

Class 12

Children and Books

Articles:

Six Early Literacy Skills Predict Reading and Writing Success

Reading Aloud to Young Children Has Benefits for Behavior and Attention

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: The Value of Picture Books

Discussion Questions:

What are some benefits for children when their parents read to them? Do you think the parents benefit as well?

Why are picture books important?

What were your favorite books when you were a child?



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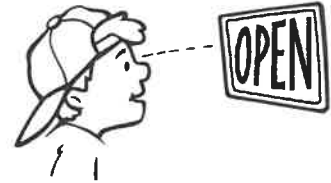
Number 378



Six Early Literacy Skills Predict Reading and Writing Success

by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed.

Early literacy is everything children should know about reading and writing before they can actually read or write. Literacy skills begin developing in the first 5 years of life with a toddler holding and chewing on a book, to wanting a favorite book read over and over, to becoming a preschooler or kindergartner who loves to “read” a story to you from memory.



According to research performed by the National Reading Panel and other experts, young children entering school with specific early literacy skills have the greatest opportunity to become successful readers and writers. Early literacy skills include *Vocabulary*, *Print Motivation*, *Print Awareness*, *Narrative Skills*, *Letter Knowledge*, and *Phonological Awareness*. These important foundational skills are the building blocks for learning to read and write. Children having been exposed to, or having most of these skills, will benefit more from the reading instruction they receive when entering kindergarten than the child with fewer skills or no exposure at all.

Some parents think their child's success in reading and writing depends on getting the “right” first grade teacher, but his/her success really depends on how much he/she learns at home about reading and writing *before* entering school. Early experiences with books and language are **most critical** for future success in literacy. Parents must be responsible for providing experiences at home that promote the following skills:

- **Print Motivation** — is taking an interest in and enjoying books. A child with print motivation loves being read to, plays with books, and pretends to write. Trips to the library are fun, motivational, and FREE! Exchange books with other parents with children of your child's age. Encourage print motivation in your child by making reading a special shared time with you. Make books accessible to your child. Let your child see you enjoying reading. Talk to your child about how we use reading and/or writing almost every minute of the day.
- **Vocabulary** — (knowing the names of things) is the most important skill for children to have when learning to read. By the time your child enters school, he/she should know between 3,000-5,000 words. Help develop your child's vocabulary by reading and rereading a variety of books (fiction and nonfiction) and teaching the names of all the objects in your child's world.
- **Print Awareness** — is a child's ability to point to the words on the page of a book. It includes learning that writing (in English) follows rules: print moves top to bottom and left to right, and that the person reading is someone that knows what all the letters and words say. Point out and read words to your child everywhere you see them: on signs, advertisements, labels, stores, candies, products, etc.
- **Narrative Skills** — help a child understand and tell a story and describe things, like what happened at a birthday party or about a trip to Grandma's. Parents can help strengthen their child's narrative skills by asking him/her to tell what is happening in a story or book, instead of always listening to you read. Ask your child to tell you about things he/she has

done or will do that involve a regular sequence of steps: getting ready for school, what your family did/will do on vacation, how to play a particular game, etc.

- **Letter Knowledge** — is the ability to recognize and name letters (upper and lower case) and produce the sounds they make. Develop your child's letter knowledge by using lots of fun reading and/or writing activities: pointing out and naming letters in a book, on a sign or on a label; drawing letters in sand or shaving cream; painting letters on paper with brushes, etc. Talk about letters and how some are similar in shape (l, h, f, e, and t or w, m, n, v). Teach the child how to write the letters in his/her name (one letter at a time) when he/she begins using a crayon to draw or "write". As your child learns each letter, have him/her practice producing the sound the letter makes.
- **Phonological Awareness** — is an understanding of hearing and manipulating sounds in words. Phonological awareness includes the ability to hear and create rhymes (bat, cat, gnat, hat, mat, and sat), say words with sounds left out (bat without b is at), and put two word chunks together to make a word (fl + at = flat). Most often, children having difficulty with phonological awareness have trouble learning to read. An understanding of phonological awareness begins with a child's exposure to and practice with the previous five steps. Phonological awareness is one of the final steps in preparing children for actual reading instruction that begins in kindergarten.



References

Arnold, Renea and Colburn, Nell. 2008. School Library Journal. The (really) big six: early literacy skills. Retrieved January, 2013, from <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6610494.html>.

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Item# FD-80

Busy Baby Describing Cards
Item# FD-10

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THE CHECKUP

Reading Aloud to Young Children Has Benefits for Behavior and Attention

By **Perri Klass, M.D.**

April 16, 2018

It's a truism in child development that the very young learn through relationships and back-and-forth interactions, including the interactions that occur when parents read to their children. A new study provides evidence of just how sustained an impact reading and playing with young children can have, shaping their social and emotional development in ways that go far beyond helping them learn language and early literacy skills. The parent-child-book moment even has the potential to help curb problem behaviors like aggression, hyperactivity and difficulty with attention, a new study has found.

“We think of reading in lots of different ways, but I don't know that we think of reading this way,” said Dr. Alan Mendelsohn, an associate professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine, who is the principal investigator of the study, “Reading Aloud, Play and Social-Emotional Development,” published in the journal *Pediatrics*.

The researchers, many of whom are my friends and colleagues, showed that an intervention, based in pediatric primary care, to promote parents reading aloud and playing with their young children could have a sustained impact on children's behavior. (I am among those the authors thanked in the study acknowledgments, and I should acknowledge in return that I am not only a fervent believer in the importance of reading aloud to young children, but also the national medical director of Reach Out and Read, a related intervention, which works through pediatric checkups to promote parents reading with young children.)

This study involved 675 families with children from birth to 5; it was a randomized trial in which 225 families received the intervention, called the Video Interaction Project, and the other families served as controls. The V.I.P. model was originally developed in 1998, and has been studied extensively by this research group.

Participating families received books and toys when they visited the pediatric clinic. They met briefly with a parenting coach working with the program to talk about their child's development, what the parents had noticed, and what they might expect developmentally, and then they were videotaped playing and reading with their child for about five minutes (or a little longer in the part of the study which continued into the preschool years). Immediately after, they watched the videotape with the study interventionist, who helped point out the child's responses.

"They get to see themselves on videotape and it can be very eye-opening how their child reacts to them when they do different things," said Adriana Weisleder, one of the authors of the study, who is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Northwestern University. "We try to highlight the positive things in that interaction — maybe they feel a little silly, and then we show them on the tape how much their kid loves it when they do these things, how fun it is — it can be very motivating."

"Positive parenting activities make the difference for children," said Dr. Benard Dreyer, a professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine and past president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who was the senior author on the study. He noted that the critical period for child development starts at birth, which is also a time when there are many pediatric visits. "This is a great time for us to reach parents and help them improve their parenting skills, which is what they want to do."

The Video Interaction Project started as an infant-toddler program, working with low-income urban families in New York during clinic visits from birth to 3 years of age. Previously published data from a randomized controlled trial funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development showed that the 3-year-olds who had received the intervention had improved behavior — that is, they were significantly less likely to be aggressive or hyperactive than the 3-year-olds in the control group.

This new study looked at those children a year and a half later — much closer to school entry — and found that the effects on behavior persisted. The children whose families had participated in the intervention when they were younger were still less likely to manifest those behavior problems — aggression, hyperactivity, difficulty with attention — that can so often make it hard for children to do well and learn and prosper when they get to school.

Some children were enrolled in a second stage of the project, and the books and toys and videotaping continued as they visited the clinic from age 3 to 5; they showed additional “dose-response” effects; more exposure to the “positive parenting” promotion meant stronger positive impacts on the children’s behavior.

“The reduction in hyperactivity is a reduction in meeting clinical levels of hyperactivity,” Dr. Mendelsohn said. “We may be helping some children so they don’t need to have certain kinds of evaluations.” Children who grow up in poverty are at much higher risk of behavior problems in school, so reducing the risk of those attention and behavior problems is one important strategy for reducing educational disparities — as is improving children’s language skills, another source of school problems for poor children.

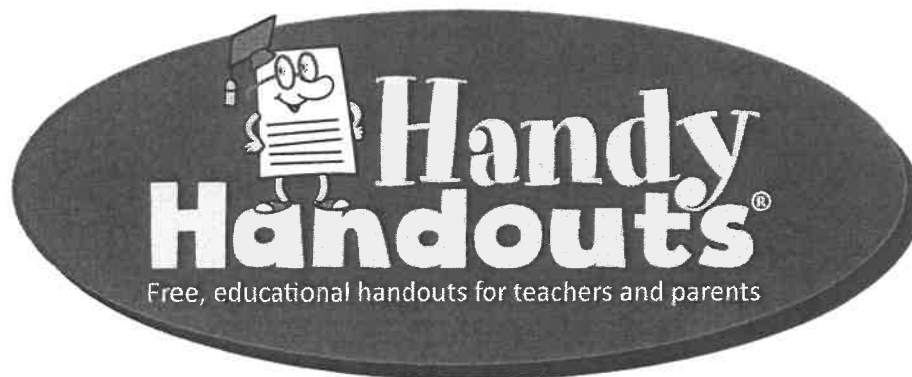
But all parents should appreciate the ways that reading and playing can shape cognitive as well as social and emotional development, and the power of parental attention to help children flourish. Dr. Weisleder said that in reading and playing, children can encounter situations a little more challenging than what they usually come across in everyday life, and adults can help them think about how to manage those situations.

“Maybe engaging in more reading and play both directly reduces kids’ behavior problems because they’re happier and also makes parents enjoy their child more and view that relationship more positively,” she said.

Reading aloud and playing imaginative games may offer special social and emotional opportunities, Dr. Mendelsohn said. “We think when parents read with their children more, when they play with their children more, the children have an opportunity to think about characters, to think about the feelings of those characters,” he said. “They learn to

use words to describe feelings that are otherwise difficult and this enables them to better control their behavior when they have challenging feelings like anger or sadness.”

“The key take-home message to me is that when parents read and play with their children when their children are very young — we’re talking about birth to 3 year olds — it has really large impacts on their children’s behavior,” Dr. Mendelsohn said. And this is not just about families at risk. “All families need to know when they read, when they play with their children, they’re helping them learn to control their own behavior,” he said, so that they will come to school able to manage the business of paying attention and learning.



A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: The Value of Picture Books

By Rynette R. Kjesbo, M.S., CCC-SLP

You've probably read many stories without pictures, but have you ever read a story written in pictures? Illustrated books often have pictures that accompany the printed words that make up the stories. The pictures usually enhance the story and can help the reader to visualize the characters, setting, and action in a story. But a picture book tells its narrative mainly through a series of pictures, with words used only to share information not contained in the pictures. Some picture books, known as "Wordless Picture Books," even tell stories without using any words at all!

Are Picture Books Important?

If picture books primarily use pictures to tell their stories, are they really helpful for developing reading skills? Yes! Besides using colorful illustrations to engage and motivate readers to read, picture books can help even the youngest readers and non-readers learn foundational reading skills such as:

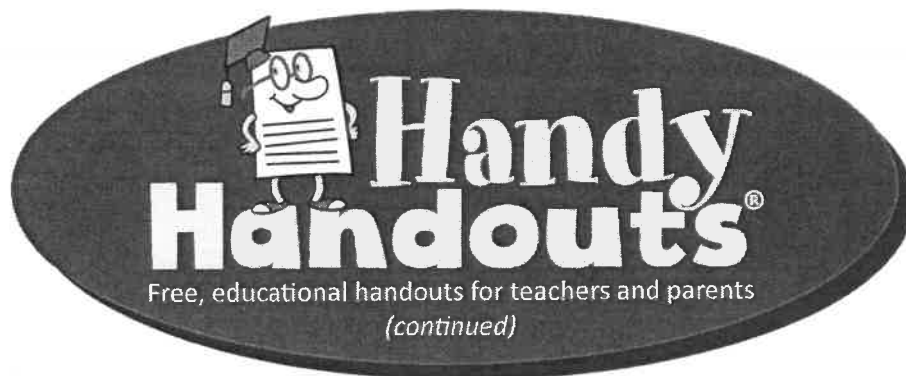
- **Concepts of Print** – how to hold a book, when to turn the page, reading from top to bottom and left to right, and understanding that printed words have meaning
- **Letter Knowledge** – recognizing the letters of the alphabet, knowing the difference in capital and lowercase letters, associating sounds to their matching letters
- **Phonemic Awareness** – understanding that sentences are made up of words, words are made up of syllables, and syllables are made up of sounds



How Can I Use Picture Books?

Picture books are helpful in many ways! They can help develop language skills, build social-emotional competence, improve a child's ability to listen, and so much more. Specific skills that you can use picture books to address include:

- **Answering questions** – Ask your child questions about what is happening in the pictures. Questions such as "Who is this?" "Where are they?" and "What is happening?" can help a child focus on the details of a story.
- **Telling and retelling stories** – Ask students to look at the pictures and tell you the story in their own words. Encourage your child to tell a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end. Once you have read the story together, asking your child to retell the story will help you to know how much of the story your child understood.
- **Exploring emotions and feelings** – Sometimes children find it easier to talk about other people's emotions instead of their own. Talk to your child about the emotions and feelings of the characters. This will also help your child develop empathy and an understanding of situations from another person's point of view.



- Developing critical thinking skills – Use pictures to predict what might happen next in the story. Ask your child which details in the picture helped him to make his prediction.
- Engaging in conversation – Talk about what is happening in a story. When possible, try to relate relevant parts of the story to your child’s experiences.
- Describing elements in a story – Talk about the characters and the setting in which the story takes place. This will help your child to think more in depth about the story.
- Listening – Encourage your child to listen and follow along as you read to him.
- Improving vocabulary – Because picture books rely on pictures to tell their stories, the vocabulary that the authors use is often specific and focused. When a child comes across a vocabulary word that he doesn’t know, encourage him to use the pictures and context to try to figure out the meaning of new words.

While many people may think that picture books can’t contribute much to reading because of they don’t contain lots of words, they actually provide a wealth of opportunities for growth and development in the area of reading! In the case of picture books, a picture really is worth a thousand words!

Resources:

“How Picture Books Play a Role in a Child’s Development,” accessed June 25, 2018, <https://www.thechildrensbookreview.com/weblog/2010/11/how-picture-books-play-a-role-in-a-child%E2%80%99s-development.html>

“5 Pre-Reading Skills Kids Need To Be Successful Readers,” accessed June 25, 2018, <https://abcsoliteracy.com/pre-reading-skills-successful-readers/>

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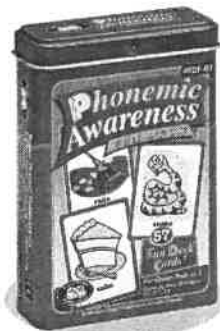
[Item #HBHE-244](#)

Webber Phonological Awareness Bingo



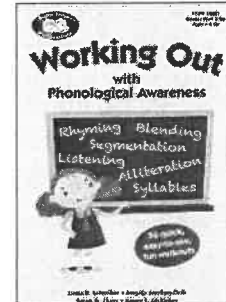
[Item #BGO-175](#)

Phonemic Awareness Fun Park



[Item #DFD-03](#)

Working Out with Phonological Awareness Book



[Item #TPX-18801](#)