"You Don't Need the Words to be in the Book": The Cultivation of Textual Agency during Families' Shared Text Experiences

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Abstract
In recent years, there has been significant interest in designing critical, asset-based family literacy and engagement programs that transform systemic racial and economic inequities and affirm and sustain marginalized families' cultural and linguistic practices. This study draws from perspectives on culturally sustaining family literacies to examine the role that shared texts played in co-learning among families in Read, Make, and Play (RMP), a bilingual family literacy program in Chicago, IL. As a collaborative practitioner-researcher team, we use qualitative methods to study the experience of parents/caregivers in two cohorts from 2021–2022. Our findings suggest that families cultivate textual agency through adapting, re-storying, and integrating texts and materials into everyday routines and rituals, which transforms hierarchies of knowledge between family members and texts. This study has implications for transformative family literacy and engagement work, research, and theory-building.

Keywords: Family Literacies, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, Text Analysis, Children's Literature, Family Engagement

Introduction

Family engagement and literacy programs in the United States have long been criticized for deficit-oriented approaches that dehumanize and disempower marginalized people (Auerbach, 1995; Coba-Rodriguez & Jarrett, 2022; Delgado-Gaitan, 2005; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994; Jarrett et al., 2015; Jarrett & Coba-Rodriguez, 2017). As such, practitioners and scholars have sought to better understand family and community literacies as a means to construct more asset-oriented and transformative programming. Our study delves deeply into one particular aspect of family literacy and engagement work: the role of shared texts in fostering agency and connections. Texts and literacies have served as knowledge authorities in formal academic settings (Luke et al., 1983). Thus, they can promote a deficit approach to family literacy by advancing a "one-right-way" understanding of cultural knowledge or practices. On the other hand, reading, making, and remaking texts in ways that center and affirm the everyday lives of families – particularly marginalized families – has the potential to do the opposite: humanize families and transform relationships and power hierarchies. This study examines a bilingual family literacy program that centered on family stories and *everydayness* (Corntassel & Scow, 2017) as

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caregivers[1] and their children engaged in co-learning (learning together), play with culturally sustaining texts and materials.

The Read, Make, and Play (RMP) program was a family literacy program that provided bookbags full of culturally relevant texts, games, and crafts to families in Chicago and offered a six-week, online, bilingual series of conversational meetings for families (caregivers and their families were invited to participate). These meetings explored how the families used the materials at home and discussed conceptual literacy strategies (such as playing, family storytelling, and questioning). We conducted a collaborative practitioner-researcher inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Baumann & Duffy, 2001) of the experiences of caregivers in the program over the course of two years. In this paper, we examine the experiences of caregivers in two cohorts through instrumental case studies (Compton-Lilly, 2021). We ask, "*What did co-learning look like among RMP families, and what role did the materials play in their co-learning experiences*?" As such, we examined the role that the materials played in families' co-learning, paying particular attention to critical text use, the sustainment of culture, and relationships. Our findings provide insight into the role that "textual agency," or a sense of ownership over a text or story, plays in cultivating family literacy and relationships. The identification of textual agency and its features has implications for text selection, design, and use in culturally sustaining family literacy and engagement programs and for theoretical frameworks of family literacy.

Review of the Literature

Shared Text Reading in Diverse Families

This study draws on literature exploring shared text reading in diverse families, particularly Black and Latinx families. The last 40 years of research demonstrate that children's reading is positively impacted by reading aloud with teachers, peers, and family (Clark, 1987; Teale, 1984) and that being read to by caregivers at home is positively connected to children's academic preparedness and performance in school (Morrow & Gambrell, 2002; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Dixon-Krause, Januszka, and Chae (2010), in a study of diverse families of many different races but primarily Hispanic/Latino and African American families with children ages three to five years old, found that caregivers reading in dyads with their children engaged dialogically through back-and-forth experience with the text, typically with the caregivers initiating or prompting discussion.

Importantly, the choice of text matters. Children tend to prefer and be more motivated to read texts that reflect their personal experiences (Purves & Beach, 1972). In a study of 10 African American families whose caregivers engaged in a family literacy program that specifically promoted African American authors, illustrators, and stories, McNair (2011) found that caregivers and their children (who were in kindergarten through second grade) collaboratively negotiated the process of choosing books together and that families were motivated to choose books that connected to their own lives. Factors that families noted when describing their book selection included gender (e.g., girls choosing books about girls), personal experiences (e.g., children choosing books in which characters have hobbies or milestones similar to their own), and relationships (e.g., books that feature similar family structures or important loved ones).

Shared book reading among families can also act as a mechanism for passing on cultural knowledge. In another analysis of the same dataset, McNair (2013) found that African American caregivers in this family literacy program reported an increase in time spent reading with their children over the course of the program and that caregivers used intentional comprehension strategies to support their children's literacy development. Furthermore, when supported in selecting books that connected to their families' experiences and positively represented African Americans, caregivers reported passing on knowledge about African American authors and illustrators and sharing

experiences and cultural knowledge through reading with their children.

Agency in Shared Text Reading

Shared family reading has the potential to strengthen caregivers' confidence and agency as active participants in the literate lives of their families. In a study of a Latinx caregiver literacy project, Larrotta and Ramirez (2009) found that Latino/a caregivers identified as having "low-socioeconomic status and low literacy skills" benefited from learning reading and literacy strategies in this context. Through engaging in Spanish with other Spanish-speaking caregivers and using books selected for and highlighting relevant cultural experiences, these caregivers grew in both their discrete literacy skills (e.g., vocabulary, reading comprehension, etc.) and their confidence and motivation (p. 628). Crucially, Larrotta and Ramirez highlight that treating caregivers as experts and inviting caregivers to share their personal experiences were critical to fostering this sense of confidence and agency.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that shared book reading among families can promote engagement and active participation in the reading process. Particularly of interest to scholars are wordless picture books, or picture books in which images and other features are the primary carriers of narrative and meaning. Studies of wordless picture books highlight these books' ability to support emergent readers in developing sequential and inferential thinking skills (Knudsen-Lindaur, 1988), second-language learning (Chen & Pan, 2009), and reading comprehension (Arizpe, 2013). Arizpe (2013) theorizes that this has to do with how wordless picture books invite readers to actively participate in the construction of meaning because there are no words there to act authoritatively. In a study of Latina mothers reading wordless picture books with their children, Petrie, Mayr, Zhao, and Montanari (2023) found that families reading wordless picture books with children ages three to five "engendered more interaction than the book with text, with a higher rate of parental prompts and responsive feedback, and significantly more child contributions" (p. 104). They write that wordless picture books "equalize parent-child shared reading interactions and encourage co-production of a narrative" (p. 127).

While caregiver voices have not historically been highlighted as central to the experience of shared reading with children, recent studies have attempted to explore this relationship. Nicholas and Paatsch (2021), in a study of mothers of two-year-old children in Australia, specifically explored caregivers' experiences of shared reading with their children. Nicholas and Paatsch found that participating mothers were actively and thoughtfully engaged in shared reading and made intentional choices oriented around both literacy development and personal connection with their children (p. 14). The participating mothers expressed purpose and motivation as they engaged actively in shared reading. In a similar vein, Coba-Rodriguez and colleagues (2020) and Coba-Rodriguez and Jarrett (2022) study of Latinx mothers' support of their preschoolers' transitions to kindergarten highlighted the resourcefulness and *familismo* (a core value that involves centering family) of the mothers (see Bermúdez & Mancini, 2013). Building on such research, we hope our findings will provide additional insights into caregiver experiences.

Conceptual Framework: Culturally Sustaining Family Literacies

We apply a critical, socio-ideological lens to the concept (and role) of family literacy practices through our theoretical framework of culturally sustaining family literacies, which brings together perspectives on culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSPs; Flores & Springer, 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017) and family literacies (Auerbach, 1995; Compton-Lilly et al., 2019; Gadsden, 1993; Reyes & Torres, 2007; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Within this broad framework, we focus specifically on two concepts: *everydayness* (Cornatassel & Scow, 2017) and critical engagement with texts. In the next

section, we describe literature that informs our culturally sustaining family literacy perspective and look deeper into the concepts of everydayness and critical engagement with texts.

Culturally Sustaining Family Literacies

For over three decades, U.S. family engagement scholars and practitioners have critiqued programs framed with a deficit perspective on marginalized families (Auerbach, 1995; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994; Noguerón-Liu, 2020). A deficit perspective approach centers middle-class whiteness as normative (Bang et al., 2018) and seeks to deny, suppress, and erase non-conforming cultural practices, often using "racialized scripts" (Ishimaru et al., 2018) such as "hard to reach" and "problem parents" to describe families. Deficit perspectives can appear to be equalizing as they often frame programs as "closing the gap" (Gutiérrez, 2008) or "fixing" families (Reyes & Torres, 2007), but they tend to locate the problem in individual families rather than systemic inequities (Auerbach, 1995). Scholars argue that programs designed from deficit perspectives both deny the wealth of knowledge that families bring (Hong et al., 2022) and reinscribe systematic inequities because their focus on problematizing individuals limits systemic change (Auerbach, 1995; Bang et al., 2018).

Our culturally sustaining family literacies perspective integrates CSPs, which are meant to counter and transform such deficit perspectives. Developed by Paris and Alim (2017) as a response to the uncritical uptake of Ladson-Billings's (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy, CSPs go beyond simply connecting to families' cultures and instead sustain linguistic and cultural diversity, cultivate healing, and challenge deficit narratives (Flores & Springer, 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017; Pearson et al., 2021). Importantly, what is culturally sustaining is not monolithic; scholars and educators must acknowledge that not every text is relevant to or sustaining for everyone and resist essentializing frames that group entire communities together based on their national, racial/ethnic, or cultural backgrounds. Paris and Alim (2014) explicitly describe the need to "perpetuate, foster, and sustain" not only heritage practices but contemporary, hybrid, and evolving practices (p. 85). Our understanding of culturally relevant texts and practices includes an expansive notion of culture as something that is "dynamic, shifting, and encompassing both past-oriented heritage dimensions and present-oriented community dimensions" (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 90).

As practitioner-researchers, this aspect of culturally sustaining family literacies held special relevance during the selection and examination of texts in the study. Throughout the program, we intentionally chose texts that potentially had salience for participating families. We chose bilingual books in Spanish and English, books that featured families living in urban contexts like our own, and books that represented Black and Latinx families positively. However, we did not see any given text or literacy practice as inherently culturally sustaining or not. Rather, whether a text is culturally sustaining depends upon the meaning that the reader makes from the text as they connect it to their own life. Different communities, families, and individuals will experience this differently, even when reading the same texts.

Our conceptual framework also draws from family literacies scholarship, which itself fits into a broader realm of research and theory about out-of-school literacies. Hull and Schultz (2002) explained that out-of-school literacies studies are a convergence of three fields: ethnographic studies of communication (e.g., Heath, 1983; Moll et al., 1992; Purcell-Gates, 1996), Vygotskian perspectives on social practices of literacy (e.g., Engeström, 1996), and new literacy studies (e.g., Gee, 1999). As such, the notion of "practice" in out-of-school literacies work often expands from notions of cognitive skills and strategies to social practices infused with ideologies and embedded in hierarchies of power. This more socio-ideological conception of practice also fits into Freire and Macedo's (2005) critical stance that social transformation requires critical consciousness of "reading the world" while "reading the word." This perspective has helped family literacies scholars uncover how families integrate identities, aspirations, and histories into their literacy practices (Coba-Rodriguez & Jarrett, 2022;

Gadsden, 1993; Moll et al., 1992). For our study, this aspect of the framework was especially relevant to the concept of everydayness (discussed below) and the ways in which we observed and analyzed family literacy practices.

Everydayness

We want to focus specifically on the concept of everydayness as an important facet of our analysis. This concept is often referred to in studies of Indigenous family engagement programs (see, e.g., Bang et al. 2018) and originates from Corntassel and Scow's (2017) research and reflections on the topic (both are Indigenous scholars and practitioners). Corntassel and Scow urge scholars to look beyond surface-level signaling of "culture" to the relationality, intimate politics, convergences of time and space, and gender relationships within everyday interactions and settings to gain a deeper sense of families' cultures. They contend that "our everyday actions, especially within a familial context, embody processes of leadership, governance, and community that help perpetuate our relationships at the interpersonal level as well as with the natural world" (p. 56). Corntassel and Scow argue that cultivating an awareness of everydayness ultimately fosters "family resurgence" through "renewing, remembering, and regenerating" (p. 56) ones' own cultures against the vise of colonialist narratives.

While Corntassel and Scow's research has focused on indigenous families, the concept can be extended to apply to other marginalized families. Bang et al. suggest that "focusing on everydayness through analysis of family roles, relations, and responsibilities is a promising strategy" (2018, p. 10). In this paper, we pay particular attention to what we call "family rituals and routines," or the small, everyday actions that families engage in together, such as cooking, talking walks, riding the bus, telling stories, and doing chores, and the ways that literacy practices, language practices, and the use of texts are or become embedded within them. Literacy scholars have drawn on similar concepts to broaden their understandings of literacy and language beyond the normative, text-based practices typically privileged in traditional school settings (e.g., Heath, 1983). For example, Arnold et al. (2012) illustrate the importance of the kitchen as a context for all kinds of literacies, such as reading the news at breakfast or working on homework after school. Understanding literacy as a social practice necessitates looking beyond the official classroom context in order to see how literacy practices function in everyday activities, as well as venues for fostering and transmitting cultural knowledge.

As an explicitly critical transformative stance, culturally sustaining family literacies encompass socio-ideological literacy practices that foster the type of "renewing, remembering, and regenerating" (Corntassel & Scow, 2017, p. 56) of family culture, languages, and histories that Corntassel and Scow promote in their discussion of *everydayness*. These may include practices embedded in everyday making and doing (such as cooking, cleaning, traveling, and shopping). It may also include moments when families challenge deficit narratives about their cultures, histories, and communities and support the development of relationships and identity.

Critical Engagement with Texts

Another concept that we are especially focused on within our theoretical framework is critical engagement with texts. Promoting culturally sustaining family literacies involves providing opportunities for families to counter, interrogate, re-make, connect with, and re-imagine narratives about their lives. However, the texts used in family engagement and literacy programs can carry with them the "authority" of schooling, which, without intentional, critical pedagogical praxis, can serve to reinscribe deficit narratives (Grever & Van Der Viles, 2017; Luke et al., 1983). This issue has been central to recent efforts to decolonize texts and school curricula that promote single-story narratives that marginalize and "asterisk"-ize (Tuck & Yang, 2012) the histories of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color) individuals (Reyes & Torres, 2007; Shahjahan et al., 2022).

Luke, de Castell, and Luke (1983) speak to the concept of the "authority" of school texts in their study by testing Olson's (1980) argument that school texts, created by mainly White, American

English-speaking dominant, middle and upper-class people, replicate societal inequities due to the authority they are afforded. They note Olson's claim that "despite historically differing educational aims and instructional approaches, the school text continues to embody the 'authorized version of society's valid knowledge'" (Olson, 1980, p. 192, in Luke et al., 1983, p. 112). However, they also challenge Olson's arguments, suggesting that texts themselves are only one factor in promoting a singular viewpoint of cultural knowledge. Several factors within a text's "discursive field" (described as "a field of use and exchange;" p. 112) frame the impact of the text, such as the *material techniques* (within the text), *institutions* (such as schools), practices that *put them in place*, and practices that *derive from them* (and thus shape and/or modify social relations). In other words, the authority given to a text depends on its social environment and pedagogical use. A teacher or caregiver who approaches a text as something to interrogate, question, and rewrite does not center its authority but rather gives the reader agency over the text. This is not to discount the importance of the material techniques (i.e., the messaging within the text) – diverse texts authentically representing the lived experiences of marginalized groups can foster agency and equity. However, the pedagogical practices surrounding the use of any texts should not go uninterrogated.

Critical engagement with text requires expanding our understanding of the ways in which we engage with texts and a social repositioning of the "teacher" and "learner" in terms of authority over the text and with each other. Noted literacy scholar Gordon Wells categorized several different modes of literacy engagement readers have with texts: informational, recreational, functional, performative, and epistemic (Wells, 1990). He argued that traditional literacy pedagogies tend to teach a narrower form of literacy engagement that is mainly performative rather than teaching deeper, more epistemic engagement. Wells' call for a more expansive understanding of literacy engagement was echoed by sociological scholars Moll et al. (1992) in their research on Latinx family home literacy practices and literacy scholars Janes and Kermani (2001) in their research on families' affective approaches to texts. Wells and his contemporaries (e.g., Beck et al. 1996) contend that in order to teach epistemic forms of engagement with text, teachers need to reposition themselves as learners *with* students (in this paper, we use the term *co-learning* to describe this practice), rather than authoritative transmitters of knowledge. Wells' research demonstrated that teachers who reposition themselves in such a way report greater appreciation of and respect for their students. As such, examinations of critical text engagement in family literacy work require attention to the authoritative positioning of readers and texts.

We propose that critical engagement with text can foster families' agency to reimagine deficit-oriented narratives from and through texts. Our conceptualization of agency in this study recognizes that literacy practices are mediated by human and non-human influences, including materials (e.g., the texts), designed spaces for learning (e.g., digital tools and the virtual platform in which sessions took place), and social relationships (e.g., other caregivers, facilitators) (Daniels, 2021; Zapata et al., 2018). However, learners' individual agency matters as well (as defined in Vaughn et al. 2020), including how they (re)position themselves and their families within existing power structures (Miller et al., 2020). For this reason, we focus on critical engagement with texts to centralize the texts and materials as important to families' meaning-making but also consider how caregivers and families (re)negotiate existing power dynamics through engagement with texts.

Context

About the Read, Make, and Play (RMP) Program

The RMP program was developed and facilitated by University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) Center for Literacy (CFL) staff. CFL is a community engagement organization and research center

that supports Chicago families in achieving their educational goals by offering multigenerational family literacy support services, building pipelines to future education and employment, and contributing significantly to public policy and scholarship in literacy education. Caregivers in RMP were mainly adult education learners at CFL in the English as a Second Language (ESL) or General Educational Development (GED) programs, but anyone with at least one child in a Chicago Early Learning program (Head Start, preschool, etc.) could participate.

The RMP program ran during the summer months of 2021 and 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was initiated in part as a response to a need voiced by CFL learners to foster more caregiver connections through virtual programming. The RMP program distributed bookbags full of culturally relevant texts, arts and crafts materials, and games to participating families (one bag per family). Families had the option to pick up the materials at specific locations or for staff to deliver a backpack to their doorstep. RMP held six weekly dialogue sessions virtually (over Zoom) with caregivers and their children. These were facilitated by bilingual literacy instructors within CFL's Adult Education department. Each Zoom session was recorded. Because RMP occurred while COVID-19 restrictions were in place, Zoom was the only way that families could participate. Zoom sessions were scheduled with families' busy schedules in mind.

Each of the weekly sessions was guided by an overarching theme and mapped onto a particular text and activity from the provided materials (see Table 1 for a list of key texts, text selection criteria, and related discussion themes). The six themes were selected with the intent to promote agency among parents and children and to conceptualize texts as tools for intergenerational literacy learning at home. The sessions were structured to build an empowering space for families and to discuss their reading, making, and playing at home. Facilitators took an explicit stance that they were not there as "trainers" or "teachers" but rather there to learn *with* families. The sessions were structured around a general protocol that included (1) a check-in around families' activities and general wellness in the prior week, (2) the introduction of a focal theme (e.g., family storytelling) and a text from the bookbag, (3) discussion and/or play around the text and the week's theme, (4) discussion and brainstorming around potential at-home activities related to the theme or text, and (5) open play or discussion.

Text Selection and Feedback Process

RMP coordinators approached text (and material) selection with critical intentionality, as the texts and materials were central to the project (a full list of all RMP texts and materials in the bags is included in Appendix A). RMP practitioners were instructors in CFL and were familiar with the adult learner population, and in some cases had taught ESL or GED classes to the learners in the past. The practitioners developed five criteria to guide text selection, aiming to choose texts that (1) engaged families in their home languages (about 60% of adult learners in CFL spoke Spanish at home, and many of our selected texts were bilingual or in Spanish); (2) represented families' racial and ethnic backgrounds positively and authentically; (3) referenced experiences and places familiar to Chicago families, such as urban spaces and parks; (4) made room for playful dialogue and relationship development between caregivers and children; and (5) celebrated creativity, invention, and artfulness. Upon identifying these criteria, CFL practitioners (several of whom were former CFL learners) and UIC literacy faculty were sought for text recommendations. Then, RMP practitioners went through a sorting process based on the criteria to choose the final materials. During the workshops, facilitators encouraged learners to take a critical stance in interrogating the texts and sought feedback on the initial text selection. In the second iteration of RMP, several additional bilingual texts were added to the bags as a result of feedback from participants and growing interest in RMP within the Latinx population. We recognize that not every text will be relevant to every family, but, as practitioner-researchers, we aimed in our practice to be attentive to the social, cultural, and historical contexts of families' lives in selecting texts.

Table 1

Key Texts, Weekly Discussion Themes, and Text Selection Criteria

Week	Discussion Theme	Key Text	Selection Criteria
1	Play, liberation, and creativity	*We Are In a Book* (Willems, 2010)	D, E
2	Features of texts (texts as tools)	*Todos A Comer* (Pérez, 2018) [bilingual]	A, B, D, E
3	Making connections	*Last Stop on Market Street* (De la Peña, 2015)	B, C
4	Questioning/agency	*The Neighborhood Mother Goose* (Crews, 2003)	B, C, D
5	Storytelling	*Imagine* (Colón, 2018) [wordless]	A, D, E
6	Family stories	*Family Pictures / Cuadros de Familia* (Garza, 2005) [bilingual]	A, B, E

Text selection criteria key:

- **A.** Texts that engaged families in their home languages
- **B.** Texts in which families saw their racial and ethnic backgrounds represented positively and authentically
- **C.** Texts that referenced experiences and places familiar to Chicago families, such as urban spaces and parks
- **D.** Texts that made room for playful dialogue and relationship development between caregiver and child
- **E.** Books that celebrated creativity, invention, and artfulness

About the Study Participants

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit study participants (Patton, 1990) in the RMP program. Caregivers who met the following criteria were invited to participate: adult caregivers identified as attending the RMP program with children between the ages of two and 18. While our larger study included a total of 31 participants, 14 were interviewed, and these participants are the focus of the present paper. In Cohort 1, seven participants were interviewed. Five identified as Latinx, one identified as African American, and one did not identify a race or ethnicity. Two participants spoke Spanish as their primary language, and five indicated that English was their primary language. In Cohort 2, seven more participants were interviewed. One identified as African American and six identified as Latinx. Five participants spoke Spanish as their primary language, and two indicated English as their primary language. In both cohorts, all participants identified as female, and almost all had annual incomes of under $50,000. The caregivers ranged from 27 to 59 years old, with an average age of 36. Almost all Latinx participants reported being from Mexico.

Researchers and Identities

Our five-person practitioner-researcher collaborative research team consisted of a mix of scholars, practitioners, and organizational leaders, four of whom are contributing authors on this paper. Kira Baker-Doyle identifies as a mixed-race (Black and White) cisgender woman whose home language is English and who has intermediate knowledge of Spanish. She played a leadership role in CFL and contributed to the design of the RMP program. Sarai Coba-Rodriguez identifies as a Latina cisgender woman whose native language is Spanish. Her role was as a scholar on the team. Andrea Vaughan is a white, cisgender woman. Her home language is English, and she speaks and writes Spanish in professional and informal contexts. She was in a leadership role at CFL at the time of this project and supported the implementation of the RMP program. Evelyn Pollins identifies as a white, cisgender woman whose first language is English. She contributed to the project as a researcher. Our fifth team member, Shawndra Allen, is a Black cisgender woman whose home language is English. She was a practitioner-scholar in our research team. She helped to facilitate weekly sessions and improve upon program design. While she did not contribute directly to the development of this article, she was involved in researching earlier iterations of analysis on the project.

Methodology

Study Design

Our study design draws from a long tradition in education research of collaborative inquiry between researchers and practitioners (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016; Baumann & Duffy, 2001). In our case, we were a team of scholars, CFL organizational leaders, and RMP practitioners. Together, we sought to gain a greater understanding of the voices and experiences of caregivers in the RMP program. We aimed to develop a clearer theoretical lens on our work and gain insights for future iterations of the program or similar programs. We adopted an instrumental case study design for our inquiry. Compton Lilly (2021) described studies that use this approach as "designed and implemented in order to examine and explore a particular issue or situation" (p. 13). The situation we examine here is caregivers' experiences in the RMP program. We used qualitative methods to capture the stories and experiences of caregivers.

Data Collection and Sources

This study uses data from two RMP cohorts: one from summer 2021 and one from summer 2022. In the face of COVID-19 and stay-at-home restrictions, our data collection procedures were primarily virtual. Specifically, we utilized session observations and in-depth interviews over Zoom, which are detailed below. A bilingual Latina female researcher (Dr. Coba-Rodriguez) conducted interviews with each participant. An interview protocol with open-ended and semi-structured questions was used (Patton, 1990). Interviews ranged from 60–75 minutes. Examples of protocol questions included "How would you describe RMP to someone who doesn't know anything about it?" and "Thinking about the materials you received, which ones did you and your family use the most? How and why did you use them?" The research team developed the interview questions using literature on family literacy, literacy practices, family engagement, and learning practices. The protocol was used to ensure that all topics were covered while still allowing the interviews to remain flexible and open (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1990; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Participants chose whether they wanted their interview to be conducted in English or Spanish. Carrying out interviews in participants' native languages promoted participants' confidence and comfort (Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009). The English interview protocol was translated into Spanish and then back-

translated into English by a professional translator, which is a procedure widely used in cross-cultural research to maximize the cultural equivalency of measures (Knight et al., 2009).

Data Analysis

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. We used REV, an American speech-to-text company that provides transcription services, for all English interviews. Once REV transcriptions were received, Drs. Coba-Rodriguez and Vaughan reviewed them for accuracy. Spanish interviews were transcribed and translated by a professional translator who self-identified as Mexican and has been working with the second author for almost a decade. Dr. Coba-Rodriguez reviewed all translated material for accuracy and intentionality. Members of the research team – a mix of practitioners and scholars – immersed themselves in the data by actively reading all transcripts to identify specific categories and themes in the caregivers' responses.

Coding began with the team developing a priori codes derived from guiding questions and substantive literature. For example, we identified co-learning as a core concept of our research question and, therefore, had codes such as "co-learning between family adults," "co-learning between caregivers and children," and "co-learning between children." Co-learning was understood to be a shared inquiry and discovery process among learners. These a priori codes were then complemented by new or emergent codes that were derived from the data (Saldaña, 2015).

We also engaged in open coding, for which the research team immersed themselves in the data through line-by-line analysis. The goal of the initial line-by-line coding was to identify key phrases or terms in the interviewee's words that could be used as preliminary codes. Coding disagreements were resolved through a collaborative discussion process known as coding by consensus (Hill et al., 2005; Hill, 2012).

We used profile and proximity matrices data displays – condensed visual representations of data – to aid us in pattern identification, determine the frequency of code mentions, and facilitate integration (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For profile matrices, we examined demographic variables that may influence families' literacy practices and experiences. Proximity matrices, on the other hand, helped us to better identify similarities and/or differences across participants' responses. Analytical memos were written throughout the analysis. These encouraged critical reflexivity and helped move the analysis to a deeper level of understanding. Member checks were also utilized in this study. Member checking is a technique for confirming a researcher's interpretation with study participants (Hill et al., 2005). For this study, Dr. Coba-Rodriguez engaged in question-answer validity. Question-answer validity is when researchers engage in real-time paraphrasing of interviewees' comments during an interview to confirm or clarify the intended meaning (Hill et al., 2005; Roller & Lavrakas, 2015; Taylor et al., 2015). For example, if inconsistent or vague information was identified throughout the interview, we asked participants to elaborate on previous comments or ideas.

Lastly, peer debriefing, defined as having a researcher or someone familiar with the phenomena review and provide critical and extensive feedback on the process, descriptions, analyses, and interpretation of the study's findings (see Bratlinger et al., 2005), was used to further enhance data management. Peer debriefing contributed to confirming that our findings and interpretations of the study were honest (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and that possible biases and errors in the data-gathering process and analysis were addressed prior to manuscript writing. Conversations with impartial colleagues involved the discussion of themes, ideas, and conceptualizations. Feedback was provided orally and covered all aspects of the study.

Findings

> *To be honest, when I saw it, I thought that it was a boring book. The cover wasn't appealing to me. I thought that my kids wouldn't want to read it, but when we read it, they were happy because they know tacos, horchata water. Everybody loved it. Tamales, we made tamales. It reinforced their roots greatly. But when I saw it the first time, I wasn't impressed. (Marisol)*[2]

In the above quote, Marisol reflects on how her family read and used *Todos A Comer!* [Let's Eat!], a book about Mexican meals (Pérez, 2018). She was initially skeptical about the text as the cover was not appealing to her. Other caregivers reported feeling similarly at first, primarily because the text seemed too "long" and "difficult." However, Marisol and other caregivers were open to trying it and willing to listen to how their children responded to the text. In that moment of openness, Marisol saw an opportunity to engage in a family activity (cooking), connect back to her family's heritage, and spend time with her family using the text in new and experimental ways. Other caregivers reported similar reactions. Some noted that when they saw the text not only as words to decipher but as an opportunity to engage in family remembrances, rituals, and routines, it became a tool for supporting family connections.

This pattern is indicative of our findings overall. While we used a range of codes to analyze our data, two coding categories stood out. The average number of codes per coding category stood at 144.2 (with an SD of 152.3 of 18 total categories). However, "co-learning between caregivers and children" was coded 444 times, and "effects of texts on relationships" was coded 499 times. These codes frequently co-occurred with several other codes, most notably with codes that indicated co-learning and an activity extension (co-occurred 76 times) and changes in approach to using texts (co-occurred 74 times). When we looked more closely at the nature of the shared learning activities, many were connected to families' everyday routines, rituals, and remembrances. Further, in our qualitative examination of the effects of texts on relationships, we saw a shift around the social hierarchy and authority of knowledge between caregivers and children and between families and texts. Below, we delve more closely into these two themes.

Co-Learning Between Caregivers and Children: Family Routines, Remembrances, and Rituals

Like in Marisol's story, RMP participants reported that texts were integrated into activities that included family routines, rituals, and remembrances of heritage, language, and culture. These practices were not ceremonial or tokenistic representations of culture; they were unique to each family and deeply embedded in everyday life, exemplifying Corntassel and Scow's (2017) conceptualization of everydayness. The majority of the time, the texts inspired them to engage in such activities. In some instances, caregivers initiated and used the texts to engage in such activities with other family members. Cooking and bedtime storytelling were family routines that over half of RMP participants reported engaging in or being inspired by the texts to engage in. Five participants reported that their children encouraged them to make the foods they saw in the two cookbooks that were in the RMP bag. Devisha, an African American grandmother, reported:

> I was at my daughter's house, and I was telling my grandson I was doing my homework. He like, "I want to do homework, too." I said, "Good, we can read this book." So, I was looking in the book, and I [inaudible], "Okay, Mom-Mom, we can make this." So, we made it. (Devisha)

Rosario, a Latinx mother, noted that the cookbook and games in the bag fostered sibling teamwork. In her interview, Rosario described an interaction between her daughters:

> As they're playing, [Reina] is actually looking at another book that you guys gave us, which is actually like a cooking book, where it showed instructions for parents on how to cook and had separate instructions for the kids on how to cook the same meal. … I remember she was telling her sister about how to cook something out of that book … Honestly, I think they're learning how to do teamwork. (Rosario)

The book that Rosario referred to was *Pretend Soup* (Katzen & Henderson, 1994), which provided detailed descriptions of recipes for adults and picture recipes for children. Several caregivers reported that their children used the text to direct them on what and how to cook. Miranda, a Latinx mother, discussed frequent use of the text: "We have even done it on two or three occasions where she says, 'Mom, bring flour, bring eggs, I mix, and you cook.'" Likewise, Alondra noted that her daughter developed a more varied interest in foods through cooking activities with the text.

There were several texts in the bag that inspired family storytelling or had familiar rhymes. About half of the RMP participants talked about how the stories in the texts and discussion of the texts among caregivers inspired remembrances of family songs and stories, often told during bedtime routines. For example, after looking at the *Family Pictures* (Garza, 2005) text and discussing the idea of telling family stories with others in the program, Miranda, a Latinx mother, remembered the songs of Cri-Cri the Cricket, part of a children's music series by composer Francisco Gabilondo Soler that was extremely popular in Mexico in the mid-20th century. She recalled the story of *La Negrita Cucurumbé*, which, as a child, encouraged her to see the beauty of her darker skin. She decided that she wanted to pass this on to her daughter as it was an important part of her identity development:

> It occurred to me to sing the song "The *Negrita Cucurumbé* went for a walk to the sea to see if the white waves could whiten her little face." And she says, "I wanted to be white as the moon; I wanted to be white as the foam that the sea brings." Then, a fish arrived, and the fish was wearing a bowler hat. He approached her and waved his tail, greeted her, and said, "But woman, why don't you see how beautiful your face is, *Negrita Cucurumbe*?" … Because perhaps it is a moment in which one, as a parent, can share with the children things from your childhood, from when you were younger, so that they know the culture and the customs that one had. (Miranda)

Another caregiver, Joanna, a Latinx mother, similarly recalled the power of song and family history after members discussed the *Neighborhood Mother Goose* (Crews, 2003) book, which triggered remembrances of family songs:

> …this lady shared about some songs that she will sing to her grandkids. And my mother passed away six years ago, so I can't really ask my mother what songs she used to sing to me. But there was one song that she would sing, and right away, like, it came back to my memory – I was like "Wait, my mom used to sing me that song." It was really nice that people got to share their experiences like that. (Joanna)

For family remembrances, the texts and discussions served more as a reminder that the caregivers *could* tell family stories – that they were not always limited to reading the words in a book. Eleanor, a Latinx mother, described her revelation that the texts could help her talk about her childhood with her children:

> Sometimes, one can see oneself reflected in the books. One comes remembering several things that happened to you in your childhood, and also what caught my attention is that one as a person, as an adult, can talk to his children about what you lived in his childhood. … Honestly, I never imagined that everything from one's childhood could come out of a book… (Eleanor)

Finally, another family routine that several caregivers reported when discussing text use was travel. Two texts that were popular in the bag and often incorporated into travel activities were *Last Stop on Market Street* (De la Peña, 2015) and *Hello Nature: Draw, Collect, Make & Grow* (Chakrabarti, 2016). Participants discussed how, through travel activities, they began to see everyday routines as different and more adventurous than before. One caregiver, Diana, a Latinx mother, reported a kind of heightened awareness of her daughter's perceptions of nature through shared text and travel activities: "Seeing beauty through her eyes. Because sometimes there are things that are so small that you pass by and don't give them so much importance, but they observe it." Another Latinx mother, Yadira, described how, like the cooking and bedtime activities, travel-related activities offered the opportunity for multiple family members to become involved in literacy practices:

> …we all, even my husband, we all loved that book, so we took it with us when we went to the forest or the park. And it had checklists, what to look for, and types of plants we could look for, and then what we think would happen, so we all started filling that book out as a family. (Yadira)

Other families reported that the texts were used as an accompaniment to travel activities, sparking a feeling that the participants were inside the story. For example, several participants discussed bringing the *Last Stop on Market Street* book with them during bus rides so that their children could read about the bus while being on the bus. Engaging with texts from the RMP bags encouraged families to work together intergenerationally, remember and pass on stories and songs in their home language, and learn more about each other during everyday family literacy activities.

Effects of Texts on Relationships: (Re)Positioning of Hierarchies

RMP participants reported the use of the texts as a means of exploring their own relationships, culture, and family dynamics and indicated a shift in the ways they related to each other over the course of the program. Several characteristics of the text and materials in the bags were important in this dynamic: wordless books served to support caregivers in pushing themselves to be co-authors with the illustrators, arts and crafts materials offered families the opportunity to extend stories and questioning beyond the text, and texts that were bilingual or reflected participants' cultures brought in more family participation in Latinx families. While the materials were helpful in creating space for these dynamics, the topics discussed in the weekly meetings, such as questioning, making connections, playing, and family storytelling, also supported families' experimentation with the texts.

The appearance of a wordless book in the RMP bags initially confounded some participants. Three participants reported that the *Imagine* book seemed unhelpful at first. However, after some exploration and discussion in the meeting about storytelling, the participants reported that they began to rethink their assumptions. Rosario described this change:

> I know that we had a book that didn't even have words in it. It was one of the books that we received, and I actually did learn that – I learned how, like, you don't need the words to be in the book -- for you to be engaged with your child. (Rosario)

A similar realization led many participants to rethink how they approached books with text. Six participants reported that when a text was uninteresting to their children, they focused on the pictures or ideas and discussed those aspects of the text with them. Instead of focusing primarily on decoding words in a text, these participants focused more on collective sense-making. Eleanor credited this shift with an increase in her daughter's reading engagement overall: "To be honest, [before] I just based myself on the letters, I based myself on giving the reading, and that's why I think my daughter was bored."

This broadened use of text – from focusing on the "word" to the "world" (Freire & Macedo, 2005) – was also reflected in the ways participants discussed shifts in the way they listened and learned with their children around texts. Toni, an African American mother, described becoming more "child-receptive:"

> So I'm listening to the kids. I'm looking to see, you know, what play they're going to do, or what are they going to ask. You know, I'm doing more attention as opposed to reading. And I always gave it more attention. But now I'm more child-receptive. (Toni)

Myrna described this kind of shift as repositioning who led the interrogation of the text: "So, much more letting her lead me and then following up with more questions about what she sees in the picture or whatever is happening in the book, what did she think of that?" This child-led approach was most evident when caregivers extended their explorations of texts through art, cooking, or community walks. Crafting, making, and engaging in extension activities supported families to explore ideas from the texts and position their children to be co-learners with them in these explorations.

Another factor that supported family co-learning and text interrogation was the cultural relevance of the text. Linguistic access was critical to bilingual families. Yadira noted that the Spanish-bilingual texts in the bag helped her husband become more involved in the RMP activities "because my husband only speaks Spanish, so… I'm usually the one that reads to them, so these were in Spanish, now my husband reads to them, so that was nice." As noted previously, the Mexican cookbook elicited much family discussion around food and cooking among Latinx participants. Diana observed that another book about Mexican culture, *Family Pictures* (Garza, 2005), fostered thoughtful discussion among the entire family about family history:

> …it makes you think; get some ideas. In fact, I shared it with my girls; I shared it with my husband…. And we started talking about how certain things connect with our lives. I started asking him questions, and right now, I don't remember, but I wanted to see what interpretation he had about it, and it was very interesting. (Diana)

Diana's reflections also indicated that family co-learning around the text supported an interrogation of family culture and history. This type of critical identity reflection was evident in other participants' discussions of culturally sustaining texts. Myrna noted that her experiences reading and discussing the *Last Stop on Market Street* text made her question why she did not seek out more culturally and linguistically sustaining texts and highlighted how important those texts were in engaging her daughter and fostering family relationships:

> I think it was very interesting because it stayed with me; it made me question why I do not go looking for books in Spanish, in English too, to be able to connect to real life … I really liked that one because it really made me have that connection with my daughter, because she liked that I asked her the questions. (Myrna)

Overall, participants indicated two kinds of repositioning in their interviews. The first was a repositioning of their relationships with the texts and authors. The second was a repositioning of their relationships with their children and other family members in terms of learning. While certain features of the texts helped to encourage repositioning, the discussions during the family sessions provided a space for families to see how others were using the texts and imagine other possibilities for themselves.

The repositioning generated a sense of agency and awareness of the possibility for caregivers to adapt their use of texts to read with their children in ways that met their interests and needs. For example, one mother, Elena, described how she changed the ways in which she engaged with her three-year-old child while positioned as a co-learner:

> [Before RMP,] I feel that the way I used to read to him was not good because he didn't understand, got bored, and wanted me to stop reading. So now, even if the book has a lot of text, if he likes the characters, we make a story that is not the one in the book. (Elena)

Elena described a greater level of freedom in using texts once she began adapting their use. In addition, as a result of this adaptation, she had a revelation: her son was aware of more than she realized. Although in the previous quote, Elena described her toddler as "not understanding" the long text of the book, she later discussed how her alternative approach to exploring the text and the world with him allowed her to learn more about his understanding:

> If the character falls into a puddle, I say, "Look, it's all muddy now," and he says, "Yes, all his face is muddy; he is very dirty now, and he likes it." Then, when we walk around, he remembers, he tells me, "Look, it's raining, and there is a puddle like the one in the book, do you remember?" and I say, "Yes," and he says, "I don't want to get closer to the puddle, or I can fall into it." (Elena)

Other caregivers reported similar realizations about their children and initiated participatory learning experiences in which caregivers and children explored the unknown together. Cooking together, going on nature hikes, making art, and even doing laundry together became opportunities for caregivers to become co-equal learners with their children.

Discussion: Textual Agency in Family Literacy Activities

Our study explored what co-learning looked like among family members in the RMP program and the role that texts and materials played in shaping those experiences. The empirical literature on shared family reading demonstrates that reading aloud with children has a variety of positive impacts (Clark, 1987; Teale, 1984) and that Black and Latinx families engage in rich, dialogic discussions during family reading (Dixon-Krause et al., 2010). Of particular interest to us was the use of texts that connect to families' lives (McNair, 2011). We observed that co-learning involved families extending their use of texts through their integration into routines and family rituals that represented everydayness (Corntassel & Scow, 2017). These practices all involve an agency to adapt, re-make, and apply texts and materials to one's own family practices and languages, home pedagogies (Delgado Bernal, 2002), and values – something we have come to call *textual agency*. Texts that reflected participants' languages and experiences, revolved around everyday family activities, and made space for invention (such as wordless books) provided initial connections and idea generation among children and caregivers around how to use these texts. In addition, the opportunity to discuss texts, exchange stories, and

explore ways of using texts with other family members also gave caregivers a sense of permission to assert agency over the authority of the texts. This connects to the existing literature on wordless picture books (Petrie et al., 2023), which indicates that they have multiple benefits for caregivers and children and that they foster back-and-forth interactions and discussion in shared reading settings. Across each cohort, we witnessed that, through these activities and the assertion of textual agency, the hierarchies of knowledge and power shifted among family members and between families and the texts. These findings reinforce Daniels' (2021) conceptualization of agency as a part of complex systems involving the interplay of materials, relationships, and social power in family literacy and illustrate ways that family members cultivate agency through their literacy practices.

Textual Agency and the Shifting Knowledge Authority of Texts

Textual agency played a critical role in extending families' use of texts and helping caregivers feel capable of engaging in literacy practices with their children. Caregivers' realizations that they could do more than decode texts with their children altered negative dynamics between them and their children. Through developing stronger textual agency, caregivers and children began to see texts as tools that they could use and adapt to support relationship-building, co-exploration, and cultural/linguistic sustainment rather than sources of information to which they must conform, and parents understood that their children had the capacity for storytelling and analysis even if a child could not decode a particular word.

Textual agency positions families as the authors of their stories and lives, and texts become tools for interpretation, exploration, and reflection. Thus, textual agency shifts the authority of the text from the author to the reader. Our findings build upon previous research in shared reading and critical text engagement and provide new insights into caregiver perspectives and experiences. We found that certain forms of text supported families' textual agency. Texts that connect to everyday activities such as cooking and traveling create possibilities for integration into families' daily lives, and texts that allow readers to insert themselves and become storytellers with or beyond the author also support textual agency. This aligns with research on shared family reading in Black and Latinx families indicating that shared reading can be a mechanism for passing on cultural knowledge (McNair, 2013). However, as Luke, De Castell, and Luke (1983) argue, texts play only one part in shifting the dominant authority of a text. The collective discussions around questioning, storytelling, making connections, and play that happened during the RMP program fostered reimagination among caregivers around what they could do with texts. Thus, a major takeaway from these findings is that integrating text use and reflections with family activities (not pre-scripted, but ingrained, family-directed everyday rituals and practices) is an integral part of empowering readers and making texts relevant. We plan to conduct a separate analysis of family interactions in the discussion sessions, which we hope will offer further insights into the influence and dynamics of that space.

Shifts in Social Hierarchies

In addition to a shift in knowledge authority with the text, caregivers shifted their perceptions of their children's knowledge and their own authority of knowledge. Like the teachers in Well's (1990) study, caregivers realized that their children had a deep well of knowledge and a capacity for critical thinking. They used text extension activities to explore these understandings with their children. They described many of these interactions by expressing awe at their children and their own lives. This was a significant shift away from seeing their children as lacking reading or writing skills and in need of tutelage. Rather, caregivers saw the assets that both they and their children brought to the table. These findings suggest that fostering co-learning positionality among family members may serve to support community education programs seeking to take a more asset-oriented approach to family literacy work.

Implications

We used a culturally sustaining family literacies perspective to examine the role that shared text experiences played in RMP family literacy activities. This revealed the ways that families enacted textual agency to adapt, re-make, and extend texts to connect with their lived experiences and that certain features of texts supported the development of textual agency. We observed transformations in relationships between family members and between families and the texts they used when the participants enacted textual agency. Here, we offer implications for theory-building in literacy research and next steps for research and practice.

We have highlighted connections between two key concepts in a critical family literacies framework: how texts are critically engaged with (including analysis and reflection) and how families' everyday practices and languages integrate texts and literacies. Centering families' approaches to analyzing and making sense of texts offers scholars a different lens on the nature of critical text engagement, shifting away from school-centered notions towards everyday home pedagogies and practices. It demonstrates how families both engage the languages and literacies they already have and try out new ways of engaging with texts, as the families in this study agentively engaged with texts and recognized their home practices as important and legitimate (Lewis Ellison & Solomon, 2019). While family literacies theory has done much to help scholars and practitioners understand families' funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), there is less known about the connections between funds of knowledge, agency, and families' analytical literacy practices. This study demonstrates how families' everyday practices contribute to their critical engagement with texts and the development of agency. In so doing, it builds critical connections between several fields and deepens our theoretical understanding of culturally sustaining family literacy practices.

The concept of textual agency raises new possibilities and questions for critical family engagement and literacy scholars. First, more empirical research on this concept is certainly warranted, including more examples of textual agency, the contexts in which it arises, and perhaps contexts in which it is stifled. Second, as many caregivers in this program were surprised at the agency they could have over texts, we wonder what factors (e.g., previous school experiences or media messaging) influenced their initial mindsets. This question, too, deserves study. Third, while our study focused primarily on the role and use of texts, we noted that discussion among caregivers about their approaches to literacy practices at home was also important in introducing alternative approaches to critical text engagement. We see this aspect as the "reflection" aspect of the praxis of critical transformation. We plan to continue our inquiry into this aspect in later studies, and we hope others will as well.

Textual agency can also inform program design. As we have learned, textual agency can be influenced by text choice. Culturally and linguistically relevant texts, wordless books and/or books that explicitly make room for families to insert their stories, and books that integrate with or speak to everyday family routines and rituals all support families to take up greater textual agency. They work as mediational artifacts (Baker-Doyle, 2023; Engeström, 1996) in fostering relationship-building and community and are central components of the larger landscape of material and social context (Zapata et al., 2018) in which learners may agentively engage with, extend, and remake texts as they read themselves into the world (Freire & Macedo, 2005). The texts used in this study were chosen to be relevant to families' experiences as bilingual, primarily Black and Latinx, and urban families. However, our understanding of culturally sustaining family literacy means that we do not assume any text is or is not relevant or sustaining; rather, that potential depends on the connections that families make with and to the texts themselves. We recognize that Black and Latinx urban families are not monolithic; some families may have Indigenous roots or speak Indigenous languages not represented in this

selection of texts. Further research has the potential to select different kinds of texts that are potentially relevant to different families' lives in different ways. In addition, our study offers some initial insights on important reflection topics that spur textual agency, including family storytelling, agency in questioning, making personal connections, and play and making. Overall, we hope this study begins to open new conversations in research and practice about how programs can support families in engaging in textual agency during shared reading and storytelling.

Endnotes

1. Here, we use the term "caregiver" to encompass all adults who care for children in the home.

3. All names are pseudonyms.

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Appendix A: Contents of Read, Make, and Play bags for Sessions

Books Provided in English to families that requested English and in Spanish to families that requested Spanish
Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña
The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros
We are in a Book by Mo Willems

Bilingual Books
¡Todos a Comer! By Dr. Ma. Alma González Pérez
Why is Everyone Wearing a Mask? By Debbie Qiu*
What Can You Do With a Rebozo? By Carmen Tafolla*
Family Pictures by Carmen Lomas Garza
Imagine (Wordless) by Raúl Colón

Books in English only
Ten, Nine, Eight by Molly Bang
The Neighborhood Mother Goose by Nina Crews
Hello Nature: Draw, Color, Make, and Grow (coloring/activity book) by Nina Chakrabarti
Anna Banana: 101 Jump-Rope Rhymes by Joanna Cole
Ruby Finds a Worry by Tom Percival
Guts by Raina Telgemeier
The Lightning Thief (graphic novel version) by Rick Riordan

Toys/Games/Craft materials
Notebook
Bananagrams word game
Egg shaker
24 pack of crayons
6 packs of crayons
Sidewalk chalk
Go Fish card game
Scissors
Glue stick
Pen
Pack of multi-colored construction paper
Paper bags
Jump rope

*Book not included in first cohort bags.