This may mean that the starting point for a discussion so this is going to be a new and challenging activity. If parents did not read to the young child, then where in turn would a parent learn to read to their child, and make some communities. There may also be a need to provide an Arabic translation to a Sudanese woman who has not been given any formal education and who identifies the Arabic language as a symbol of the political oppression she fled.

All carers of the child should be provided with material which they can comprehend. For example, a young mother may be able to read English, but her grandparents, who are also carers of the child, may require the information in Chinese. Additionally, the words may have been translated but the pictures in the book are not representative of the culture. It is vital that all families are given the chance about whether they want any translated materials. They should be offered the English version and the translated version, or given a dual language book which ensures they receive both the home language and the English version.

It is vital that all families are given the chance about whether they want any translated materials. They should be offered the English version and the translated version, or given a dual language book which ensures they receive both the home language and the English version.

The selection of books should also be culturally sensitive. Books illustrated with photographs of Aboriginal people who have died are not acceptable in some communities. There may also be a need to consult with different points the precarious early years to ensure that the book selection meets their specific cultural and religious needs.

Access to books that portray the diversity of the Australian population – different skin colours and facial features – is also important so that families can identify with the characters. The style of artwork used in the book can also be familiar to a group and make them feel more attached to the book.

Some of the traditional Aboriginal dreamtime stories are now being produced as books and can be used to introduce the conventions of print, but these needs to be cautious with young children about the length of the story.

TRANSLATIONS

Providing translated materials is often seen as being culturally sensitive. Translations have a role but are not enough. Although many people from different cultures appreciate translated material, some do not, for a variety of reasons. For example, it would not be culturally sensitive to provide an Arabic translation to a Sudanese woman who has not been given any formal education and who identifies the Arabic language as a symbol of the political oppression she fled.

All carers of the child should be provided with material which they can comprehend. For example, a young mother may be able to read English, but her grandparents, who are also carers of the child, may require the information in Chinese. Additionally, the words may have been translated but the pictures in the book are not representative of the culture. It is vital that all families are given the chance about whether they want any translated materials. They should be offered the English version and the translated version, or given a dual language book which ensures they receive both the home language and the English version.

It is vital that all families are given the chance about whether they want any translated materials. They should be offered the English version and the translated version, or given a dual language book which ensures they receive both the home language and the English version.

In some communities, there may also be a need to consult with different points the precarious early years to ensure that the book selection meets their specific cultural and religious needs.

Access to books that portray the diversity of the Australian population – different skin colours and facial features – is also important so that families can identify with the characters. The style of artwork used in the book can also be familiar to a group and make them feel more attached to the book.

Some of the traditional Aboriginal dreamtime stories are now being produced as books and can be used to introduce the conventions of print, but these needs to be cautious with young children about the length of the story.
to engage with all families there is a need to determine where the issue of literacy sits within the family and community and the cultural perceptions and expectations. The parents’ literacy levels will have an impact on how a family approaches early literacy activities with their young child. Adult literacy varies between cultural groups.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Aspects of Literacy Survey 2006 found that approximately 46% of Australians aged 15 to 74 years had very poor to poor ‘document literacy’ (the ability to understand and use information from various kinds of written texts, including tests from newspapers, magazines and brochures), and 47% had very poor to poor ‘document literacy’ (the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payrol forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts). An even higher percentage of Aboriginal people have poor to very poor literacy (ABS, 2006).

Some cultural groups from outside Australia have equivalent or higher levels of education and adult literacy when compared to the Australian population as a whole, while other groups come from a background of low literacy levels, and circumstances of disrupted educational provision (ABS, 2006). It is valuable to ascertain a family’s history of origin, to determine the languages they speak and the education opportunities for males and females.

Most adults will not publicly admit to poor literacy. A parent may accept early literacy resources without admitting their poor literacy level. This creates challenges for professionals in implementing an early literacy program.

 Some ideas to consider:

- Parents with poor literacy may prefer one to one instruction from people with whom they can be encouraged to ask questions without embarrassment.
- If possible, role model positive adult/child interaction with books.
- Recognise that parents with poor literacy will struggle to enjoy reading and have fun with their children in this activity.
- Recognise that parents may want to protect their child from experiencing the frustration and embarrassment of not being a competent reader.
- In group work with parents it is important not to put any parent in an embarrassing situation by asking them to read aloud.
- Become familiar with the adult literacy programs in your area and recommend these to parents where appropriate.

PARENTS’ LITERACY LEVEL

In Australia (51%) come under the skilled migration scheme (ABS, 2007). These families are making a choice to move to Australia. “Skilled” migrants are voluntary and see cultural and linguistic differences as challenges to be overcome in making their way in a new country. They are often very keen to adapt the English language, and someone in the family is already described as having “good English language ability”.

Australia’s success in the English as a second language Indigenous children, including health issues related to poverty, which impact on language and literacy.

Table 1: Benchmark Achievement of Year 3 Students – 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Territory</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>92.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language background other than English</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Depending on State or Territory, this group was either identified from responses to questions asked about their traditional language or the language(s) they speak at home; from questions asked about their own or their parents’ country of birth, from enrolment records; or from English as a second language program records.

(Source: Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy report, 2008)

A child’s first teacher is their parent. It is difficult to expect a parent who does not speak English to be the best teacher for their child in relation to learning English. However, they are equipped to teach them their home language. Whatever language is being spoken, it is important to be consistent, have frequent exposure and repetition, and encourage the child to use their home language.

Children do not need to fully develop their language skills in the first week of school. Children who arrive in this country with very poor language skills make it into their primary school by using strategies of their own. Subsequent strategies to support children include encouraging parents to tell stories to their children, as this process by encouraging parents to tell stories to their children, as this process by encouraging parents to tell stories to their children.