



Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting

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Reading with Children Starting in Infancy Gives Lasting Literacy Boost

Shared book-reading that begins soon after birth may translate into higher language and vocabulary skills before elementary school.

SAN FRANCISCO – New research at the 2017 Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting shows that reading books with a child beginning in early infancy can boost vocabulary and reading skills four years later, before the start of elementary school.

The abstract, “Early Reading Matters: Long-term Impacts of Shared Bookreading with Infants and Toddlers on Language and Literacy Outcomes,” will be presented on Monday, May 8, at the Moscone West Convention Center in San Francisco.

“These findings are exciting because they suggest that reading to young children, beginning even in early infancy, has a lasting effect on language, literacy and early reading skills,” said Carolyn Cates, PhD, lead author and research assistant professor in the department of pediatrics at New York University (NYU) School of Medicine. “What they’re learning when you read with them as infants,” she said, “still has an effect four years later when they’re about to begin elementary school.”

Mothers and their babies were recruited from the newborn nursery of an urban public hospital, with more than 250 pairs monitored between ages of 6 months and 4 and a half years (54 months) for how well they could understand words, and for early literacy and reading skills. The study was funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The findings were compared with the quantity of shared book-reading, such as the number of books in the home and days per week spent reading together. Quality of shared book-reading

was gauged by asking whether parents had conversations with their child about the book while reading, whether they talked about or labeled the pictures and the emotions of the characters in the book and whether the stories were age-appropriate.

Adjusting for socioeconomic differences, the researchers found that reading quality and quantity of shared book-reading in early infancy and toddlerhood predicted child vocabulary up to four years later, prior to school entry. Book-reading quality during early infancy, in particular, predicted early reading skills while book-reading quantity and quality during toddler years appeared strongly tied to later emergent literacy skills, such as name-writing at age 4.

The results highlight the importance of parenting programs used in pediatric primary care that promote shared book-reading soon after birth, Dr. Cates said, such as Read Out and Read and the Video Interaction Project..

Dr. Cates will present the abstract, “Early Reading Matters: Long-term Impacts of Shared Bookreading with Infants and Toddlers on Language and Literacy Outcomes,” at 8:15 a.m.

Reporters interested in an interview with Dr. Cates can contact New York University Langone Medical Center media relations officer Ryan Jaslow at 212-404-3511 or Ryan.Jaslow@nyumc.org.

Please note: only the abstract is being presented at the meeting. In some cases, the researcher may have more data available to share with media, or may be preparing a longer article for submission to a journal. Contact the researcher for more information.

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The Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) Meeting brings together thousands of individuals united by a common mission: to improve child health and wellbeing worldwide. This international gathering includes pediatric researchers, leaders in academic pediatrics, experts in child health, and practitioners. The PAS Meeting is produced through a partnership of four organizations leading the advancement of pediatric research and child advocacy: Academic Pediatric Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Pediatric Society, and Society for Pediatric Research. For more information, visit the PAS Meeting online at www.pas-meeting.org, follow us on Twitter @PASMeeting and #pasm17, or like us on Facebook.

ABSTRACT

TITLE: Early Reading Matters: Long-term Impacts of Shared Bookreading with Infants and Toddlers on Language and Literacy Outcomes

Background: While it is generally accepted that shared reading is critical for language and literacy acquisition, links between early reading and these outcomes is not always clear with regard to aspects of bookreading (e.g., quantity or quality) important for their development. Furthermore, data is limited regarding long-term impacts of shared reading during the infant and toddler period on language and literacy development.:

Objective: To explore relations between shared bookreading quantity and quality among mother-infant and mother-toddler dyads and child language, emergent literacy, and early reading outcomes prior to school entry.

Design/Methods: Cross-sectional analyses of mother-child dyads enrolled post-partum as part of larger study. Assessments at child age 6, 14, 24, and 54m. Predictors: 1) Bookreading Quantity (6, 14, and 24m: StimQ) and 2) Bookreading Quality (6, 14, and 24m: StimQ). Outcomes: 1) Child expressive/receptive vocabulary (54m: EOWPVT, ROWPVT), 2) Emergent Literacy (54m: Name Writing, Beginning Sound Awareness, and Print/Word Awareness using PALS Pre-K), and 3) Early Reading (Woodcock Johnson Letter Word Recognition, 54m). Multiple regressions adjusted for SES (Hollingshead 4 factor index) and child gender.

Results: 185, 166, and 235 dyads assessed at 6m, 14, and 24 respectively (97% Hollingshead 4-5). At 6m bookreading quantity and quality predicted expressive vocabulary at 54m. Bookreading quality at 6m also predicted Early Reading at 54m and was associated with a trend in increased receptive vocabulary. At 14m, bookreading quality and quantity robustly predicted receptive vocabulary and were associated with trends in increased expressive vocabulary. Bookreading quality further predicted name writing, beginning sound awareness and Early Reading while Bookreading quantity was associated with trends in enhanced beginning sound awareness. At 24m, bookreading quality and quantity robustly predicted expressive and receptive language and predicted beginning sound awareness and Early Reading. Bookreading quantity also predicted name writing and print/word awareness. [table1]

Conclusion(s): Findings suggest shared reading, beginning early in infancy and in toddlerhood are critical for key language and literacy outcomes as much as four years later. Findings strongly support preventive programs in pediatric primary care aiming to enhance early shared reading such as Reach out and Read. Support: NICHD 2R01HD047740, Marks Family Foundation, Tiger Foundation, Children of Bellevue, Inc.