Introduction to
Connecting Literature and Math (CLAM)

Purpose

Connecting Literature and Math (CLAM) was developed through a contract with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. The project will support programs serving three to five year old children in meeting mathematics standards for children and for programs.

Children live in a mathematical world. They see and hear math all day long. Here are some examples of what they might experience:

- Clocks, phones and calendars with numerals
- Adults giving their phone number or their credit card number
- Prices on items in the grocery store
- Questions such as "Do you want a round or a square cracker?" "Would you like half or a whole banana for snack?"
- Comments such as "The new baby next door weighed 7 pounds 2 ounces." Or "We've had rain for 3 days. Maybe the sun will shine tomorrow so we can go swimming."
- From grandma, "You get taller every time I see you. I'll bet you've grown two inches since your fourth birthday."

These everyday events that surround children support the five mathematical standards identified by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM):

- Number and Operations
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis and Probability

These standards may seem beyond what many think children between three and five can understand. But children are natural mathematicians. They like to count, to compare quantities, describe shapes, sizes, and numbers, and move their bodies in space. Teachers of young children are encouraged to take advantage of these interests of children by providing access to appropriate mathematics experiences in a positive and supportive environment.

In **CLAM**, there are Tips and Techniques plus twelve curriculum guides that focus on strategies for providing children with daily opportunities to experience mathematics through child-centered, hands-on activities as well as teacher-guided activities. Ten of the curriculum guides begin with a children's book that focuses on one of more of the mathematical standards and two begin with two children's books. Each guide extends to related experiences in the learning environment and the daily curriculum.

During the development of **Connecting Literature and Math (CLAM),** guides were sent to selected early care and education programs for implementation and feedback. The feedback received from the programs was considered as revisions were made to the guides.

Two early childhood educators, Dot Brown and Beverly C. Wright, spent a year developing the curriculum guides. While the careers of the two developers have taken different paths, they share similar backgrounds and work experiences. The list that follows applies to both developers and highlights the similarities.

- Masters of Education degree with an early childhood emphasis
- Instructors of early childhood courses
- Monitors, evaluators, supervisors and mentors in preschool classrooms
- Developers of curriculum for children from birth to five
- Registered trainers in the Arkansas Early Professional Development Registry (TAPP)
- Certified Pre-K ELLA trainers

Currently, Dot Brown, President of Early Childhood Services, Inc., focuses on the development of training materials. Beverly C. Wright is an adjunct instructor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Both remain committed to making available to caregivers and teachers the support they need to provide high quality care and education for children from three to five.

The development of training materials that focus on the Cognitive/Intellectual Learning Strand and Mathematics Benchmarks from the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Handbook will provide teachers the tools they need to help children from three to five achieve mathematical competence. This mathematical foundation will support children as they move from the preschool years to kindergarten and beyond. An understanding of mathematics will also give them the tools necessary for “later in life” everyday tasks such as spending and saving money and help them find jobs in tomorrow’s ever changing technological world.