	X				
XX	7					X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
YY	5					X	X		X	X				X		
ZZ	7					X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Total	38															

NN	5											X	X	X	X	X
PP	5											X	X	X	X	X
QQ	5											X	X	X	X	X
RR	5											X	X	X	X	X
SS	4											X	X		X	X
VV	5											X	X	X	X	X
Total	29															

Totals	96	6	3	7	6	7	6	7	5	6	5	4	5	6	6	5	6	6
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5-Jan 12-Jan 19-Jan 26-Jan 2-Feb 11-Feb 18-Feb 25-Feb 3-Mar 10-Mar 24-Mar 31-Mar 5-May 12-May 19-May 9-Jun 23-Jun

These three programs ran almost continuously from early January through June. The only break in the program sessions was in April, and allowed for Holy Week, or *Semana Santa*, which is a major family and holiday time in Mexico. The first program included 5 sessions in January and early February. The second program ran for eight sessions from mid-February to late March, and the third program consisted of 5 sessions in May and June. (This scheduling took into account weather and local holidays. It is hard for participants to attend during either the rainy season, which runs from July to November, or during the very hot summer months of July and August.) Participation at these 2004 sessions was far more stable than during the re-entry program of the previous fall of 2003. In 2004, the first program had 9 participants overall and only 2 of these came just one time. By the second program, there were 7 participants and the fewest number of sessions attended by any one participant was 3 out of a possible 7. The third program demonstrated strong stability in membership, with 6 participants who all came each of 5 times except for one who missed one session.

**Reflective Moments 2004: Program 1 (n=29 records, 9 individuals)**

In general, these responses are shorter and appear not as thoughtful as those from most of the other programs. This could reflect the importance and/or time given to them by the practitioner leading these sessions, or it could have been a group for whom reading and/or writing was difficult or not important.

Nine (9) out of 29 responses regarding what was done with confidence said *'reading'*. *Participating* and *speaking* accounted for 7 more responses.

'Something I learned' included *'how to play'* 6 times, *'children learn in relationships'* 5 times, as well as *'paying attention'*, *'spending more time with my children'* and *'the development of the brain'*.

In response to 'what I will use at home' 9 said *'everything'*. Of the remaining responses, 5 included *'play'*, and several others mentioned *using particular objects* from the basket.

When asked what they liked, most said *'everything'*, but one repeatedly responded with *'the instructors'* or *'the way they taught'*.



**Reflective Moments 2004: Program 2 (n=38 records, 7 individuals)**

This group overall seems more focused on the values of play and using the objects than previous groups. Again, this could reflect an emphasis given by the particular practitioner leading the sessions, or some characteristic of the participants.

When responding to what they did with confidence, 11 responses were *'play'*. No other response appeared that number of times. An additional 7 responses related to *'speaking'* and *'giving opinions'* combined. For one participant, the response was *'telling my experiences'* for each session, and for another participant, the responses for each session were about *getting others to know her and know her name*.

Responses to 'what I learned' again strongly focused on *'play'* (7), with the additional strong appearance of *'talking'* (8) to my child. Most other responses scattered here, and included some that related to learning to *'talk to my classmates'*.

The responses to 'what I will use' again overwhelmingly targeted *'play'* (11) and *'using the objects'* (17). (For these responses only, some of these are duplicated count.)

When asked what they liked, most said *'everything'*, but there are several specific references to the Parents Are Teachers readings and discussions.

**Reflective Moments 2004: Program 3 (n=29 records, 6 individuals)**

Responses in this group seem to vary by individual more than by topic, and there seems a greater awareness of and response to process. This again might be because this was a small group with very stable attendance over a short time span. One feature of these responses is that there were quite a few for 'what I did with difficulty', which is not the case for most of the other groups.

In some interesting cases the responses for 'what I did with confidence' are remarkably similar to those for 'what was done with difficulty'. For example, for 4 of these participants, there are 9 instances where what was difficult (e.g. answering the question or reading) is what was done with confidence. There is either some misunderstanding of the questions, or, possibly (since it is a focus of the approach), there is an understanding that what is difficult can be overcome and done with confidence.

In responses to 'what I learned', the responses for these sessions seem to reflect a shift from more concrete responses (*'playing with the balls'*) in the early session to a more abstract concept in the last session (*'that parents are important to children'*). Because this is consistent among these participants, it looks like this was done as a group activity with facilitative leadership. This



is a very acceptable and instructive way of doing these reflections, but is more likely to carry meaning in a small stable group, such as this one was.

When these participants were asked to record 'what I will use at home', 8 responded with '*play*', 4 with '*talk*', and the rest mentioned particular *objects* from the basket. Again, because there is such consistency, there is the appearance of a group process with facilitative leadership.

In contrast to the previous 2004 programs, this group was quite verbal about what they liked, and their responses remained individualized over time. When asked to record 'what I liked', one participant focused on the *objects and playing and learning* exclusively. Another repeatedly mentioned '*participating*'. Another repeatedly mentioned the mutual respect among leaders and participants, such as '*that we taught each other without negative comments*'. In general among all participants, '*how things were explained*' was important and something they liked.

#### Lessons Learned 2004

- Intensity of the intervention (stable participation over several sessions close together in time) seems to produce more thoughtful and engaged participation and possibly deeper impacts.
- Participants can strongly engage with a particular theme.
- There might be a stronger focus on a certain theme in programs where attendance is more stable and closer together in time.
- There might be a stronger focus on certain themes because of the emphasis of a particular practitioner, the characteristics of the participants, or both.
- Developing and using reading skills (and the use of the Parents Are Teachers books) might be an important outcome of the sessions for some participants, and could be an area where participant change is occurring.
- Individual impact can vary, and some individuals are reporting particular learning that looks important to them, such as 'telling my story' (being heard), or that 'instruction is inclusive' (feeling respected).
- A smaller more stable group with facilitative leadership seems more likely to interact as a supportive group and to be more engaged with the underlying processes that build confidence and skills.



### Continuing: 2005

Following the next rainy season and winter holiday season, new sessions were begun in January 2005. Two programs were done in 2005. The first program consisted of nine sessions from early January to early February. These sessions were done once a week for two weeks and then twice a week until the last session in February. The second consisted of seven sessions from late April to early June. Participation is displayed below.

#### Learning Basket Participation Bucerias, Mexico 2005

Participants (n=24)	Totals	Jan3	Jan13	Jan8	Jan20	Jan25	Jan27	Feb1	Feb3	Feb8	Ap22	A029	My13	My20	My29	Jn10
III	6		X		X	X		X	X	X						
JJJ	7		X	X		X	X	X	X	X						
KKK	7	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								
LLL	5	X		X	X	X	X									
MMM	4			X	X	X	X									
NNN	4				X	X	X		X							
OOO	4			X	X		X		X							
PP	1				X											
QQ	1		X													
TT	2							X		X						
Total	41															
RRR	4										X		X	X	X	
SSS	2													X		X
UUU	2											X	X			
VVV	3										X	X	X			
WWW	3												X		X	X
XXX	3										X	X				X
YYY	3												X	X		X
ZZZ	4												X	X	X	X
4A	4										X	X	X	X		
4B	3												X	X		X
4C	5										X	X	X	X		X
4D	2										X	X				
4E	4										X	X	X			X
4F	3												X	X	X	
Total	45															
Total	86	2	4	5	7	6	6	4	4	3	7	9	11	7	3	8

The first group consisted of 10 individuals who participated during the 9 sessions. Three of these 10 participated only once or twice. Three attended four times, and four attended 5, 6, or 7 times. Of the 10 total, then, 7 attended 4 or more times. No one attended every session.

The second group consisted of 14 individuals who participated during 6 sessions. In this group, 3 attended only 2 times and 6 attended 3 times. Of the 14 total participants, 11 attended at least half the sessions. No one attended all the sessions, and only one person attended 5 times.

#### **Reflective Moments 2005: Program 1 (n=41 records, 10 individuals)**

These responses in general reflect variation based on the individual. There also seems in this group to be an engagement with sewing and making play objects to use with their children.

When asked what they did with confidence, one participant mostly responded with 'pay attention' and another with 'give an opinion' or 'participating'. Three participants responded almost entirely with *activities related to making materials*. Another said 'sharing my ideas' for several sessions.

In response to what was difficult, the most common response was 'nothing'. Several did mention that 'participating' and 'arriving on time' were difficult, as was *learning new words*.

Responding to what I learned, 12 responses mentioned 'how to play', and 17 mentioned *making and/or using specific objects* from the basket. Several also mentioned 'sewing'.

When responding to I will use, 40 of the 41 responses related to the objects in the basket. One responded 'toys and playing of all types'.

The responses to 'what I liked' indicate that this group solidified through their work together. Eighteen (18) responses related to *enjoying the social activities, being with friends, 'the sense of community in the group'*. The only individual who did not give a response of this nature was an individual who came only once.

#### **Reflective Moments 2005: Program 2 (n=45 records, 14 individuals)**

These responses seem to be distinguished again by individual variation. In addition, they seem to be more reflective and thorough than the previous group.

When asked what they did with confidence, one responded every time with 'give an opinion' another responded each time with 'reading, talking, telling', and another with 'participating'. Here again, *reading* seems to be important; 5 individuals mentioned it.



Responses to What I Learned were lengthy and more conceptual than usual. These participants mentioned '*play*' 6 times, while they talked about '*giving more time and attention*' 10 times. There were additional responses that related to '*better ways to be with my child*'.

When responding to 'what I will use', almost half of these responses (19) again referred to the objects but many (10) said they would '*give more time*', '*be more patient*'.

In response to what I liked, there was a mixture in this group. Some (6) responses referred to the '*connectedness and sharing in the group*', some (5) referred to '*things were explained well*', and some referred to '*participation*' in general. Others scattered across a number of other topics, such as learning about the development of young children.

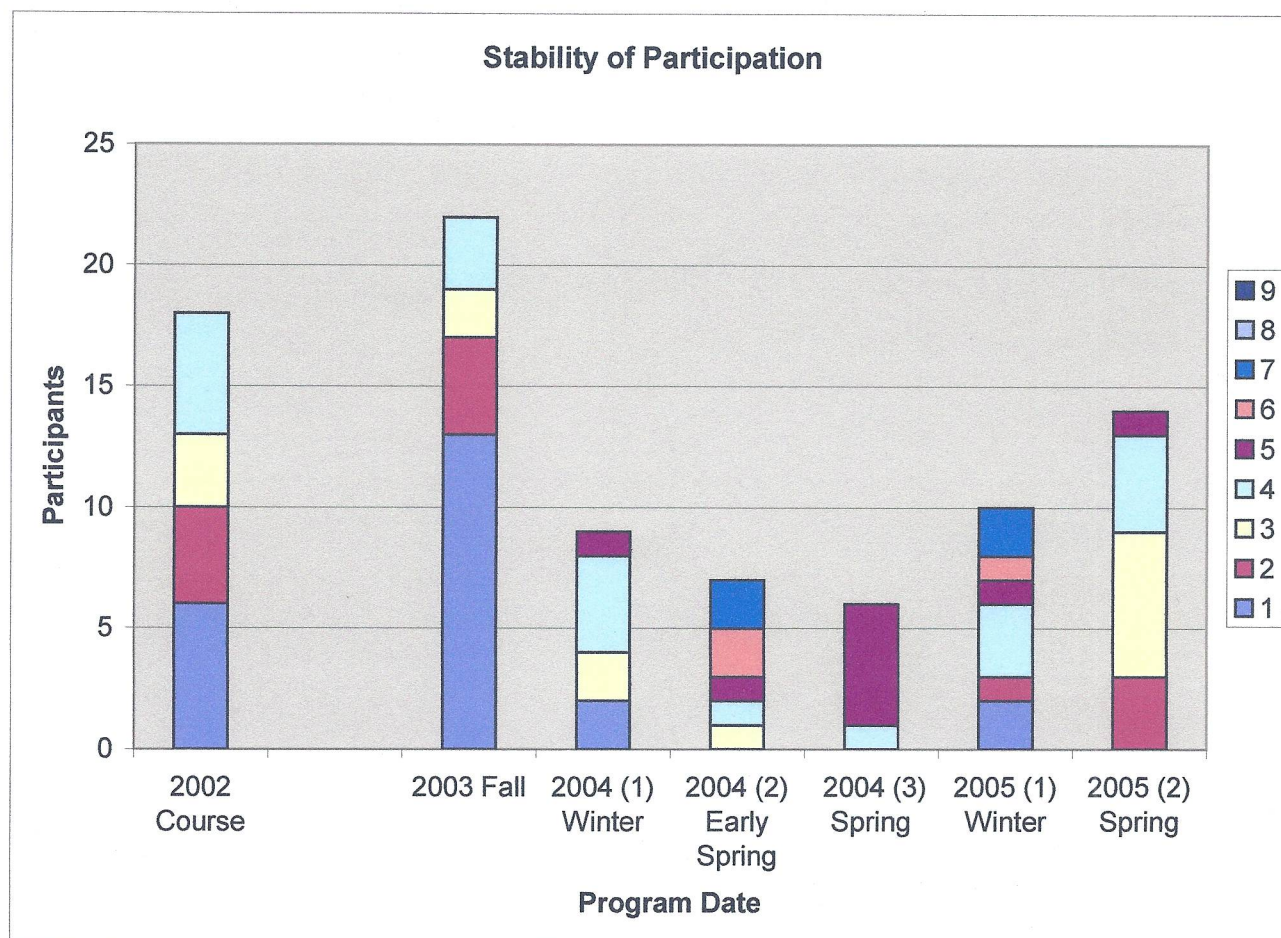
Lessons learned 2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on a common project (sewing objects for the baskets) provided a way to bring participants together and build social connections.</li><li>• Reading continues to be an activity that is notable to participants as they report doing it 'confidently'.</li><li>• Some participants relate to the objects and others to the ideas of 'giving more time' or 'being patient'.</li></ul>



In summary, over four years and seven programs of implementation, participants reflected a variety of topics that they did with confidence, learned, will use at home, and liked. Nonetheless, there is consistency in the topics that were most frequently mentioned over the four years of implementation.

### *Some General Observations*

This chart displays the stability of participation in the Learning Basket program in Bucerias from 2002-2005. The key on the right refers to the number of times that participants attended. For example, the blue that is the bottom color on four of the columns indicates the number of individuals who attended once.



The pattern of blue suggests that, as noted earlier, when the Learning Basket Approach was introduced into the community, many came who did not return. Each reintroduction (winter of 2004 and winter of 2005) again brought some who were just curious or for some reason unable to commit to more intense attendance. Following these reintroduction sessions, attendance was more stable in subsequent programs in those same years.



These patterns also can be used to examine the impact of intensity of delivery of the Learning Basket parenting sessions in Bucerias. Individuals who attended more frequently, and whose sessions were closer together in time can be said to have received more intense intervention. The patterns above indicate that the group that met in the spring of 2004 received the program with the greatest intensity. Their group also met over a short time span. This is the group that was focused on 'play' throughout most of their *Reflective Moments* responses and was notable for participants giving individual responses regarding what they liked.

The group with the next most intense service delivery is the group from spring 2005. Even though there was more variation in the participation, most were there for at least half the sessions and there were none who did not come for at least two times. The responses of this group also displayed the tendency toward responses that varied between individuals but were consistent within individuals.

The group that met in winter 2005 does not illustrate great intensity, but their responses indicate that these participants appreciated the socialization and mutual support that was present in the group. This group spent a great deal of their time making the objects for their baskets and expressed a joy in the work that was done together.

One caution in this interpretation is that we do not know who the practitioners were that led these groups. It is likely that the implementation became more complex (for example, more attentive to individual needs) or more focused on intended messages as practitioners became more practiced in leading groups.

#### Lesson Learned

- Participation patterns show a clear tendency to solidify as a program is repeated in a community.
- It is possible that greater intensity of program delivery allows a more concentrated focus, and, at the same time, more attention to individual experiences.
- It would be helpful to record who led sessions to see the emphasis of various practitioners. Names could be coded to protect identity.

### ***Addressing The Evaluation Questions***

This report was designed to address a set of evaluation questions of interest to the staff, organization, and funders who implement and support the work of ICA through the Learning Basket program. Many implications of the summaries and analyses presented above have been summarized as 'Lessons Learned'. These do not necessarily respond directly to the questions of interest, but could be useful as tools for continuous improvement and readjustment of the program. Some also are 'lessons' of what participants have revealed of themselves or their participation.

The evaluation questions to be addressed directly were presented early in this report. They are repeated here and will be addressed in order.

The first set of questions that were to be addressed by this report related to international implementation of the Learning Basket Project. The consistent collection of *Reflective Moments* through the 2002 –2005 implementation enabled an examination of the Learning Basket parenting sessions in an international setting over an extended period of time. In addition, the availability of ICA staff living and visiting in the area, as well as local connections, enabled the collection of background and context information through on-site interviews. This allowed questions to be addressed regarding how international implementation could be put in place, and to provide information that could be useful for future work of the Learning Basket Project.

#### **Questions relating to international implementation:**

##### **What supports implementation of the Learning Basket Approach in international settings?**

In this setting it was important to have local contacts, ICA friends living near the target community, and Learning Basket friends who supported the initial implementation with time and funds. The local contact who arranged the original demonstration was critical. Following that, the support and interest of a local health professional who arranged the Practitioners' Course and continued as a practitioner herself has kept the program going. Finally, there is a local ICA



contact who manages funds, arranges the delivery of books, and maintains ongoing contact with the local practitioners.

**Are there features of this implementation that seem to be salient for international implementation?**

The most important lesson here is to be alert to local politics and to local interpersonal dynamics. The visit by the Mayor's wife and entourage was intended by Learning Basket staff to lend credibility and importance to the initiation of the work, but it left some participants concerned that the work had the backing of a particular political party. The importance of immediate follow-up with local contacts was learned in Bucerias as well. The training team left Mexico immediately after the training and there was no implementation of the Learning Basket program for almost another 18 months. It required several visits and conversations to uncover the interpersonal dynamics that were the barrier to moving forward. These had to be addressed with some delicacy, and were accomplished through the good relationship between one of the local ICA community and one of the local contacts.

Another issue that has emerged is the purchase and production of materials for the baskets. Funds were not monitored closely at first, and resulted in the discontinuation of two practitioners from the program. The local ICA contact recommends that local practitioners do the purchasing because they know where to get things, but funds for this need to be managed carefully.

**Do the data from this site indicate that Learning Basket Approach can be successful across cultural and economic circumstances?**

The data indicate that the program can be successfully implemented in an international setting that presents cultural and economic circumstances that are different from those in which most of the Learning Basket implementation has been done over the last seven years. With one or two notable exceptions, Learning Basket has been delivered in the United States. The settings of implementation have varied greatly, from Chicago to rural Colorado. The circumstances that exist in Bucerias include a greater level of poverty (many of the homes have dirt floors, for example), and a different role for women, most of whom spend most of their day in simple household routines and childcare. Additionally, this program was implemented in homes in neighborhoods (barrios) and not in an institutional setting. Given all these conditions, the level of

participation and enduring attraction of Learning Basket sessions over four years testify to the applicability of the program across cultures and economies.

Questions relating to participant outcomes that were targeted for this implementation:

**Does participation in the Learning Basket parenting sessions foster parent/child interactions of a type that are known to increase children's learning capacity?**

**Does participation in the Learning Basket foster confidence in parents that they are capable of influencing the learning potential of their children?**

These questions will be addressed together, because the data relating to them were collected, summarized and analyzed together, and are conceptually hard to separate.

To examine these questions, a table was developed to summarize the topics and ideas that were most frequently mentioned in the text data that were analyzed. This table will be found below. This provides the opportunity to get an overview of what the participants in all the sessions found to be memorable and salient.

One of the main objectives of the Learning Basket Approach is to instill confidence in parents that they can be competent teachers of their children, and to enable parents (especially female parents) to give voice to their ideas. Reading through the summary of 'what I did with confidence' in the summary table finds that 'participating', 'speaking' and 'giving an opinion' have been consistently recorded. Perhaps a surprise here is the extent to which 'reading' is noted as something which has been done with confidence. This could indicate the confidence in their reading skills that is imparted by reading the Parent Are Teachers books, or just a general level of satisfaction with being able to read the simple texts that are used in the program, and that reading is part of the session. Building confidence in their own reading is likely to result in an ability and willingness to read to and with their children.

The Learning Basket curriculum was intentionally developed to instill research-based and recommended practice in fostering parent/child dyadic interaction. A presentation of the bases for the curriculum will not be repeated here. Descriptions of the research and conceptual foundations of the approach can be found in Learning Basket materials, and on their website ([www.ica-usa.org](http://www.ica-usa.org)). Here it is sufficient to note that play is the foundation of the curriculum, and



play is the dyadic context in which adults talk to children, expose them to pre-literacy features of the language, pose challenges, and delight in solving problems.

Overall, what is 'learned' and what participants think 'will be used' reflect major activities and emphases of the Learning Basket sessions. Patience and more time with children are the messages of role-plays in the curriculum, and interactive 'play' is what is practiced, talked about, and practiced again in the sessions. It is the major intended outcome of the curriculum. Zero to Three, a highly respected professional and parent organization for infant and toddler research and family support, has the following on its website:

In spite of all the recent hype about "making your baby smarter," scientists have not discovered any special tricks for enhancing the natural wiring phase in children's brain development. Normal, loving, responsive care giving seems to provide babies with the ideal environment for encouraging their own exploration, which is always the best route to learning.

The one form of stimulation that has been proven to make a difference is language: Because language is fundamental to most of the rest of cognitive development, this simple action—talking and listening to your child—is one of the best ways to make the most of his or her critical brain-building years.

In fostering 'play', the Learning Basket Approach is fostering early brain development and early learning in the context of the parent/child interactive dyad. The table below indicates that 'play' has been consistently an outcome of participation in the Learning Basket parenting sessions, at least on a short term.

As has been noted previously, there are some participants who connect to the objects and concrete features of the curriculum and others who connect more to ideas, such as 'more time with my child'. This might be a way in which the curriculum reaches adults of different learning levels, abilities, or interests.

All the data are from single reflections of participants as they were finishing a session. There is no direct information on long-term effects of participation in the program. However, because there is such consistency in the responses, another way of interpreting what is displayed in the summary table is as the saturation of these ideas into a community's neighborhoods over four years and 87 individual parents.

## *Reflective Moments Summary: Most Frequently Mentioned Topics*

Parenting Sessions	I did with confidence?	What I learned?	What I will use?	What I liked?
2002 (Practitioners Course) 46 records 19 individuals 5 sessions*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer questions</li> <li>• Talk</li> <li>• Give opinion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give time and attention</li> <li>• Be patient</li> <li>• Brain development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give more time</li> <li>• Be more patient</li> <li>• Play with objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role-play, drama</li> <li>• Participation</li> </ul>
2003 (1) 45 records 23 individuals 5 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Playing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing</li> <li>• Be patient</li> <li>• Pay attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be patient</li> <li>• Pay attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking</li> <li>• Everyone participated</li> </ul>
2004 (1) 29 records 9 individuals 5 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Participating</li> <li>• Speaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Importance of relationships</li> <li>• Paying attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everything</li> <li>• Play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everything</li> <li>• The way they taught</li> </ul>
2004 (2) 38 records 7 individuals 7 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Speak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Talking to child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Using the objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everything</li> </ul>
2004 (3) 29 records 6 individuals 5 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play with objects</li> <li>• Parents are important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Talking to my child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objects</li> <li>• Participating</li> <li>• Teaching each other</li> </ul>
2005 (1) 41 records 10 individuals 9 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making materials</li> <li>• Paying attention (I)</li> <li>• Give opinion (I)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making/using objects</li> <li>• How to play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toys</li> <li>• Playing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being together</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>
2005 (2) 45 records 14 individuals 6 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Give an opinion (I)</li> <li>• Participating (I)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give more time and attention</li> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Better ways to be with child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objects in the basket</li> <li>• Give more time</li> <li>• Be more patient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing in the group</li> <li>• Things explained well</li> <li>• Participation</li> </ul>
* Records are from four sessions only	(I) = Individual repeatedly made this response			



In conclusion, we can say that the table above supports the claim that Learning Basket, when implemented in an international setting over a period of time and with multiple participants, fosters the kind of parent/child interactions that are known to be related to children's learning capacity. It also supports the claim that such an implementation fosters the confidence of parents in their capacity to support their child's learning.

### ***Further Questions and Research***

In spite of the encouraging data reported here, there are some unanswered questions.

Some have to do with implementation. These include:

1. What are differences between practitioners and how does that affect the nature and quality of implementation? Does experience affect emphasis and effectiveness?
2. Do practitioners need refreshment and retooling after a period of implementing the program?
3. Are there ways to maintain stable participation?
4. Are there differences in outcome between programs that run five sessions and those that run eight?

Some have to do with participant outcomes. These include:

1. How could procedures be put into place to measure the short-term and long-term effects on children's development? (Partly to address this, there is an appendix to this report that addresses some of the concerns relating to measuring child change and child outcomes.)
2. How could long-term effects on parents' interaction patterns or family play patterns be tracked? What resources would be needed to do this?
4. Are there measurable community effects? How could they be defined and measures?

What are the long-term effects on a community of repeated implementation?

The promising results in this report suggest that there would be ways to collect valid and reliable data for addressing these questions. Complex interventions, such as Learning Basket, require complex and possibly long-term research and evaluation programs for claims of effectiveness, but the effort here indicates both willingness and capacity to carry it out. Perhaps more importantly, the results here suggest an encouraging base for continued meaningful program delivery.

## References

Sameroff, A. J., & MacKenzie, M. J. (2003). A quarter century of the transactional model: How have things changed? *Zero to Three*, Sept., 14-21.

Filemaker Pro, Version 7. © Filemaker Inc., Santa Clara, CA

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George Packard

Karen Snyder



## Appendix A

### Description Of Learning Basket As It Appears On The ICA-USA Website



# The Learning Basket® Approach

## Nurtures Family Literacy

### Using Materials Developed in Spanish and English

*These materials and approach have been piloted with Early Head Start, Healthy Families and Migrant Head Start programs as well as Family Literacy Programs funded by the Secretary of State's Literacy Office in the state of Illinois*

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[Our Approach](#)

[Early Brain Development](#)

[How to Implement](#)

[Background](#)

[Results](#)

[Play to Learn](#)

[Training Available](#)

[Contact Us](#)

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[Who is ICA?](#)

[Article - Nurturing Learning](#)

[Article - Playing to Learn](#)

[Update](#)

#### **PACT**

The *Play to Learn* activity book provides age-appropriate multicultural activities for Parents and Children Together (PACT) interactive play..

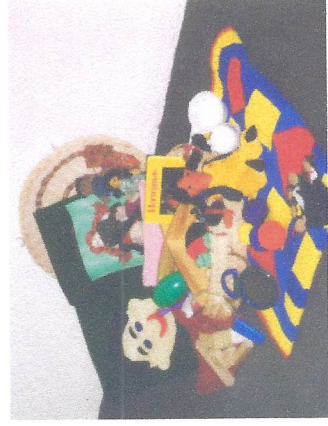


#### **Success Before School: Child Readiness**

*The Learning Basket contains*

18 categories of objects that are appropriate for interactive play with infants and toddlers.

The Play to Learn activity book provides activities that nurture learning through multiple intelligences across four major learning domains. A special emphasis is put on language development and pre-math and pre-reading skills as well as the development of self-confidence, self-image and imagination.



#### **Parenting Education and Support**

The *Parents are Teachers* literacy manual provides multicultural line drawings that stimulate conversation, critical thinking and problem-solving while enhancing vocabulary. The manual has been developed in



The manual was developed in collaboration with Proliteracy Worldwide.

The *Lessons of Danielle and Carlos* is a series of 13 presentations conveying critical information about the role of play in the development of language and learning. The lessons contain role plays, reflective conversations and interactive activities.

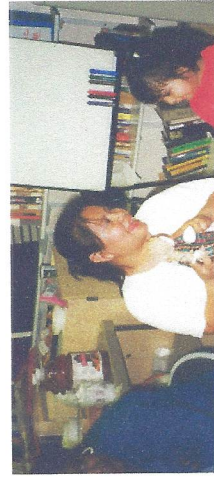


#### **Adult Self-Sufficiency Through Education**

*Learning for Success Life Skills Curriculum\**

Social and Personal Skills  
Financial and Economic Literacy  
Consumer Literacy  
Employability Skills

*Research and Development\**



#### **Home Visitation Manual**

The Learning Basket **Home Visitation Manual** was written in collaboration with the Howard Area Community Center Infant and Toddler program in Chicago. The manual is user-friendly, containing over 100 pages of age-appropriate activities which were developed by seasoned home visitors who have the concern for partnering with parents to develop their children's optimal potential.

#### **Practitioner Training Program**

The **Practitioners Training Program** is a series of three-day course offerings that equip practitioners to successfully design and implement a family literacy program using the *Learning Basket* approach. Three-hour modules include training in Home Visitation emphasizing a partnership with parents, and developing pre-literacy skills through interactive play, and nurturing adult literacy through life skills education.

*"Play to Learn* is one of those rare accessible, instruments that can enhance and support the parent-child alliance just when it needs to get on the right track. Simple but not simplistic, it speaks instantly to the world's parents of peaceful, mutually enjoyable learning."

Dr. Kyle Pruett

President of Zero to Three

Author of the books *Me, Myself, and I* and *The Fatherhood*

*"For most infants and toddlers their parents are their first and best love."*



For most infants and toddlers their parents are their first and best love. *Play to Learn* and the Learning Basket approach are wonderful tools which provide children and parents delightful time to cultivate that love through learning and playing together."

Alicia Lieberman, Ph.D  
Professor of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco  
Senior Psychologists, Infant-Parent program  
Author of the book *The Emotional life of the Toddler*

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### Developed by The Center of Imaginal Education



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Home Learning Basket® Activities That Stimulate Brain Development  
Background Info Implementation Evaluation Results Message *Play to Learn* Book  
Learning Basket Training System Contact Info

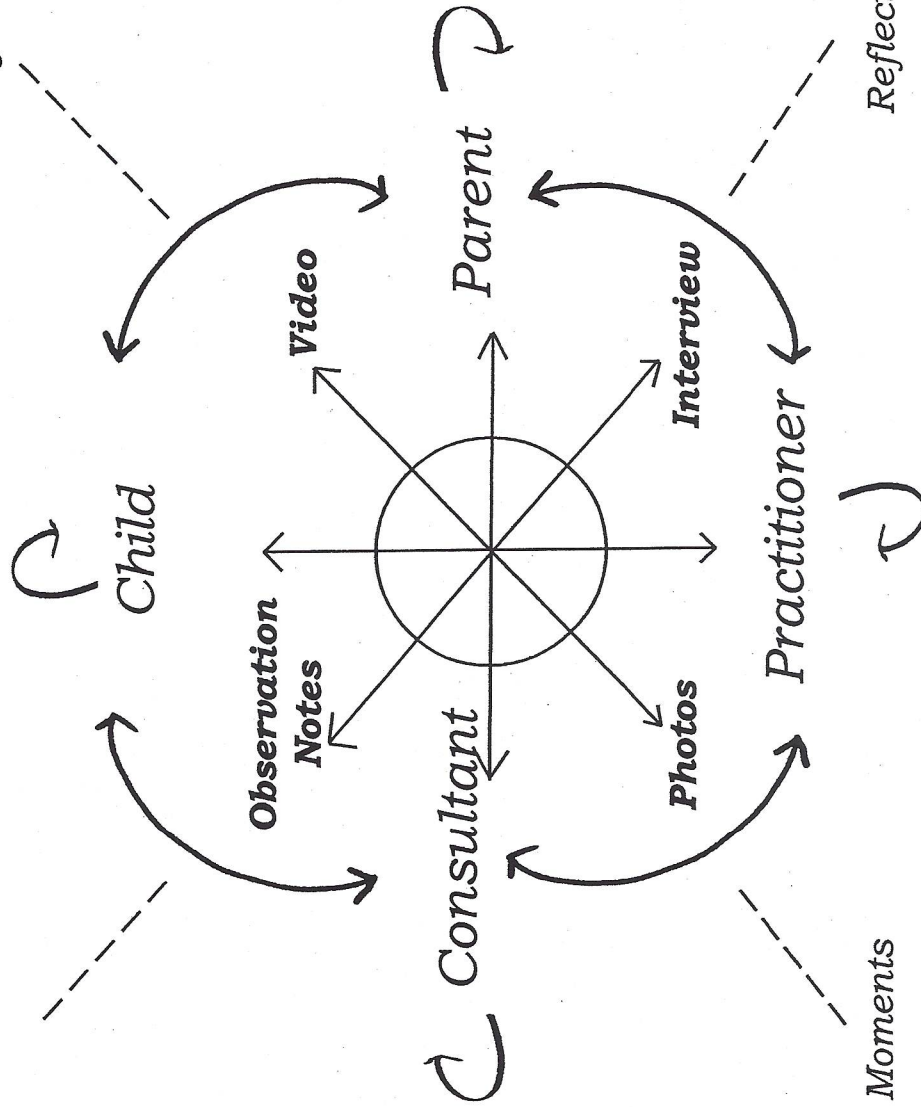
## Appendix B

### Learning Basket Evaluation System



Infant Development  
Assessment

Watch to Learn  
Play Journal



Reflective Moments  
Consultants Journal

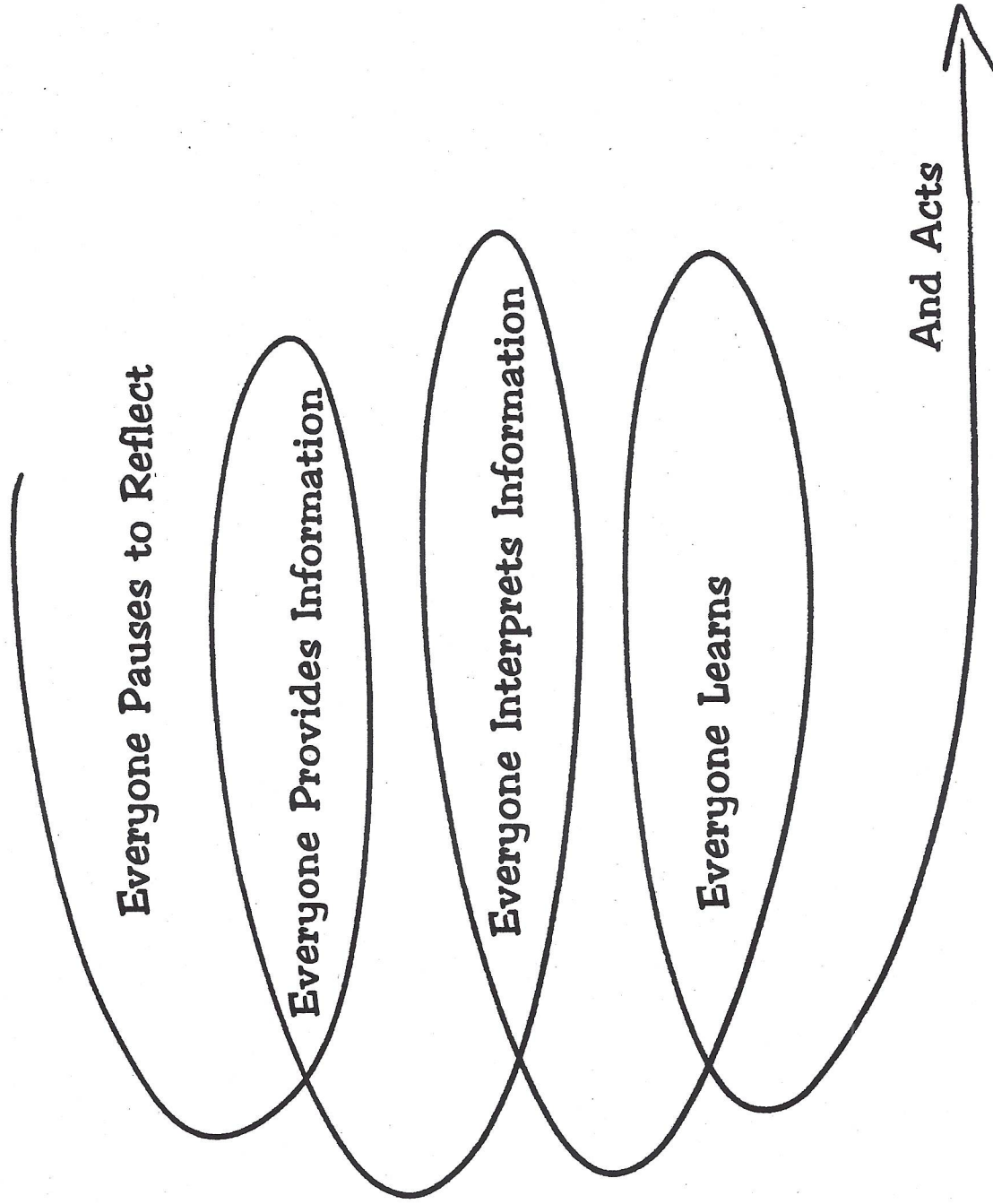
Reflective Moments  
Parents' Practitioners Journal

Data Collection



Interpretation Response

# Reflective Participatory Evaluation





# - Reflective Moments -

## Session Evaluation

.....Name

.....Program Name

.....Date

Today in the group session I:

☐ led a game    
 ☐ volunteered to do something for the group    
 ☐ led a conversation    
 ☐ presented an object    
 ☐ other.....

Today I spoke up:     ☐ never     ☐ sometimes     ☐ often.....

I offered my opinions:     ☐ never     ☐ sometimes     ☐ often

What I did with most confidence was:

What was difficult for me was:

When I was participating in the group today, I mostly felt: (circle two)



proud



anxious



bored



playful



confident



sad



creative



thoughtful



exhausted



frustrated

Something I that I learned today was:

Something I will use at home with my child/children is:

Something I liked about the session was:

Something I would change is:

## Appendix C

### Commentary Regarding the Measurement of Child Change



### **Issues to consider in measuring child change as an outcome of the Learning Basket intervention:**

Special care must be taken in measuring child outcomes. Child development outcomes in the early years are notoriously difficult to measure. The measurement of change is always problematic, but in the case of young children, it is further confounded by the natural maturation that is rapidly occurring. Because of this maturation, it is difficult to claim that any particular intervention has led to change in development, because some change would be expected without any intervention.

There are various devices available to address this problem. For example, there are indices that look at rate of change, rather than absolute change, and explore whether that rate has changed with an intervention.

In recent years, the variable of interest has shifted somewhat from the child alone to the dyad of the child and adult. This is related to increased understanding that change in the adult is related, through the dyadic interaction as a learning context, to higher probabilities that the child will experience optimal development.

If measuring child outcomes are a high priority for funders or a sponsoring organization, there are some ways to do this.

Some possibilities to consider will include:

1. A few well-selected case studies could yield some very interesting results regarding the impact of the Learning Basket approach on families.
2. Where programs are using additional assessment instruments, such as the Ages and Stages questionnaire, those instruments could be used for further information regarding children.
3. Comparison groups of children not receiving Learning Basket approach interventions, could be examined, but with great caution, since it is extremely difficult to hold all other things equal in the lives of children.
4. Expectations for development can be derived from the research literature in the field, and the performance of children in Learning Basket programs can be measured against these expectations. For example, children whose development is recorded on an Ages and Stages Questionnaire could have their development recorded as they enter the program and again after about 12 weeks of participation in the Learning Basket program. (Less than 12 weeks would strain the potential for documentable change.) The extent to which that development approaches or matches what is typical (normal) for those two ages could be compared, and a change in the match could be used as an indication of the effect of the program.

All of these issues suggest the need for great care and determination of resources needed to conduct various kinds of studies that will provide various kinds of results, but will be recognized as valid indicators of the impact of this intervention on child change.

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