

# Thematic Unit

## Learners' Lives as Curriculum©:

### OUR CHILDREN



**Level: Beginning/ Low Intermediate**

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## WE HELP OUR CHILDREN



We help our children. We read stories to our children. We wash clothes for our children. We help our children take showers. We play games with our children. We sing songs. We help send them to the school bus. Our children help us cook. We eat with the children. We comb their hair. We write with the children.

- *By the Greentree Family Literacy Class*

"I have three children. I have 1 sons and 2 daughters. I want them to grow up. I teach them songs. I want my children to live Pittsburgh. I want my children to be American citizens. My daughter wants to be a teacher. My son likes balls."

- *By Bwe Sar*

"I teach my sons to go to school. I have no job. I have three sons. I have no daughters. I tell them to get good education. My son Chetnath wants to be a doctor."

- *By Kala Subedi*

1.) PLAYING WITH LANGUAGE: To, With, and For

**DIRECTIONS:** Look at the story again. Fill in the blanks using *to, with, or for*.

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✓ Think about the words.

When do you use *to, with, and for*?



**DIRECTIONS:** Talk with your class about *to*, *with*, and *for*. Look at the examples of times that you use each word in English. Talk about the examples. Write more examples.

<u>To:</u>	With:	For:
<i>Come/ Go to</i>	<i>Come/ Go with</i>	<i>Cook for</i>
<i>Give to</i>	<i>Eat with</i>	<i>Do for</i>
<i>Have to</i>	<i>Live with</i>	<i>Make for</i>
<i>Like/ Want to</i>	<i>Read with</i>	<i>Pay for</i>
<i>Send to</i>	<i>Work with</i>	<i>Wash for</i>
<i>Talk to</i>	<i>Walk with</i>	<i>Work for</i>
	<i>Write with</i>	

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the story below. Fill in the blanks using *to*, *with*, and *for*. Use the chart on page 8 to help you.

Our children learn \_\_\_\_\_ the family. Every day, our children go \_\_\_\_\_ school. The younger children go \_\_\_\_\_ preschool \_\_\_\_\_ their parents. We send the older children \_\_\_\_\_ the school bus. We play \_\_\_\_\_ our children and talk \_\_\_\_\_ our children. We pay \_\_\_\_\_ clothes, food, and rent \_\_\_\_\_ our children. We want \_\_\_\_\_ take care of them. Our children like \_\_\_\_\_ sing, dance, read, write, and play.



**DIRECTIONS:** Write 3 new sentences using *to*, *with*, and *for*.

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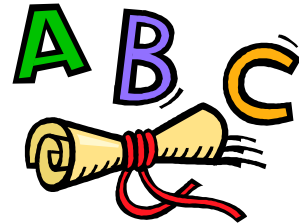
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## 2.) PLAYING WITH LANGUAGE: Verbs

**DIRECTIONS:** Read pages 1, 2, and 3 again. Circle the verbs. Make a list of the verbs below:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Put the verbs in **alphabetical** (ABC) order.



_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

✓ Think about the words.	
<p><b>Regular past = ✓ "ed"</b>                      (add "-ed" at the end)  <i>walk<u>ed</u>, work<u>ed</u>, learn<u>ed</u></i></p>	<p><b>Irregular past = X "ed"</b>                      (do NOT add "-ed" at the end)  <i>came, went, ate</i></p>



### 3.) COMPARE AND CONTRAST:

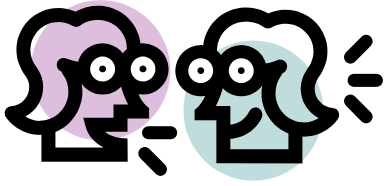
#### Raising Children



**RAISE CHILDREN** = Take care of children + teach children + play with children + read to children + talk to children + love children.

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with a small group. Finish the chart. Write what you think about raising children in your country and in the United States. Copy your group's chart here:

<u>In My Country...</u>	<u>In the United States...</u>



4.) TALK ABOUT IT:

Raising Children

**DIRECTIONS:** Show your group's chart to the class. Tell the class about your chart. Talk together about raising children, in your country and in the United States. What is the same? What is different? What is important?

My Notes:

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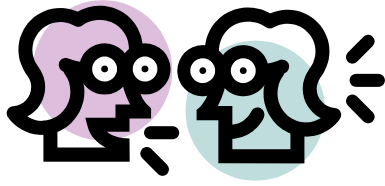
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## 5.) TALK ABOUT IT:

### My Children

**DIRECTIONS:** Walk around the room. Talk to your classmates. Find someone whose children...

Does your child...?

Do your children...?

- ✓ Play soccer. \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Climb on everything. \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Say "no!" \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Count and spell. \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Sing and dance. \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Wake them up. \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Tell about a time your child...

- ✓ Made you laugh.
- ✓ Scared you.
- ✓ Helped you.
- ✓ Made a mess.
- ✓ Made you angry.
- ✓ Helped another child.
- ✓ Was unhappy.
- ✓ Made you proud.

**DIRECTIONS:** Work with a team. Write as many verbs as you can in every box. You have \_\_\_\_\_ minutes for every box.



What do your children do at home?	What do your children do at school?
What do your children do outside?	What do you do with your children?

✓ **EXTRA:** Can you say these verbs in the past?

6.) WRITE NEW STORIES:

Thinking and Writing

**DIRECTIONS:** Make a new chart, just about you. Write things you know about raising children in your country and in the United States. Use other pages from this unit.



<u>In My Country...</u>	<u>In the United States...</u>



## 7.) PROJECT: Make a Class Book!

**DIRECTIONS:** Make a book about family with your class.

Your book needs...

- \_\_\_\_\_ ...Covers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...A title.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...Authors' names.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...Everybody's writing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...Pictures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...Drawings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...A dictionary for new words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...Space for notes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ...Anything else you want!



*When you finish one of these parts, check it off like this: ✓*

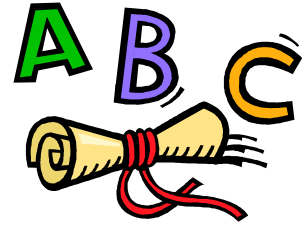
**DIRECTIONS:** Work with a partner. Choose one part of the book to work on together. Make that part of the book with your partner. Write your name, your partner's name, and your job here:

Me: \_\_\_\_\_

My partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Our job: \_\_\_\_\_

8.) PROJECT: Make a Dictionary!



**DIRECTIONS:** Work with your class. Choose 10 words you learned from this unit that you want to remember.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_

Now, work with a partner. Put your 10 words in alphabetical order.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_

Make a dictionary from these 10 words. Put it in your class book.

***Dictionary example:***

**Parent** (noun). - A mother or father, raising children.

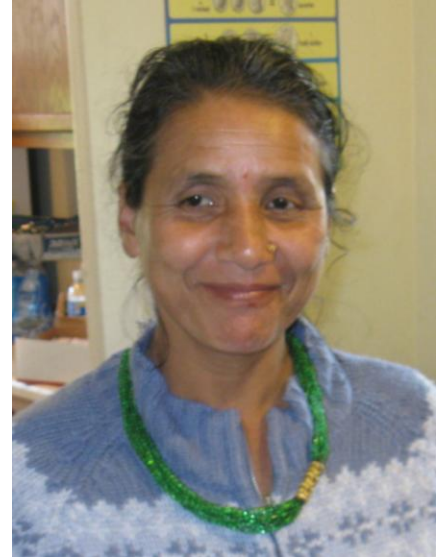
**School** (noun). - A place we go to study and learn.



## 9.) MORE STORIES

"I have children. I have 5 children. I have 1 son 4 daughters. I want them to have education."

- *By Khina Bista*



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## OUR FAMILIES

Nepali families are big. Karen families are big. Americans have one or two children. In Burma and Bhutan, people do not have money. In America, we have a little money. Our children go to work and to school. We help our children. We take care of our children.

- *By the Greentree Family Literacy Class*

## 10.) LOOKING BACK

### Language Learning:

**DIRECTIONS:** Read. Do you agree? Check (✓) "yes", "a little", or "no".

SKILL	YES	A LITTLE	NO
I can use <i>to</i> , <i>with</i> , and <i>for</i> .			
I know more verbs.			
I can put words in alphabetical order.			
I can use the computer more.			
I can write more in English.			
I can talk more in English.			
I can read more in English.			

### Activities:

**DIRECTIONS:** Tell your opinion. Check (✓) "good", "O.K.", or "bad".

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>GOOD</u>	<u>O.K.</u>	<u>BAD</u>
Writing			
Game			
Class book project			
Class dictionary project			

## SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS:

**GENERAL NOTE:** Unless otherwise noted, it is my opinion that all of these activities can effectively be done individually, with a tutor, in pairs, in small groups, or with the whole class working together, depending on the needs of individual teachers, classes, and learners. I would use some combination of the above and change it up for variety.

### Opening Stories (pages 1-3)

When introducing new reading material to my class, I have found the following steps to be helpful for beginning learners and sometimes lower intermediate learners:

- 1) Working from the reading selection written on the board: Teacher reads out loud, once very slowly so learners can hear and focus on how to pronounce each word, then at “normal speed” so the class can hear “how an American would really read it”. Repeat as needed if learners want to hear it again or if teacher judges that they could benefit.
- 2) Working from the board: Teacher reads one word at a time; learners repeat after each word.
- 3) Working from the board: Learners and teacher read the selection in unison.
- 4) Working from the board: Learners read the selection in unison while teacher silently points to all of the words on the board.
- 5) Working from individual copies: Learners read the selection to each other in pairs.

I work with beginning and intermediate learners who are nonliterate or semiliterate. I designed this unit with them in mind. For my beginning learners to become confident with a reading selection (about the length of the Opening Stories), the steps above may be spread out over a week or two. I don't necessarily do all of them every day – they can be combined or mixed up as the teacher deems necessary and as the learners need. I give learners a few minutes to individually review their personal copies of the reading we are working on before and/or after we do any of the steps above. I have found this sequence helpful with nonliterate and semiliterate beginning and lower intermediate learners.

### Playing with Language: *To, With, and For* (page 4)

Supplemental activity suggestion for intermediate learners:

- 1) Memorize and practice using some common phrases with “to”, “with”, and “for” (on the chart).
- 2) Learners generate and correct their own example phrases and sentences for these words.
- 3) Learners discuss when to use “to”, “with”, and “for”, and what they think the rules might be for these words in English.
- 4) Learners type up notes from their grammar discussion. The teacher can then make copies of those notes and distribute them to the class.

Beginning learners who find this too difficult can focus on the examples on the chart, and on practicing sentences using the phrases from the chart (some are available on page 9).

### Playing with Language: *Verbs* (page 7)

Supplemental activity suggestion for intermediate learners: Have them change the verbs from present to past tense, and/or write original sentences or a paragraph using the verbs in one or both

tenses. The teacher could assign them a certain minimum number of verbs to use in a paragraph. They could then read their stories to the other learners.

### Playing with Language: Verbs (page 7)

Teacher and/or learners can agree on how many minutes the groups should get to generate as many verbs as they can in a category. Fill in the agreed-upon number in the blank at the top of the page.

### Compare and Contrast: Raising Children (page 8)

I recommend a discussion about the opening stories and raising children before doing this activity. Different classes will need more or less discussion time. Possible questions to generate discussion: What is easy/ hard about being a parent in your country or in the United States? What do you like better about being a parent in the United States or in your country? What do you like about being a parent? What do you not like? What do your children like to do? What are they good at? What do they want to be when they grow up? What do parents think about that? What do parents want for their children? What do you teach your children? What is important when you are raising children?

### Write New Stories (page 12)

Some beginning learners may do better completing these activities in a small group. Their composition on page 13 can be done as a Language Experience Activity. Learners should use the following previous activities from the unit to help them write:

- ✓ Verb activities on page 7.
- ✓ Group chart on page 8.
- ✓ Discussion notes from page 9.
- ✓ Verb game on page 11.
- ✓ Individual chart on page 12.

### Project: Make a Dictionary! (page 15)

Supplemental activity suggestion: Before having your class make their own dictionary, ask learners to look at and explore some real dictionaries, English-English as well as bilingual dictionaries (English to their language would be great). Some people have pocket dictionaries or self-taught language course books with glossaries in the back. Have them compare and contrast different uses of dictionaries (learning what a hard word means in English versus learning what an English word is in their language, finding out how to spell or pronounce something, seeing the history of the word, etc.). Don't forget online dictionaries.