Families are powerful influences on children’s early literacy.

The ORIM Framework is based on the premise that there are four main ways in which parents can help their children’s literacy development (Hannon, 1995, Nutbrown, Hannon and Morgan 2005).

**Opportunities for literacy**
In the early years parents can provide vital learning opportunities for children’s literacy development such as giving children books, writing materials, and CDs or DVDs of nursery rhymes.

**Recognition of children’s literacy development**
Parents can provide unique encouragement by their recognition and valuing of children’s early achievements, for example, early reading, writing, spotting letters and logos. When parents know about early literacy milestones they can make a point of telling their children, and others what new skills they have achieved.

**Interaction around literacy**
Children need their parents to interact with them – sharing and supporting them in real-life literacy tasks where children can make a meaningful contribution, such as writing a birthday card.

**Models of literacy users**
Parents can act as powerful models of users of literacy if children see them using literacy themselves in everyday life, such as reading a paper, writing notes or following written instructions.

**ORIM**
Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Model or **ORIM** can be used to think about ways parents can help their children. Work using ORIM includes:
- The Sheffield REAL Project.¹
- Making it REAL.²
- A Framework for Early Literacy Development with Parents.³

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¹ http://www.real-online.group.shef.ac.uk/
³ ESRC project RES-189-25-0219 Information at http://www.real-online.group.shef.ac.uk/

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**Strands of early literacy development**
Key strands of early literacy development include Environmental print, Books, Early writing, and Oral language (storytelling, phonological awareness, talk about literacy).

The value of the ORIM framework is that it can be used to describe how particular families support children’s literacy (or other aspects of their development) and to plan work with parents. One can ask of each cell in the matrix ‘How can we support the parent’s role here?’ Or ‘What can we do to help parents improve children’s experiences here?’

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**Publications**