

Issue Focus: Teamwork and Collaboration OSLA Perspectives

Title: Development of Emergent Literacy in English Language Learning Children Through Parent Shared Reading

Authors: Genese Warr-Leeper and Karla N. Washington, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
Tanya L. Wren, Pathways Children Centre, Windsor, Ontario

Forward

There is clear evidence that language intervention is effective (Jacoby, Lee, Kummer, Levin & Creaghead, 02 ; Law, Garrett, & Nye, 04 ; McLean & Cripe, 97; Nye, Foster, and Seaman, 87) and, in some cases, the earlier treatment is initiated, the better the outcome (Schery, 85). As the field of speech-language pathology has evolved, service delivery models have expanded to include integrated approaches involving collaboration between team members from multiple disciplines servicing disordered and at risk populations. Collaborative approaches between speech-language pathologists (S-LPs) and other professionals have been shown to highly effective in supporting the development of oral language, literacy, and social communication skills (Ellis, Schlaudecker, & Regimbal, 95; Farber, Dennenberg, Klyman, & Lachman, 92; Farber & Klein, 99; Gerber, 87; Gillon & Dodd, 95; Hoffman & Norris, 94; Kaufman, Prelock, Weiler, Creaghead & Donnelly, 94; Larson & McKinley, 95; Magnusson & Naucler, 92; Norris, 89; Norris & Hoffman, 90; Salazer, Warr-Leeper, Gain & Koyanagi 03; Schery, 85; Schery & O'Connor, 92; Throneburg, Calvert, Sturm, Paramboukas, & Paul, 00; Warrick, Rubin & Rowe-Walsh, 93 and Wilcox & Kouri, 92).

Despite the seemingly overwhelming number of disordered children requiring speech and language services, it has been suggested that the support from the S-LP is warranted for children whose success in life is jeopardized by weak language skills (Warr-Leeper, 01). This group often includes children *at risk* due to traditional risk factors, such as economic stress or English as a second language. Application of S-LP techniques and strategies for children *at risk* may include health promotion and programming in collaboration with parents or other professionals and has been shown to be beneficial (Hadley, Simmerman, Long, & Luna, 00; Salazer, Warr-Leeper, Gain & Koyanagi, 04; Warr-Leeper, Dhayanandhan, Kazmi, Darling, Armstrong & McEachern, 03; Warr-Leeper, Grey, Mah & Van Reenan, 03 and Warr-Leeper, Neglia & Arnold, 03).

S-LPs are not only interventionists but also preventionists for the development of oral and written language and social communication skills of all children. The present article will describe a collaborative project for young English Language Learning (ELL) children designed to improve parental home reading practices and the emergent literacy skills of the children.

Introduction

The earliest experiences and achievements in literacy begin at birth and usually last until the end of preschool (Justice & Ezell, 04). Emergent literacy involves the development of print conventions, word concepts, and alphabet knowledge in the preschool years, a necessary foundation for later formal instruction in reading. Interventions employing adult-child shared reading activities in which children engage in meta-focussed conversations surrounding elements of print have been shown to increase phonological awareness (McFadden, 98; Ukrainetz, Cooney, Dyer, Kysar, & Harris, 00) and significantly improve print and word concepts and alphabetic

knowledge (Ezell & Justice, 00, Justice & Ezel, 02 and Whitehurst, Epstein, Angell, Payne, Crone & Fischel, 94). Although classroom-based interventions are helpful, home practices and interactions produce the more substantial increases in learning, suggesting that home environment is the most influential place for learning emergent literacy (Justice & Ezell, 04 and Whitehurst, et al., 94).

Purpose

The purpose of the present project was to enhance parent literacy practices at home through shared reading and thus increase the emergent literacy skills of ELL preschool children.

Method

Participants were recruited from the Language Instruction for New Comer to Canada (LINC) Program where children attended a daycare while their parents attended ESL classes. Seven children between the ages of 3 years and 4 years, 3 months and their mothers participated in the project. English levels of the children ranged from the 1st to the 21st percentile in receptive vocabulary, from the 1st to the 23rd percentile in expressive vocabulary, from the 5th to the 34th percentile in auditory comprehension, and from the 5th to the 66th percentile in expressive communication.

Following a complete review of the literature, an intervention program was designed that included eight techniques that had been proven to be effective in parent shared reading programs. Eight simple books that were well-suited to each technique and featured common scripts for preschool children were chosen. (See Appendix A).

The intervention program took place over 8 consecutive weeks and was administered by one registered S-LP and a senior graduate student in Speech-Language Pathology. The lead Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and other daycare providers were also ESL and observed during program delivery. Each week, during a break-time from ESL classes, parents and children were gathered to learn a different technique (Technique of the Week) for 15 minutes. The trainer described the technique, then each parent-child dyad practised the technique with the associated book, while the trainer circulated to provide individual instruction as needed. Parents with relative more advanced English skills provided on-line interpretation when needed. Each dyad was given the book to keep and asked to read to their child, using the technique, at least 3 times/week. A sheet describing each technique with a picture representing the technique and examples of what could be done was given to the parents along with a magnet to post on the sheet on refrigerator as a reminder. (See Appendix B)

A repeated measures single-participant design was employed with pre-to-post measurement of 1) parent report of home reading practices and observations of child reading behaviours collect through a caregiver questionnaire and 2) emergent literacy skills through direct assessment during book reading of emergent literacy skills for print conventions, word awareness, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge.

Results

Despite the simplicity and brevity of the program (total of 2 hours of training), pre-to-post

increases were evident in home literacy practices and parental observations of increased emergent literacy behaviours in their children while engaging in shared reading at home. All children demonstrated gains in print conventions and word awareness with children in the four year range showing the greatest gain. Alphabet concept showed only modest improvements.

Conclusions

Collaborating with parents who are ESL in a shared reading training program can improve their home literacy practices, resulting in improved emergent literacy skills in their children. Children younger than four years of age can benefit from an emergent literacy program. In comparison to typically developing 4-year-olds (Justice & Ezell, 2001), the 3- and 4-year-olds in the present study demonstrated that emergent literacy strategies for English-speaking children can be applied to ESL populations with similar results and benefits.

References

- Ellis, L., Schlaudecker, C., & Regimbal, C. (1995). Effectiveness of a collaborative consultation approach to basic concept instruction with kindergarten children. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in the Schools*, 26, 69-72.
- Ezell, H. & Justice, M. (2000). Increasing the print focus of adult-child shared book reading through observational learning. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 9, 36-47.
- Farber, J., Dennenberg, M, Klyman, S, & Lachman, P. (1992). Language resource room level of service: An urban school district approach to integrative treatment. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in the Schools*, 23, 293-299.
- Farber, J. & Klein, E. (1999). Classroom-based assessment of a collaborative intervention program with kindergarten and first-grade students. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in the School*, 30, 83-91.
- Gerber, S. (1987). Collaborations between speech-language pathologists and educators: A continuing education process. *Journal of Childhood Communication Disorders*, 11, 107-123.
- Gillon, G. & Dodd, B. (1995). The effects of training phonological, semantic, and syntactic processing skills in spoken language on reading ability. *Language, Speech, and Hearing in the Schools*, 26, 58-68.
- Hadley, P., Simmerman, A., Long, M. & Luna, M. (2000). Facilitating language development for inner-city children: Experimental evaluation of a collaborative, classroom-based intervention. 31, 280-295.
- Hoffman, P. & Norris, J. (1994). Whole language and collaborative work: Evidence from at-risk kindergartners, *Journal of Childhood Communication Disorders*, 16, 41-48.
- Jacoby, G., Lee, L. Kummer, A., Levin, L. & N. Creaghead. The number of individual treatment units necessary to facilitate functional communication improvements in speech and language of young children. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 11, 370-381.
- Justice, L. & Ezell, H. (2000). Enhancing children's print and word awareness through home-

based parent intervention. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 9, 257-269.

Justice, L. & Ezell, H. (2001)

Kaufman, S., Prelock, P., Weiler, E., Creaghead, N. & Donnelly, C. (1994). Metapragmatic awareness of explanation adequacy: Developing skills for academic success from a collaborative communication skills unit. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in the Schools*, 25, 174-180.

Larson, V. & McKinley, N. (1995). *Language Disorders in Older Students*. Eau Claire, WI: Thinking Publications.

Law, J., Garrett, Z., & Nye, C.. (2004). The Efficacy of treatment for children with developmental speech and language delay/disorder: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 47, 924-938

Magnusson, E. & Naucler, K. (1992). On the Development of reading in good and poor readers. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1, 174-85.

McClellan, L. & Cripe, J. (1997). Effectiveness of early intervention for children with communication disorders, pg. 349-428. In M. Guralnick (Ed.) *The Effectiveness of Early Intervention*, Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

McFadden, T. (1998). Sounds and stories: Teaching phonemic awareness in Interactions around text. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 7, 5 -13.

Norris, J. (1989). Providing language remediation in the classroom: An integrated language-to-reading intervention method. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in the Schools*, 20, 205-218.

Norris, J. & Hoffman, G. (1990). Language intervention within naturalistic environments *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 21, 72-84.

Nye, C., Foster, S. & Seaman, D. (1987). Effectiveness of language intervention with the language/learning disabled. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*, 52, 348-357.

Salazer, R., Warr-Leeper, G., Gain, K. & Koyanagi, K. (2003). Phonological Awareness Skills and Programming Outcomes for *at risk* Kindergarten Children. *AHSA Leader*. Presented at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, November, Chicago, IL.

Salazer, R., Warr-Leeper, G., Gain, K. & Koyanagi, K. (2004). Phonological awareness and story skill programming outcomes for kindergarten students. *AHSA Leader* Presented at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, November, Philadelphia, PA.

Schery, R.K. (1985). Correlates of language development in language disordered children. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*, 50, 73-83.

Schery, T. & O'Connor, L. (1992). The effectiveness of school-based computer language intervention with severely handicapped children. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 23, 43-47.

- Schweinhart, L., Berrueta-Clement, J., Barnett, W., Epstein, A. & Weikart, D. (1985). Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on youths through age 19: A summary. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 5, 26-35.
- Throneburg, R., Calvert, L., Sturm, J., Paramboukas, A., & Paul, P. (2000). A comparison of service delivery models: Effects on curricular vocabulary skills in the school setting. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 9, 10-19.
- Justice, L. & Ezell, H. (2004). Print referencing: An emergent literacy enhancement strategy and its clinical applications. *Language, Speech & Hearing Services in the Schools*, 35, 185-193.
- Ukrainetz, T. Cooney, M., Dyer, S., Kysar, A. & Harris, T. (2000). An investigation into teaching phonemeic awareness through shared reading and writing. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15, 331-335.
- Warrick, N., Rubin, T., & Rowe-Walsh, E. (1993). Phoneme awareness in language-delayed children: Comparative studies and intervention. *Annals of Dyslexia*; 43, 153-73.
- Wilcox, J. & Kouri, T. (1991). Early language intervention: A comparison of classroom and individual treatment. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 2(3), 49-62.
- Warr-Leeper, G. (2001) An Overview of Programs and Effectiveness Research in Early Intervention for Environmentally Disadvantaged Children. *Journal of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology*, 24, 90-103.
- Warr-Leeper, G., Dhayanandhan, N., Kazmi, H., Grey, R., Darling, S., Armstrong, H. & McEachern, S. (2003). Development, Implementation, and Outcomes of a Social Communication Program for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children in a Daycare Setting. *Program*. Presented at the Third Annual Scientific Meeting of the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network, Victoria, British Columbia, June.
- Warr-Leeper, G., Grey, R., Mah, S., & Van Reenan, T. (2003). The Effects of ECE-mediated Social Communication Skills in Children *at risk* for Social Failure. In *Enhancing Caregiver Language Facilitation in Child Care Settings*, (7) 1-7. Toronto: Hanen Early Language Program.
- Warr-Leeper, G., Neglia, A., & Arnold, K. (2003). The effects of ECE-mediated facilitation on the linguistic and social communication skills of children *at risk* for social failure. In *Enhancing Caregiver Language Facilitation in Child Care Settings*, (7) 11-15. Toronto: Hanen Early Language Program.
- Whitehurst, G., Epstein, J., Angell, A., Payne, A., Crone, D., & Fischel, J. (1994). Outcomes of an emergent literacy intervention in head start. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86, 542-555.

Appendix A

Techniques Used in Parent Training with Target Category, Corresponding Book and Rationale for Book Choice Organized by Week of Presentation.

Week	Technique	Target Category	Corresponding Book	Rationale for Book Choice
1	Let the child lead	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Turn and Learn</i> (Bumblebee Books, 2003)	Highly interactive and manipulative
2	Track print and talk about print	<i>Print Concepts</i>	<i>Spot's First Walk</i> (Hill, 1991)	Interactive; Features large, bold narrative print; Print embedded in pictures
3	Ask child to predict what will happen	<i>Story Awareness/ Attention</i>	<i>Just Me and My Puppy</i> (Mayer, 1985)	Predictive value of story and dissociation between narrative story and reality depicted in pictures
4	Ask questions about print	<i>Print Concepts</i>	<i>Spot Goes to the Park</i> (Hill, 1991)	Interactive; Features large, bold narrative print; Print embedded in pictures
5	Talk about the alphabet and letters in the book	<i>Phonological Awareness</i>	<i>Dr Suess, ABC</i> (Dr. Suess, 1960)	Direct discussion of the entire alphabet featuring capital and lower case letters and sound association
6	Discuss rhyming words and encourage rhyme detection/production/play	<i>Phonological Awareness</i>	<i>All By Myself</i> (Aiki, 2000)	Multicultural people depicted; rhyming prose
7	Ask child to recall aspects of the story	<i>Story Awareness/ Attention</i>	<i>A Pocket for Corduroy</i> (Freeman, 1978)	Multicultural people depicted; amenable to story recall
8	Allow child to fill in words or pretend to read	<i>Motivation and Story Awareness/ Attention</i>	<i>Me Too!</i> (Mayer, 1983)	Repetitive nature of book