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The Impacts of Dialogic Reading on 2-4 Year Olds and Their Awareness to Print

Introduction

Reading to children is an important part of a child's literacy development and their success in learning to read. Teaching parents to incorporate a print referencing style of reading in their homes can aid in a child's understanding in comparison to their counterparts who have minimum exposure to print. We examined the effectiveness of a print referencing style of reading with parents of children ages 2-4 years old. This study examined 5-10 families of different backgrounds and education levels with 2- 4 year old children. While this is a small study it opens a pathway to more detailed studies involving preschool teachers as well as a larger population of parents in the future.

Background

Current research on a dialogic reading and print awareness style of reading support the statement that this style of reading contributes to preschoolers' overall print knowledge. These studies incorporated a variety of participants, states, as well as ethnic backgrounds. Most studies typically include either a dialogic reading style or a print awareness style of reading yet few include both.

In a study conducted by Justice, et. al the focus was the impacts of print focussed reading in

preschool classrooms. Utilizing teachers the results concluded that this style of reading did have an impact on children's print knowledge as well as their receptive and expressive vocabulary use. (2021)

This study among others below inspired my research to include both types of reading styles at home. Since these styles of reading are beneficial in a classroom setting this type of style used at home would be perceived to have similar benefits to the child's overall awareness to print. As well as the parent's enjoyment of intentionally being able to be involved in their child's language development.

Methods

Participants were 5 parents and caregivers with preschool children who were interested in learning how to better engage their children in reading and teach them about print (letters). The experimenter demonstrated how to read to the parents and how to engage a preschool child in reading by having them talk about what was happening in the book (dialogic reading). The experimenter also demonstrated how to make references to print by pointing out letters in their child's name or letters in familiar words.

Once the parents indicate that they understand how to use dialogic reading with references to print, they will be asked to read a different book to their child. This time is used for the experimenter to guide the parents through the process of implementing this reading style. The experimenter will offer constructive criticism throughout the process to give parents confidence to implement this reading style in the future when the experimenter is not present.

After reading to their child, they will be asked to answer a few questions about their views of this different way of reading to children. This survey will encompass the parent's

comfortability with this reading style, their views on their child's engagement with reading, and their views on learning to facilitate this style of reading.

Main acronyms were taught during the informational session for parents to remember for dialogic reading; Completion, Recall, Open-ended questions, Wh- questions, and Distancing questions (CROWD) and Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, and Repeat (PEER). These are commonly used in the current research studies as a guide to parents to help elicit certain information from their child in relation to the story being read. This gives parents a basis of knowledge to build upon as their child's interest in story time increases. Furthermore, as the child increases in age the difficulty will also increase. An example given of these strategies was given with the book "The Couch Potato" by Jory John when the question was posed to the child "What type of technology is the couch potato playing with?" a follow up question would be "What kinds of technology do you play with during free time?"

Print awareness was exemplified by letter identification of letters in the child's name correlating to the first letter of a word. For example if the child's name was "Sam" and the book pictured a sandwich the connection of the letter "s" would be made. This referencing style was also used with letters and words familiar to the child. Favorite items, parents and caregivers names, as well as food items were used within this style to aid in the preschool child's print awareness.

Results and Conclusions

Results from this study indicated that parents appreciated learning how to facilitate print awareness when reading to their children. While about 50% of the families did not currently have

a consistent reading routine which was information received from initial parent interviews. These interviews were conducted to get a better understanding of each family's current baseline when it came to the child's interaction with print. 100% of the families stated they felt as though their child had a peaked interest in reading when implementing this style of reading.

Future studies should explore how to provide more preschool teachers and parents information about how to use dialogic reading to improve print awareness in preschool children

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