Teaching Teens Literacy for Tots

This project enhanced learning and literacy while ensuring that at-risk parents or soon to be parents acquired valuable parenting skills.

Curriculum/State Standard
Life Skill Goals and Transition Goals

Overview
In this project, students participated in a group twice a week, discussing various parenting and literacy concerns. They were presented with information and books about parenting, as well as given opportunities twice a week to read to preschoolers. Students participated in field trips to stores to purchase items for the group. Former students with children spoke to members about personal parenting experiences.

Objectives
• The student will increase literacy skills by participating in reading activities with children ages four and under.
• The student will increase knowledge of early childhood parenting skills by participation in hands-on experiences with young children/infants and by being presented and instructed with appropriate materials.
• The student will apply information/strategies within their home settings.

Materials
bus transportation for field trips, children’s books, canvas bags, paints and paint pens, disposable cameras, photo albums, puppets to act out stories, snacks for preschool students, book for each preschooler, camera and film, toys for visiting children who were brought to group, meeting area with book shelves where all supplies can be kept and meetings can take place

Readiness Activity
Students were each given a canvas bag, which they decorated themselves. This bag was used to hold the set of children’s books that was provided to them. Each student signed a letter of commitment stating that they would fully participate in the project in order to be able to bring books home at the end of the year. Students were given an agenda/schedule of topics. The topics were their choosing and they were able to pick each week what they wanted to discuss. No particular order was given. Students delegated the direction of the group. Students led discussions and were provided with tremendous support from group leaders throughout the year.

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“Teaching Teens Literacy for Tots” project continued . . .

**Strategies/Activities**
- Group met on Mondays, 8th period and Fridays, 3rd period for 45 minutes each time. On Tuesday, 11-11:30 a.m., and Thursday, 1-1:30 p.m., students went across the street to preschool class and read to children.
- On Mondays and Fridays, the group would discuss parenting issues and review strategies for reading to young children. Group members would choose the books they were going to be reading so they could practice before reading.
- One group session was devoted to discussing parenting/literacy issues, while the other was for issues that the girls chose to discuss.
- Group members chose a theme in order to create their own children’s picture books. They were given cameras to take pictures and shown how to make a theme book.
- Group members were taken shopping and taught how to choose appropriate young children’s literature. They were also shown how to choose age-appropriate toys for children.
- Each group member received a set of children’s books to keep for themselves. At the end of the year, they were able to bring them home.
- Students were given an agenda at the beginning of this project and were able to choose from these topics what they wanted to discuss/learn about each week.

- Group members signed a letter of commitment to the group and were expected to be responsible for showing up at given times/meetings.
- Group leaders provided extensive demonstrations of how to read to a child and stressed the importance of reading to children. They were monitored each week and provided with feedback from group leaders.

**Culminating Activity**
The culminating activity was a party for the preschoolers. At this time, each of the children were given a gift/book. Participants were also taken out to lunch for end of year celebration and each member was given a journal at the luncheon. Members were also able to take their collection of children’s books home.

**Evaluation**
Students were monitored by group leaders who worked with them each week and also accompanied them to the preschool reading activities. At group meetings, participants were given feedback and were able to offer each other constructive criticism as well. Photographs documented students progress, as well as allowing them to see their own personal techniques. Written self evaluations were done at the end of the year.