Dear (to the principal)

Connecticut Commission on Children, in collaboration with Literacy How and CBER at the University of Connecticut will offer three sessions this year for the parents of students in kindergarten through third grade, on how they can partner with schools to achieve optimal literacy outcomes. The focus will be on vocabulary, conversation, brain research, the word knowledge gap and the importance of exposure to various subject matter and contexts.

The three evenings will include dinner, an overview of the topic for the evening, hands-on practice and a synthesis of the evening’s learning. Children are encouraged to attend with their parents, as the activities are focused largely on parent -child exchange. The content will be fun and each evening will offer take home activities. For at least one evening there will be a book for the child(ren).

Trained facilitators, skilled in both English and Spanish, will guide the classes. The facilitators are selected for their capacity to work with parents as assets and partners in the schoolhouse. They have several years experience working with parents, across culture and language.

We would like you to offer us three dates that work well with your calendar, for the parent evenings. Please offer us one date in autumn, winter and spring. Let us know if you wish the evening to be offered in both English and Spanish.

This parent component is paid for by the State Department of Education. Supplies, dinner and the trainers are at no cost to the school. We will go over the details with you as we plan the sessions.

Parents are critical, as you know, to children’s attitudes towards learning. The word knowledge gap teaches us that the family exchange is critical to language development at every stage of literacy development. We look forward to your partnership in this work and hope you and other members of your staff will be able to attend all three sessions.

Sincerely,

Elaine Zimmerman Margie Gillis Darci Burns