

**Words that *Cook!*  
Parenting with  
children's books™**

DVD Viewing & Workshop Guide

Show 12:  
Home & School Connections

[www.WordsThatCook.org](http://www.WordsThatCook.org)

## About Words That Cook!

Words That Cook! is an award-winning educational media company producing and delivering innovative literacy resources that empower parents and educators to inspire and motivate children. Our products and services include educational television programming and DVDs, Web resources, accredited courseware and training, and family literacy publications.

## About Words that *Cook!* Parenting with children's books™

Originating as a 13-part series broadcast on select PBS affiliates and on public access cable stations nationwide, *Words that Cook! Parenting with children's books* is the winner of the *International Reading Association 2005 Broadcast Media Award for Television* and is now available in DVD format.

This series celebrates the joy of reading, the art of writing, the wonder of storytelling and the magic of wordplay through a combination of interviews and live action spiced up with animated fun.

Professionals, experts, parents and children model and discuss enjoyable and practical techniques for enriching literacy experiences. Designed for educators and parents of children ages 0-12, each DVD includes an original 30-minute episode, comprised of five or six related segments, plus bonus guest material and messages from the executive producers.

## About this Viewing & Workshop Guide

This guide is designed to help you get the most out of the DVD, whether you are nurturing family literacy in your home, center or school.

With the guide, you can review the many family literacy suggestions presented throughout the show, read summaries of recommended books and engage in suggested activities.

If you are a professional planning workshops for others, you'll find helpful show overview and summary information as well as appropriate discussion prompts for both parent workshops and professional staff development.

The grade levels specified for each DVD chapter and extra indicate the grades to which the topics and modeled strategies apply. When children are featured, the *italicized* grade level indicates the range into which those children fall. If other grade levels are also listed, the topics and modeled strategies are appropriate for these grades as well.

By watching, discussing and using the strategies modeled in the show, we hope you and your family, or the families you serve, will be empowered to create dynamic and exciting reading and writing experiences for children.

## Summary of Show 12: Home & School Connections

When teachers and parents work together to support children, everyone wins. Like this show's guests, you can make connections between home and school by reading aloud, using writing boxes, learning about educational benchmarks and testing, attending school meetings, visiting the classroom and meeting with teachers.

### Show 12 Outline

#### Show Intro (length - 1:16)

In the Words that *Cook!* virtual entertainment room, hosts Monty Haas and Martine Bernard introduce the theme of this show: *Home & School Connections*.

#### Chapter 1: Laying a Foundation for Success in School (length - 5:13)

**Guest(s):** Terri James Solomon, Mom and Career Counselor, Iman Solomon, Dad and Elementary School Teacher, and their 7-year-old son

**Location:** Solomon Family Home

**Grade Level(s):** All Levels (*Kindergarten – Grade 2*)

**Topic(s):** families joining book clubs; establishing a family tradition of reading aloud; exposing young children to books; pausing when reading aloud to discuss content and ask questions; recognizing inherent value of all reading; enjoying reading aloud; using character voices when reading aloud; bringing stories to life; connecting books with children's interests; non-fiction books; expanding books with related follow-up activities; supporting children's writing with reading and art; homemade books; maintaining regular contact with teachers; parents and teachers as partners; benefits of parents showing appreciation to teachers; becoming familiar with and talking with teachers about educational benchmarks; noting and addressing children's academic problems as soon as possible

**Modeled Strategies:** exposing young children to books and other types of reading material

**Book(s):** The *Bionicle* series by various authors; *What Your First Grader Needs to Know* and other books from the *Core Knowledge* series edited by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.

#### Recipes for Success™:

Encourage young children to hold and look through books

Ask questions and discuss books when reading aloud

Start reading to children from birth

When reading aloud, try changing voices for different characters

Choose books that reflect your child's interests

Don't overlook nonfiction books, especially for boys

Enable children to make books

Maintain regular contact with teachers

Approach teachers as partners

Create opportunities to show appreciation to teachers

Recognize teachers have children's best interest at heart

Become familiar with educational benchmarks and talk with teachers about your child's progress

## Chapter 2: Supporting Reading and Writing at Home (length – 4:59)

**Guest(s):** Adam Schwartz, Dad and English Professor, Michele McDonald-Schwartz, Mom, and their 10-year-old daughter

**Location:** McDonald-Schwartz Family Home

**Grade Level(s):** Kindergarten – Grade 2; *Grades 3 – 6*

**Topic(s):** recognizing inherent value of all reading; understanding that books can't be too easy; giving books as gifts or rewards; working in partnership with the school; parents using successful school strategies at home; reading aloud books above children's reading level; parents modeling reading to improve pronunciation, fluency and comprehension; pausing when reading aloud to verify children's comprehension; progressing from reading a simple text of a story to a more complex text; introducing books through a movie version; using questions to guide children's writing; breaking down writing into steps; verbalizing ideas before writing; making writing enjoyable

**Modeled Strategies:** children reading aloud selections from favorite books; discussing favorite books with children; children and adults working collaboratively on creative writing projects; learning to enjoy writing through scrapbooking

**Book(s):** *Antarctic Antics* by Judy Sierra; the *Magic Tree House* series by Mary Pope Osborne; *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri

### **Recipes for Success:**

Attend school meetings

Remember, a book can't be too easy

Introduce a wide variety of books

Use reading strategies that support your child's learning style

Read aloud books that are above your child's reading level

Occasionally check your child's comprehension

Help uneasy readers by starting with simple versions of books, then advance to the next level, or introduce the story as a movie to see and hear before reading

If your child needs help writing, ask questions – Who? What? Where? – and get rough ideas onto paper together, then revise

Enable children to verbalize their ideas before writing

Remember, learning to write and having fun go together

### Chapter 3: Writing Boxes (length – 1:51)

**Guest(s):** Laurie Joy Haas, Words that *Cook!* Executive Producer, with Honey the Cookie-Bookie Bear™

**Location:** The Words that *Cook!* Virtual Den

**Grade Level(s):** Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6

**Topic(s):** the concept of writing boxes; types of items for writing boxes; including a variety of materials in writing boxes; letting children decide when and how to use their writing boxes; giving writing box items as gifts; considering age-appropriate tools

**Modeled Strategies:** including a variety of materials in writing boxes

#### **Recipes for Success:**

Encourage children to write with writing boxes

Don't tell children how to use their writing boxes

Over time, add exciting new items: stencils, chalk and rulers

Choose personalized gifts like favorite stamps and stickers, even books about art

Add only safe, age-appropriate writing tools

### Chapter 4: Parental Involvement in Children's Education (length – 3:49)

**Guest(s):** Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

**Location:** Studio and Mattahunt School

**Grade Level(s):** *Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6*

**Topic(s):** observing children in the classroom; addressing concerns with teachers before with administrators; requesting meeting as a team with teachers, specialists and administrators to address bigger issues; teachers facilitating day-to-day communication with parents; teachers asking for parents input to help assess children's issues; teachers inviting parents and other caretakers to read aloud in the classroom

**Modeled Strategies:** parents and other caretakers visiting the classroom; children reading aloud to parents and other caretakers in the classroom; responding to children's reading aloud with questions and discussion

#### **Recipes for Success:**

Consider observing your child in the classroom

Talk to the teacher about any literacy concerns

If you meet with the principal, include the teacher

Help teachers understand children's emotions

Let children know you and the teacher talk to each other

Read a favorite book to your child's class

Share special occasions with your child at school

## Chapter 5: Advocating for Children (length – 5:02)

**Guest(s):** Craig Ross and his 12- and 14-year-old sons

**Location:** Ross Family Home

**Grade Level(s):** Kindergarten – Grade 2; *Grades 3 – 6*

**Topic(s):** recognizing similarities and differences in children; recognizing children's different learning styles; connecting books and reading with creative play and children's interests; children reading the newspaper; using testing to understand children's needs; importance of tailoring teaching to children's learning styles; learning educational terminology (from testing) to effectively communicate with teachers; meeting with teachers at the beginning of each school year to discuss children's needs; getting involved in the school system and local politics

**Modeled Strategies:** addressing children respectfully; encouraging children with praise

**Book(s):** The *Star Wars* series by various authors; the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling

**Recipes for Success:**

Remember, fantasy play is storytelling

Consider testing to understand your child's needs

Become aware of your child's learning style

Be proactive in supporting your child's education

Learn the language from testing in order to communicate

Meet with teachers at the start of each school year

Continue to meet face-to-face on complex issues

Be involved in your school system and local politics

## Show Recap/Close (length – 3:14)

Hosts Monty Haas and Martine Bernard review selected Recipes for Success and present the Recommended Book List.

## Extra 1: A Word from Our Producers (length – 3:00)

**Guest(s):** Monty Haas and Laurie Joy Haas, Words that Cook! Executive Producers

**Topic(s):** overview of show content and guests; parents working in partnership with the school and with teachers; writing boxes; connecting books, reading, writing and creative play; book, *Read it Aloud! A parent's guide to sharing books with young children*; courseware for parents, teachers and others, *Read it Aloud! Tips, Tools and Techniques™*

## Extra 2: More Solomon Family – “Reading, Interests & Literacy” (length – 2:05)

**Guest(s):** Terri James Solomon, Mom and Career Counselor; Iman Solomon, Dad and Elementary School Teacher

**Grade Level(s):** All Levels

**Topic(s):** importance of parents' enthusiasm when reading aloud; exposing children to a wide range of literature; connecting books and literacy with children's interests; defining literacy and reading broadly

### Extra 3: More Solomon Family – “Early Writing Tips” (length – :54)

**Guest(s):** Terri James Solomon, Mom and Career Counselor; Iman Solomon, Dad and Elementary School Teacher

**Grade Level(s):** Kindergarten – Grade 2

**Topic(s):** correcting young children’s writing; supporting young children’s writing; recognizing accuracy of grammar will come later; making writing and reading enjoyable

### Extra 4: More Solomon Family – “Urban Opportunities” (length – 1:07)

**Guest(s):** Terri James Solomon, Mom and Career Counselor; Iman Solomon, Dad and Elementary School Teacher

**Grade Level(s):** All Levels

**Topic(s):** taking advantage of literacy-related programs and activities; Barefoot Books; looking for bookstores that offer interactive programs

### Extra 5: More Miriam Marecek – “Parents at School” (length – 1:44)

**Guest(s):** Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

**Grade Level(s):** Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6

**Topic(s):** homemade books; inviting parents and caretakers into the classroom to celebrate completion of projects; importance of offering evening events at school for parents and children

### Extra 6: More Miriam Marecek – “Choosing Books” (length – 1:13)

**Guest(s):** Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

**Grade Level(s):** Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6

**Topic(s):** connecting books with subjects children are learning in school; non-fiction books; visiting bookstores and libraries; historical fiction

### Extra 7: More Miriam Marecek – “Creative Book Reports” (length – :54)

**Guest(s):** Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

**Grade Level(s):** Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6

**Topic(s):** recognizing children’s innovative abilities; nurturing children’s aesthetic development; asking children to express what they read about visually and creatively

## Show 12 Recommended Book List

### For Ages 0 to 3:

#### **Playtime Rhymes for Little People**

Compiled by Mary Finch

Illustrated by Clare Beaton

This delightful book of children's nursery rhymes, games and songs is a collection to treasure. In these pages, you'll find classic favorites like *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe* and *The Wheels on the Bus*, as well as lesser-known gems like *Five Little Peas* and *There's a Wide-Eyed Owl*. Each piece is accompanied by easy-to-follow instructions for acting out the verses through fingerplays and gestures. Yarn, buttons, beads and a variety of textured fabrics form exquisite illustrations that add charm and allure and will surely generate countless smiles between you and your child. These selections are perfect for sharing with babies on bouncing knees as well as with preschoolers.

#### **You Can Do It Too!**

Written by Karen Baicker

Illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max

In this sequel to *I Can Do It Too!*, young readers and listeners will continue to be reassured and encouraged as they try to master everyday activities. The main character and narrator of the first book now takes on the role of big sister, helping her toddler brother learn how much he really can do – from clanking a spoon on the back of a pan to make music to counting the people waiting in line at the ice cream truck. With bold and engaging childlike illustrations, little ones will find themselves drawn to this book and, once the reading begins, they'll be captivated by the infectious sense of confidence big sister has and passes on to her little brother. And little brother has a surprise in store, showing he has something to teach his sister. This sturdy card stock book will please both your toddler and an older sibling.

### For Ages 3 to 6:

#### **Food for Thought**

Written and illustrated by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers

Fruits and vegetables take on a whole new nutritional role in this clever book, nourishing young minds with the concepts of shapes, colors, numbers, letters and opposites. Carved melons form a house with a square window and rectangular door. A sheep with a cauliflower body and an olive head represents black and white. Mushroom people play on a seesaw of rhubarb and broccoli to demonstrate up and down. With just a few strokes and cuts, Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers elicit an astonishing amount of expressions and personalities. The bright colors of the different food items and the solid page backgrounds, along with the whimsical nature of the photographs, will engage children's eyes and minds.

#### **Wait! I Want to Tell You a Story**

Written and illustrated by Tom Willans

Here's a book children will simply love! Tom Willans creates a delightful read-aloud with the repetitive pattern of a chain story rounded out by a surprise ending. When a hungry tiger happens upon a muskrat, he's anxious to make a meal of the creature, but there's more in store than the tiger bargained for. "I'm going to eat you, little muskrat," said the tiger. "Wait!" said the muskrat. "I want to tell you a story." "Okay," said the tiger, "but make it quick!" And so, the muskrat begins to tell his cyclical tale of other animals in similar predicaments, all leading to an unexpected ending. Don't be surprised if, as soon as you finish the book, your children shout, "Read it again!"



## **White Is for Blueberry**

Written by George Shannon

Illustrated by Laura Dronzek

Through bold and bright acrylic paintings and initially mysterious and bewildering text, Laura Dronzek and George Shannon help children (and adults) look at colors in a whole new light. “Orange is for sky... when the sun has nearly set” and “White is for blueberry... when the berry is still too young to pick.” By changing the standard settings for observing colors, the author and illustrator aim to challenge readers’ typical color associations. Younger children will be fascinated by the unexpected twists, while older children can engage in predicting end results. Accept the challenge along with your child to look at colors in a new and poetic way, and your eyes will open to many wonderful surprises.

## **For Ages 6 to 9:**

### **Chameleon, Chameleon**

Written by Joy Cowley

Photographs by Nic Bishop

A colorful chameleon wakes up hungry in his tree home and sets out to find a juicy treat. Along the way, he encounters geckos, a tiny frog and a scorpion. As he happens upon and climbs another tree, his luck improves with the sighting (and subsequent eating) of a big caterpillar. A female chameleon in the tree appears with dark colors that signify a message of “Go away!” But the brightly-colored greeting the male chameleon displays is then welcomed as the female’s colors pale. Is this the start of a new chameleon friendship?

The bold photographs and colored pages make this book a visual delight and, more than that, a fine example of combining informational visuals and story. At the close of the book, the Did You Know? section provides intriguing details about chameleon traits and behavior.

### **Horrible Harry and the Mud Gremlins (A Puffin Chapters Book)**

Written by Suzy Kline

Illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz

In this 14<sup>th</sup> book in the Horrible Harry series, you and your child will enter the world of a dynamic third grade classroom and playground. When Harry comes to school wearing a necklace with a mini-microscope attached, his classmates are intrigued. Anxious to use the microscope, Harry tells his friends they can observe a veritable kingdom of mushrooms during recess, but they’ll have to break a school rule to do so. Will they follow Harry and break the rule? And if they do, what will happen if they get caught? This fast-paced story has elements of conflict, excitement and apprehension and builds to a tense climax, all combining to motivate even the reluctant reader.

### **Look at My Book: How Kids Can Write & Illustrate Terrific Books**

Written and illustrated by Loreen Leedy

In this step-by-step guide, Loreen Leedy takes young readers on a writer’s journey – giving concrete suggestions and insightful advice for brainstorming ideas, researching, drafting and editing their own fiction or nonfiction books. With plenty of lists, captioned illustrations and thought bubbles sprinkled throughout the book, the format is both accessible and engaging. There are also examples of book formats and layouts, as well as lettering methods and binding processes. A resource list at the end of the book provides recommendations for other books on writing, illustration and getting published.

## For Ages 9 to 12:

### **Always Remember Me: How One Family Survived World War II**

Written and illustrated by Marisabina Russo

Rachel's grandmother, Oma, shares her photo albums that date back to pre-World War I Germany. Oma tells of the joy of her marriage, the sadness of her husband's death, the rise of the Nazis and the resulting Holocaust. Through grace and luck, Oma and her three daughters survived the concentration camps and were reunited in America. Oma presents Rachel with a special heirloom that she hopes will serve both as a remembrance and as a good luck charm.

The author/illustrator's own family history provides the foundation for this important story. With great sensitivity, Marisabina Russo introduces readers to World War II and the Holocaust. This picture book for the older child offers a poignant way to present a difficult topic.

### **The Island on Bird Street**

Written by Uri Orlev

This is a riveting story of a Jewish boy who is forced to hide in a bombed out building in a Polish ghetto during World War II. On the "island" of 78 Bird Street, Alex becomes like a modern day Robinson Crusoe, finding ways to make his shelter safe as he hopes and waits for his father's return. Alex struggles with fear, loneliness and starvation as he continues to hide from the Nazis. Throughout his ordeal, Alex demonstrates incredible courage, resilience and willpower, but will he survive the war and the hunt for Jews? And will his father ever come home? This story is so compelling and powerful that your child won't be able to put it down.

## For Parents:

### **Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever**

Written by Mem Fox

Illustrated by Judy Horacek

Dedicated to the "King of the Read-Alouds," Jim Trelease, this book will inspire parents to read aloud to their children not only when they are infants, toddlers and grade-schoolers, but always. Full of practical advice, activities and read-aloud anecdotes, you'll want to reread this book often to learn the games and catchy sound ideas that can help your child learn to and love to read. Beyond the literacy development benefits to children, Mem Fox makes the point that by sharing with your children the words and pictures, ideas and perspectives and everything else that books involve, you are forging a unique bond that will strengthen the parent-child relationship.

### **Making Books That Fly, Fold, Wrap, Hide, Pop Up, Twist and Turn**

Written and illustrated by Gwen Diehn

Photographs by Evan Bracken

Clear directions and diagrams make this exciting book a fine resource for both parents and children. The introductory pages give details about the book, how to use it, how to set up a book-making center along with specific tips for communicating your message and for illustrating your ideas. Types of books are separated into categories like Books that Carry Messages Across Space and Time; Books that Celebrate and Mark Things and Books that Save Words, Pictures and Ideas. Instructions are written in a step-by-step manner augmented with line and figure drawings. Photographs of the finished products help you to envision your books. This imaginative introduction to the wonderful world of book making will provide all the inspiration you and your child will need, so go ahead and start making books together today!

## Suggested Literacy Activities

As you partner with children to write collaboratively, it can be very helpful to understand how children's writing skills evolve as they grow. At [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org), type the phrase "Developmental Stages of Writing" in the search box (make sure the Seattle Public Schools button is selected). Select the top resulting link to see a chart that details how children's writing progresses from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Try creating circle stories (those that typically end in the same place they began) with a group of children and adults. Visit [www.lifetips.com](http://www.lifetips.com) and enter the phrase "circle story" in the Search box. Click on the link for Free Kids' Party Games – Circle Story, scroll down to the tip of the same name and give it a whirl! Adjust the game as needed depending on the age of the children and/or create the stories in child-adult pairs. Consider having the adults write down the stories as they develop.

For some book-making ideas that can inspire exciting collaborative writing, visit [www.makingbooks.com](http://www.makingbooks.com). Go to the Teachers' Page or the Parents' Page and select Free Projects. You'll find instructions for making eight different types of books. These projects suggest just book formats; the content is up to you and your children.

Book series like the *Magic Tree House*, the *Magic School Bus* and *Horrible Harry* that consist of short chapter books with recurring characters, can be wonderful tools for encouraging reading, even for older children who struggle with reading.

For more information on the value of such reading, check out the article *A Fresh Look at Series Books* by Dana Truby. You will find this article at the Web site of the Edina Public Schools in Minnesota ([www.edina.k12.mn.us](http://www.edina.k12.mn.us)). From the home page, select Concord Elementary under the Schools heading. Then, under Teach & Learn, select Media Center. You will find a link to a PDF of this article in the Recommended Reading section.

To learn more about the concept of writing boxes, visit the Bank Street College of Education Web site ([www.bankstreet.edu](http://www.bankstreet.edu)), click on Library, then Library Home Page, then Library Index A-Z. Go to the "W" section of the index and click on the link for Writing Box Program. This comprehensive yet concise paper delves into the Writing Box Program of the Brooklyn Public Library. It provides background information as well as practical recommendations, tips and techniques covering everything from materials to time frames to topics to eight reproducible workshops. This is an outstanding resource that will help you inspire and support a wide variety of writing across age groups. (*NOTE: Whenever possible, give children their own individual writing boxes.*)

Support children's interest in reading by encouraging them to engage in creative, dramatic or fantasy play that springs from books. Some possibilities include: creating figures of storybook characters out of modeling clay, LEGOS or other materials; drawing or painting in a style that emulates a particular illustrator; role-playing stories or taking on a familiar character and acting out new and original adventures.

If you're interested in children's books that explore the subject of sibling relationships and impending additions to your family, visit <http://parenthood.com> and enter the phrase "reading to siblings" in the Search box. Click on the resulting link for *Best Books for Reading to Siblings*. This article lists some wonderful books about families and siblings that approach the subjects in a variety of ways. The inclusion of book summaries will help you choose the books that best fit your family. You'll also find a sidebar link to another article, *Reading to Two: How – and What – to Read to Siblings*, which offers tips for reading aloud with children of different ages.

You'll find more helpful sibling-related information at <http://familyfun.go.com>. Type the phrase Sibling Rivalry in the Search the Site box. Then click on the link for Sibling Rivalry – and More Family Fun. The resulting page offers links to a number of articles addressing different aspects of this age-old predicament. Explore the articles, especially the *Field Guide to Siblings*.

## Additional Words That Cook Resources

Words That Cook develops resources for professionals and parents that help to motivate and inspire children to learn and to love reading, writing, storytelling and wordplay. At our Web site ([www.WordsThatCook.org](http://www.WordsThatCook.org)) under Free Resources, you will find valuable information derived from the television series, including activity and additional reading ideas connected to each recommended book. Also at the Marketplace of our site, you can learn more about our other literacy-related products and services.

### For Professionals

#### Discussion prompts and group activity ideas for teacher/staff workshops

Discuss ways that staff can encourage parents to become active partners in their children's education.

Select and discuss some of the modeled strategies and Recipes for Success.

Separate into small groups of participants. Ask each group to formulate tips for guiding parents to create writing boxes for their children. At a minimum, the tips should include a list of suggested materials and usage "Do's & Don'ts." Direct each group to design a how-to pamphlet that incorporates their tips. Share the tips and design ideas with the whole group.

#### Discussion prompts and group activity ideas for parent workshops

Discuss what materials would be appropriate for parents to include in their children's writing boxes and how they envision using writing boxes with their children.

Select and discuss some of the modeled strategies and Recipes for Success.

Either in small groups or as a whole, distribute a variety of picture books and have each group read a book. Using provided materials (e.g. pipe cleaners, modeling clay, LEGOS, etc.), have each participant create a character figure or sculpture inspired by the book. Ask the groups to then discuss ideas for using the figures/sculptures with their kids and/or for doing this activity with their families. Share the figures/sculptures and related ideas with the whole group.

*When working with ESL/ELL families, help them to understand the value of learning and applying literacy strategies in their primary language. Encourage them to also apply strategies in English if it is comfortable and if the adult has developed the English language skills to sufficiently challenge their child.*

## Words That Cook Staff

Monty Haas, COO & Executive Producer

Laurie Haas, CEO & Executive Producer

Stuart Pologe, Director of Finance & Marketing

Todd DeBonis, Senior Producer, Director & Editor-In-Chief

Susan Minichiello, M.Ed., Director of Course Development & Associate Producer

## Words That Cook Educational Consultants

Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy & Children's Literature Expert

Dr. Jeanne DeTemple, Early Literacy & ESL/ELL Expert

Dr. Sharon A. Edwards, Author & Reading, Writing & Curriculum Specialist

Dr. Robert W. Maloy, Author & Professor – University of Massachusetts, Amherst, School of Education

Dr. Diane Edwards, Early Childhood Program Manager – Lake Sumter Community College

Reverend Patricia A. Walton, Diversity & Multiculturalism Specialist

Charlene Sontag Eng, Elementary & Outdoor Education Specialist

**Please feel free to contact us for more information about our DVD series and other products and services.**

Phone: 888-875-5368

E-mail: [info@WordsThatCook.org](mailto:info@WordsThatCook.org)

Mailing Address: Box 411 Natick, MA 01760

Web site: [www.WordsThatCook.org](http://www.WordsThatCook.org)

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