

ABSTRACT

Parent-infant book reading and children's later language development

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Early onset of parent-child book reading is an important predictor of later language development (Debaryshe, 1993; Karrass & Baumgart-Rieker, 2005; Payne, Whitehurst & Angell, 1994), which in turn affects reading and academic success (NICHD, 2005; Walker, Greenwood, Hart & Carta, 1994). One possible mechanism through which early book reading influences language development is the quality of the parent-child interaction in this context, yet there is limited research on the nature of parent-infant book reading interactions. Thus, the goal of this study was to examine which specific features of parent-infant book reading interactions predict later language development in a population of parents and their 10-month-old typically developing infants from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Forty-four mother-infant dyads participated in a longitudinal observational study that spanned the period from child age 10-months to 18-months. At child age 10-months, mother-child dyads were videotaped at home during a book reading. At child age 18-months, children's language abilities were measured with a variety of assessments. Book-reading sessions at 10-months were transcribed and coded for quantity and quality of maternal talk and for child interest. Results suggest that controlling for socio-economic status, and children's 10-month language comprehension, maternal use of questions during book-reading and child interest during book reading predict children's language skills at 18-months.