Literacy Autobiography

I believe learning to read and write is a complex achievement involving many different stimuli. One of the first influences and maybe contributing the most effect is our parental involvement in reading, or lack of that involvement. Meaning, if a child is read to during those first formative years, age 0-5, I believe this will have a positive effect on that child having an interest in books and that will aid in the process of starting to read, which in my eyes will lead to the ability to learning to write. Once a child starts to school, read alouds in class provide an opportunity for children to gain knowledge in language development and compression skills. Children who are read to, learn the way a story sounds and can “read” a story back to a parent that he has heard over and over. The child is not reading this difficult story but through the process of “reading” this story he will pick up some important pre-reading activities like, holding the book the right way, hopefully reading left to right and maybe even start finger pointing. If a child can learn concept of word at an early age, it will make the actual word call part of reading a much easier acquired process. Along with this same train of thought, oral language development will impact the rate of success a child is having at learning to read. If a child is talked to and engaged in conversations with their parents, grandparents, other family
members and other children, this child will develop a good oral language basis for applying to the written language. There are many difficult factors involved in the process of learning to read, one of which is knowledge of meanings of words. A child that has been talked to and with will have a broader range of knowledge of words, what they mean and how to pronounce them. Reading them in the written form will take on a new meaning as they learn to read, but already knowing what the words mean will aid this child in understanding what he is reading. It will also help in some of the strategies we teach when a child is learning to read. A child who has been talked to will be able to make a better guess at what might come next, simply because he will be at a higher stage of language development than the child who was not talked to or with much as a young child. I feel it is important to talk to children from birth.

However I have some mixed emotions on whether a child learns to write first or read first. I have read some articles on writing first and reading second. Until this article I had always thought you had to read before you could write. This article posed the possibility of a child learning to write something as important as his name and learning to read that and that leading to learning to read other things also. This makes sense when I watched my own child and he was able to write his own name and read it
and recognize it in other places before he started reading any books, so in essence the first thing he read was his name.

I have been a reading specialist for the last 2 years and have learned a lot about this whole process. I think that each child will learn this in his own way and usually at his time. The children that I work with have not been able to learn this reading process in the regular classroom and usually benefit from a phonics program. I don’t think this is the only program or that each child needs this, I didn’t learn to read this way, nor did my child (who is in the 2nd grade, so this reading process is a new process for him, we have spent the last couple of years perfecting it). It has been very eye opening to see what the students I work with need in comparison to what my own child needs. My child didn’t need the vowel patterns broke down and a comprehensive study of them, he was able to grasp that concept in a classroom setting and applied this knowledge to his reading. I believe that a knowledge of vowel patterns and the ability to decode words is essential for learning to reading and writing but I believe this process is acquired differently depending on each child. I think that a process of re-reading stories is a benefit for those children who are having difficulties with learning to read, it is actually a benefit for all children who are just learning to read, for example level 3-5 books (emergent levels) but children who
catch onto reading, like my son and lots other children do may not have a
need for this rereading on past this level. One thing I saw in my son, he got
bored with rereading after this level, because he was ready for something
new and interesting.

Another belief of mine is I think it is highly important to get books
into children’s hands that interest them, esp. these children that I work with
each day, why would they want to work hard and struggle through this
process of reading if they don’t even have an interest in the book. I think
you can use their interest level as a motive to keep working on reading
acquisition.