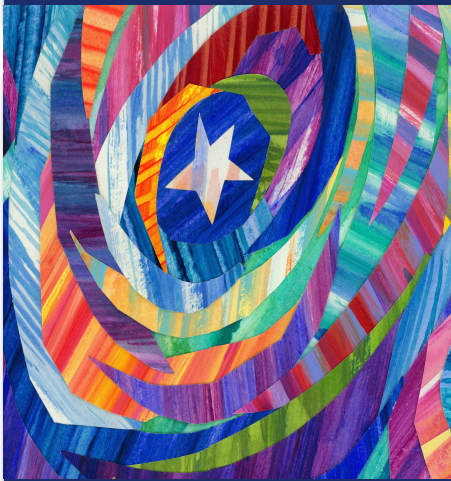


# The Early Years Count Literacy Connection



## Families Belong

Written by Dan Saks  
Illustrated by Brooke Smart

*Preschool edition*

### Overview of Book

What are the important things families do together? Highlighted in this book are many different families doing some of the many things that show how families belong together—singing, eating, cleaning up, relaxing, dancing, laughing, playing, trying, loving and more.

Genre: Picture/non-fiction

### Vocabulary

Books are a rich source of words new to children. Here are some words from *Families Belong* to introduce in your classroom:

bellowing	melodies
relax	unfamiliar
rumbling	heaping

Each time you read the book, choose 2 or 3 words to highlight.

Use age-appropriate definitions and/or the illustrations to help children gain an understanding of each word's meaning.

Use these new words throughout the day, reminding the children, "That's a word from our story!"

### Connecting with the HighScope Curriculum

#### COR Advantage 1.5

Social and Emotional  
Development  
Item D (*Emotions*)  
Item G (*Community*)

Creative Arts  
Item AA (*Pretend play*)  
Item Y (*Music*)

Social Studies  
Item FF  
(*Knowledge of self and  
others*)  
Item HH (*History*)

### Reading Tips

Take a "book walk" with the children before reading the text in *Families Belong*. Ask them to describe what is happening on each page. Then read the text and discuss what each family is doing. Ask questions like, "Does your family dance together at home like this family?" Ask about their favorite family *melodies*. Be prepared to stop at any point to allow time for children to offer their own stories.

Three readings are recommended to familiarize children with the story. Each reading provides an opportunity to introduce new vocabulary words, pose open-ended questions, and engage children in activities that make the story "come alive."

At the end of each reading, display the book in the book area so children can read it on their own.

### Throughout the Routine

Refer to the book throughout the day and use new vocabulary words in meaningful ways. Active engagement with the story helps the content come alive.

Take blankets and instruments along for **Outside Time**.

At **Greeting** and at **Rest/Nap Time**, have a whole group “relax and listen without saying anything” moment. Compare what children hear at these very different times of the day.

At **Large Group Time**, have children make up or hum/sing his or her favorite *melody* and encourage everyone to move to it.

### Around the Room

Highlight the book’s content and build on the children’s excitement in a variety of locations.

Create a family book for the **Book Area**. Have a page for each child’s family photos, favorite family recipes and song titles.

Add to the people basket in the **Block Area**. Encourage the building of homes, parks and other places for the “families” to visit.

Add foods, platters and other items to accommodate large gatherings in the **House Area**.

### Open-ended Questions

Enhance active engagement and early critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions. These questions encourage children to explain why or how things happen, make predictions, or brainstorm possibilities rather than give one “right” answer.

Here are some questions you might ask for *Families Belong*:

What is your favorite thing your family does together?

Have you ever been to an *unfamiliar* place with your family?  
Please tell us about it.

What do you think it would be like to *relax* on a blanket in a park and look at the sky?

For more information on how to use books and stories with children to enhance your curriculum, contact **The Family Connection:**

website—  
[www.famconn.org](http://www.famconn.org)

Facebook—  
@famconnsjc

phone—  
571.627.6710

### @ Home

Since many of the children in our county will have this book at home, use it as a way to further the home-school connection. In your daily contact—in person or by text, email or other notes home—encourage families to share *Families Belong* with their child. Here’s a sample message you can send:

*Families Belong* offers a good opportunity to share about family and is a wonderful book to read over and over with your child. Linger on the pages your child finds most interesting or novel. Share family stories. Ask questions like, “What’s your favorite (song, meal, dance, place) our family shares together? Why?” Listen and keep this conversation going. Share stories your child has not heard before as well as old favorites. Sing and dance together. Place a towel or blanket on the floor to look at the book there, pretending you are in the park together. This is a fun book to use to help your child understand that your family belongs together!