DOES PARENT IMPLEMENTED DIALOGIC READING STRATEGIES INCREASE VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN PRESCHOOL AGED CHILDREN?

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by
Kasie Dawn LeRoux
Spring 2013
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ABSTRACT

DOES PARENT IMPLEMENTED DIALOGIC READING STRATEGIES INCREASE VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN PRESCHOOL AGED CHILDREN?

by

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Master of Arts in Education
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Early language and literacy skills are predictors of future academic achievement. This study investigated the effects of dialogic reading on children’s expressive and receptive vocabulary acquisition. Parent participants received training on dialogic reading techniques and the intervention took place in the child’s home. A literature review of language and literacy development, benefits of parent involvement, effects of the home literacy environment, and an overview of dialogic reading and research is presented. Participants included six parent-child dyads from middle-upper socioeconomic households. This was a pre/post-test experimental/control group design. All children in the study made expressive and receptive vocabulary gains. Overall vocabulary growth was compared to Home Literacy Environment Checklist that was completed by the parent
ent participants. Children with lower checklist scores made the greatest vocabulary gains.

Patterns were found between experimental and control group data and are discussed. A similar study design is recommended with a larger group of participants.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you will go.

~“I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!”
Dr. Seuss

Studies have shown that the development of children’s literacy skills is positively associated with their overall academic achievement (Dickenson & Neuman, 2006, p. 15; DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994). Widely agreed upon in the education community is the notion that literacy development begins long before children reach a formal education setting, such as Kindergarten (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Ezell & Justice, 2005). Similarly, the greater the development of pre-emergent literacy skills prior to entering Kindergarten the better a child will perform in elementary school (Cole, 2011).

Expressive and receptive vocabulary skills are both major components of literacy development. Receptive skills are a prerequisite for expressive skills. Similarly, expressive vocabulary skills are vital to the development of proficient reading (Brannon & Dauksas, 2012). Therefore, this small case study will assess the expressive and receptive vocabulary growth of preschool age children who are exposed to dialogic reading techniques at home by their parents.
Background

Literacy development has always been an important research topic in the field of education. In the past several years, the area of early literacy development has come under focused investigation, therefore; resulting in the implementation of certain national early literacy initiatives, such as; Good Start, Grow Smart. This program aims to improve Head Start programs across the nation, partners with states to align early childhood education programs through the development of pre-kindergarten state standards and flexible funding, and promotes professional education opportunities for early childhood educators and caretakers (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Therefore, literacy research has been effective in generating change, but is it the type of change that is best for early childhood educators, parents and children? With the development of federal and state standards the field of early childhood education starts to mimic that of elementary and secondary education. Early childhood educators are faced with a similar set of mandated materials, content and methods of teaching. Granted, the additional funding does benefit pre-kindergarten education programs across the nation, it is important to remember the basics; parents as teachers.

Education begins at home, with the parents. From the day a child is born they are learning and adapting to the environment and culture in which they are born (Crain, 2005, pp. 65-86). The greater the verbal and physical interaction between a parent and child the faster he/she will assimilate and learn. It has been shown that parent/child verbal and physical interactions decrease as the level of parent education and SES decrease (Korat, 2009). For that reason, most research is dedicated to this population in hopes of
closing the achievement gap; a worthy and needed endeavor. Yet, parents, in general, struggle for ways to effectively communicate, interact with and teach their children.

Research has shown that dialogic and shared book reading techniques increase emergent literacy development (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Dialogic prompts and techniques promote a discussion between the adult reader and child regarding the story content and vocabulary (Whitehurst et al., 1988). Dialogic reading has been shown to increase young children’s oral language skills (Ezell & Justice 2005; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998). Also, greater verbal communication and interactions were reported in families who use dialogic practices while reading with their children at home (Brannon & Dauksas, 2012). Dialogic techniques are a positive and effective tool for all parents to use while reading, talking and interacting with their children at home. The researcher considers dialogic reading to be a catalyst for developing concrete language and literacy skills prior to entering kindergarten; thus, preparing students for the rigor of formal education and future academic success.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the effects of parent implemented dialogic reading techniques on typically developing preschool aged children in the home setting. This study also looked for a relationship between the participants home literacy environment and the children’s vocabulary growth.

Early studies on dialogic reading were conducted on children with normal developmental and language abilities, aged 21 to 35 months, from upper-middle SES households (Whitehurst et al., 1988). However, current research in the area of early
literacy tends to focus on populations that have significant needs or are at risk. Specifically, studies regarding dialogic reading techniques and shared book reading have focused on children who are economically disadvantaged, delayed in their acquisition of speech and language skills, or otherwise developmentally delayed.

It was the focus of this study to better understand the efficacy of parent implemented dialogic reading strategies at home with pre-school aged children. The overall effectiveness of dialogic reading was measured through the participants expressive and receptive vocabulary growth throughout the study. It is the hypothesis of the researcher that the participants in the experimental group who experience the dialogic reading intervention will score higher on the vocabulary picture assessment than children in the control group who are not exposed to the intervention.

The researcher also posits that the home literacy environment may have an effect on vocabulary development. Parents of participants completed the Get Ready to Read, Home Literacy Environment Checklist (HLEC) (Appendix C). The checklist measured the literacy related interactions and materials provided in the home environment. The scores on the checklist were compared with the vocabulary scores for both the experimental and control groups. Therefore, it is also the hypothesis of the researcher that the home literacy environment checklist scores will show a positive relationship with the expressive and receptive vocabulary scores.

Research Questions

What effect does parent implemented dialogic reading have on the expressive and receptive vocabulary skills of preschool aged children?
Is the level of literacy support within the home environment associated with the vocabulary growth?

What is the role of age and gender in relation to participants’ vocabulary growth?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to validate the vocabulary benefits of dialogic reading with preschool aged children. Several studies established that dialogic reading and shared book reading techniques improved literacy development in children. Current studies tend to focus on populations with significant needs (i.e., special education, children in high-risk environments, reading delays, low SES). However, this study focused on typically developing, preschool age children from upper-middle SES households.

It is the assumption of the researcher that all young children and families benefit from reading interventions. Therefore, providing families with specific training and information regarding dialogic reading strategies may foster a positive relationship with literacy, increase communication and positive literacy interactions amongst parents and children and potentially improve children’s overall literacy skills and academic achievement.

Theoretical Bases and Organization

Parent involvement leads to improved academic achievement and is considered to be a protective factor that counteracts the risk of certain conditions that may lead to future school underachievement (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). High levels of
parent involvement are directly related to a child’s academic, social, and personal achievement because involved parents develop higher academic expectations for their children. Accordingly, parental expectations are the most consistent predictor of academic achievement and social adjustment (Michigan Department of Education [MDE], 2001).

The earlier parents become involved in their child’s literacy practices and activities the greater the impact and lasting effects (Cole, 2011). Furthermore, parental involvement in literacy activities, i.e. story time, is the largest determining factor in a child’s emergent literacy and language skills.

Research has widely credited interactive storybook reading as a key contributing factor for increasing early language and literacy development (Ezell & Justice, 2005). However, the quality and frequency of the reading sessions also plays a vital role in the lasting benefits of these parent/child reading interactions. Furthermore, the quality and frequency of reading interactions is highly correlated socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency and maternal education. For these reasons, establishing a proven and effective program, such as dialogic reading, in the home or preschool setting is of great importance in order to establish school readiness language and literacy skills (Ezell & Justice, 2005).

Dialogic reading utilizes techniques that progressively shift the role of the storyteller from the parent to the child by asking open-ended questions, repetition and modeling proper language and literacy skills (Ezell & Justice, 2005; Whitehurst et al., 1988). These questions and strategies increase conversational language and become a type of socially mediated instruction. Vygotsky’s theory suggests that learning occurs
through socially mediated instruction. Knowledge being shared begins on a social plane, but as the experiences increase the knowledge moves to an internal plane (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Once internalized, the child owns the knowledge. Dialogic reading is the socially mediated instruction which moves the knowledge from the adult to the child as the child becomes the storyteller.

Dialogic and shared storybook reading are very interactive and responsive literacy activities. The level of adult responsiveness is characterized by following the child’s lead, pace and topic; promoting interactions by asking open-ended questions; and modeling language that the child is familiar with but extending that model of language to an area that is new to the child (Ezell & Justice, 2005). The more responsive the adult is to the child, the more supported, comfortable and able to learn the child becomes. Therefore, the quality of literacy interactions also determines the level and quality of the child’s learning.

Limitations of the Study

While this study was carefully conducted, it has limitations that the reader needs to be aware of.

1. This study was conducted using a small sample size. The experimental group consisted of four children and parent dyads; the control group was two children and parent dyads.

2. Children received the intervention for a short amount of time. The duration of the study was 24 days.
3. Dialogic reading interactions and implementation were home-based. The researcher was unable to make direct observations of the quality of the interactions and reading sessions. Implementation of dialogic reading techniques was dependent on the parents’ level of comprehension of the program, concepts and techniques, as well as, the instructional video.

4. The frequency of the home reading sessions may be less than accurate due to parent self-reporting.

Definition of Terms

**Dialogic Reading**

A shared book reading experience with an adult and a child or group of children that uses questions and prompts to encourage the children to interpret the story and become the storyteller. Synonymous with *Shared Book Reading, Shared Storybook Reading, Shared Reading*.

**Emergent Literacy**

Characteristics of prereaders that may relate to later reading and writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

**Emergent Literacy Environment**

Experiences that may affect the development of emergent literacy (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

**Expressive Vocabulary**

The ability to understand the meaning of a word well enough to use it in ones own language.
Home Literacy Environment

Experiences, materials, and attitudes relating to literacy that a child observes and interacts with at home (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005).

Parent Involvement


Receptive Vocabulary

The ability to recognize and understand the meaning of a word well enough to comprehend the meaning when heard or read.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

As parents, the most important thing we can do is read to our children early and often. Reading is the path to success in school and life. When children learn to love books, they learn to love learning.

~Laura Bush

Story time: one of the most beneficial home learning experiences a parent can share with their child. To a child, storytime is simply a fun activity. But to an early childhood educator, it is one of their most valuable teaching tools. Reading storybooks aloud to children contributes to their development of language and emergent literacy skills, such as, print awareness, expressive and receptive vocabulary, and story comprehension (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994).

Reading a storybook using dialogic reading strategies creates the opportunity to develop a child’s language, literacy and vocabulary skills, as well as, instill a passion for reading and learning (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Therefore, this review will discuss the progression of a child’s language development and literacy skills through parent involvement and dialogic reading techniques.
In the first few months of life children innately begin to learn various language skills, such as, sounds, words, and eventually grammar (Crain, 2005, p. 69). Through ‘cooing’, babbling and first word utterances (i.e., ‘mama’ and ‘dada’) children display their natural ability to learn from their environment. This period of unconscious language acquisition continues until the age of three. Between three to six years of age children begin to consciously acquire language and grammar. Montessori theorists refer to these periods as the Sensitive Period for Language (Crain, 2005, p. 70). It is during this sensitive period that children are naturally drawn to master the skill of language. In her book, *The Absorbent Mind* (1949) Maria Montessori states, “If the child is prevented from enjoying these experiences at the very time when nature has planned for him to do so, the special sensitivity which draws him to them will vanish, with a disturbing effect on development” (as cited in Crain, 2005, p. 67). Similarly, Dickinson and Neuman (2006) also state that language develops at a rapid rate between the ages of three and six. It is during this rapid development period that more advanced language abilities begin to emerge (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Ezell & Justice, 2005). These advanced language abilities contribute to the organization and function of cognitive, linguistic and social skills that are believed to be the foundation of literacy development. This innate and biological view regarding the importance of language development between the ages of two and six is also supported by developmental psychologist, Katherine Nelson, who states: “Language and the surrounding culture take over the human mind. It is during
these years that biology ‘hands over’ development to the social world” (as cited in Dickinson & Neuman, 2006, p. 13).

Developmental theorist, Lev Vygotsky, also believed that the development of higher mental functions occur during the early childhood period (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006, p. 13). In accordance with Vygotskian theory, all development occurs on two planes; social and psychological, surmising that the process of learning occurs through internalizing social interactions with a more capable peer or adult (Crain, 2005, p. 227). Knowledge begins as a social construct on a social plane, but as a child’s experience increases these constructs move from a social plane to an internal psychological plane and the child becomes the owner of the knowledge and experience (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Therefore, social interaction is vital to the development of language and literacy knowledge, as such, a child will learn to enjoy literacy activities through the guidance of an adult.

The zone of proximal development (Crain, 2005) is the distance that children can perform beyond their current level with the assistance of a more knowledgeable peer; also a Vygotskian concept. The purpose of the zone of proximal development is to move the child’s mind forward and increase the potential for new learning (Crain, 2005, p. 239). Within a social interaction, the more capable peer, such as a teacher or parent, can increase knowledge acquisition by offering experiences that are just beyond the child’s capability and marginally assist that child toward a solution (i.e., discuss new vocabulary words in a storybook (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994; Crain, 2005).

Literacy development is said to be best understood from a systems perspective, in which, language plays an early and vital role in the organization of
cognitive and behavioral skills that support literacy related activities (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006, p. 12). Language skills (vocabulary, syntax, discourse, and phonemic awareness) are central to early and long-term literacy success. Dickinson and Neuman (2006) also report that developing literacy and language skills concurrently is the most effective (i.e., dialogic reading. Dialogic reading, in its simplest form, creates an adult/child dialogue about a storybook. Furthermore, when adults use dialogic reading techniques with children during story time, they create a social interaction and discussion (language) revolving around a storybook (literacy). Consequently, developing both language and literacy skills during a shared book reading experience.

The development of a child’s literacy skills is positively associated with their overall academic achievement. Research has consistently shown that the first five to six years of development (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994; Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Ezell & Justice, 2005; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003) is the most influential period regarding the growth of language, which is also instrumental to the development of literacy. Early storybook reading is predictive of future reading abilities in the elementary grades (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994). For example, reading achievement in first grade and at the end of high school are highly correlated as well (Dickenson & Neuman, 2006, p. 15). This correlation illustrates an important picture regarding the need for adult guided early reading opportunities that develop children’s language and literacy skills during a crucial point in their development; birth through age six.
Parents are a child’s first and most important teacher. Long before they reach the doors of their preschool or elementary school they have learned language skills, reading, math and science skills, social studies and art through daily interactions with their first teachers; their parents (Amundson, 1999). Simply by talking, recognizing shapes and letters, visits to the library, digging for worms, painting and playing at the park parents are educating their children. So it is crucial to continue this education even after children begin learning in a formal educational setting, such as preschool and beyond.

When measuring academic achievement, research has shown that the greatest determining factor is parental involvement (Peña, 2000). Accordingly, parent involvement is considered a protective factor and counteracts the risk of certain conditions that may lead to future school underachievement (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). A high level of parent involvement is directly related to a child’s academic, social, and personal achievement. The reason being, involved parents develop higher academic expectations for their children. Consequently, parental expectations are the most consistent predictor of academic achievement and social adjustment (MDE, 2001).

Parent involvement in the preschool years has been found to significantly improve a child’s communication skills, daily living abilities and overall motor skills, especially in boys (Marcon, 1999). Moreover, the earlier parents become involved in their child’s literacy practices and activities the greater the impact and lasting effects (Cole, 2011).
The consistency and regularity of parental involvement has been found to solidify the progression of emergent literacy development in preschoolers (Drouin, 2009). A longitudinal study of 77 preschool children researched the effects of parent involvement in an emergent literacy intervention program. The three groups of preschoolers (Parent-Training, No Parent-Training and No-Contact Control group) were assessed at four weeks and two years post emergent literacy intervention. At four weeks, both intervention groups made similar gains in letter identification and sounds. However, at two years post-intervention the children in the Parent-Training (PT) group were significantly ahead of the No Parent-Training (NPT) group in standardized test scores for reading and spelling. Also, the children of the PT group were identified by their teachers as having greater classroom literacy achievement when compared with both the NPT and control group. The effects of long-term parent involvement and emergent literacy intervention greatly impact the child’s overall literacy development and academic achievement (Drouin, 2009). Additionally, parent involvement produces long lasting benefits.

Marcon (1999) found that out of the 708 participating preschoolers from low SES, urban neighborhoods, those with greater mastery of basic school readiness skills had parents with higher rates of involvement. Moreover, school readiness, especially in at risk children, is also attributed to the amount of contact between the child’s home and school (Marcon, 1999).

Researchers have found that parent involvement is associated with stronger preliteracy skills during the preschool years (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008). A study was conducted with 163 preschool-aged children from a low-income background.
The preschool teachers rated the level of parental involvement and administered standardized tests to the children. The children’s test scores were related to the parents self-disclosed level of income, marital status and depression. The results showed a parents level of involvement was greatly related to their child’s test scores. Moreover, the parent’s income level and marital status were determining factors in the parent’s level of involvement (Arnold et al., 2008).

Parent involvement and literacy intervention comes in many different forms. In 2008, the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) found that the activities and interactions parents have with their young children at home have a greater influence on the child’s development than the parents income, SES or level of education. Therefore, any parent can choose to have a significant and positive impact on their child’s overall development, literacy skills and school achievement just by communicating, reading, interacting and playing with their child. The earlier the involvement begins the greater the impact (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2004).

A longitudinal study by Miedel and Reynolds’ (1999), investigated the effects of parent involvement during preschool and kindergarten years on school achievement during later years. Such involvement led to a smoother transition into first grade. Also, by the age of 14, the children of parents with a higher rate of parent participation during the early years were significantly associated with higher reading achievement levels, and had a decreased risk of grade retention and the need for special education. Similarly, in regards to the incidence of special education needs, Sylva et al. (2004) noted parent involvement as a protective factor. Miedel and Reynolds (1999) concluded that the
child’s reading achievement increases as the number of activities a parent reported being involved with also increases.

Children spend 70% of their waking hours outside of school and likely with a parent or guardian; therefore, when parents use this time to encourage literacy activities, children make significant gains in reading achievement compared to those who only practice during school hours (MDE, 2001). Parental involvement in literacy activities, especially story time, is the largest determining factor in a child’s emergent literacy and language skills (Cole, 2011).

Home Literacy Environments

When parents engage in literacy activities with their children, everyone benefits. Supportive home literacy environments are correlated to preschoolers language abilities (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). According to the National Literacy Trust (Cole, 2008), studies show that parents report greater self-confidence, self-esteem and better parent-child relationships when they engage in literacy activities with their child. Without exposure to the letters of the alphabet prior to school entry, a child’s ability to acquire foundation-level literacy is delayed (Cole, 2008).

Home literacy environment (HLE) refers to the way in which reading and writing are used within the home, such as, books, magazines, paper, and opportunities for literacy activities. Most researchers study traditional literacy practices when measuring reading and school achievement; however, family literacy practices within the home literacy environment can come in many different forms; traditional, environmental and technological (Brown, Byrnes, Raban, & Watson, 2012).
Traditional literacy activities refer to singing, rhyming, storytelling and storybook reading. Some families choose to incorporate literacy activities into their everyday lifestyle, such as, identifying logos, looking through child related catalogs, and understanding the bus timetable. This is typically referred to as environmental literacy. Additionally, with the heavy influence of technology in our day to day lives, it is no wonder that ‘technoliteracy’ has been identified as a practice of family literacy. Technoliteracy occurs when families invite literacy activities into their home through technological media, such as, computers, cell phones, electronic reading devices, and voice recognition software. Notably, rather than focusing on one method of literacy practice, most families utilize all three types of literacy practices within their home literacy environment (Brown et al., 2012).

Roberts et al. (2005) found that children whose mothers had higher maternal sensitivity and who utilized more book reading strategies in their home environment had higher average receptive vocabulary scores at the time of Kindergarten entry. Notably, the caregiver’s emotional and verbal responsivity to the child, acceptance of the child’s behavior, organization of the home environment, academic and language stimulation, and maternal involvement with the child are all factors within the home environment that are positively associated with receptive and expressive language, receptive vocabulary and early literacy skills (Roberts et al., 2005).

Defining Dialogic Reading

Reading aloud to young children contributes to their development of language and emergent literacy skills (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994). These skills include receptive
and expressive vocabulary, story comprehension and print awareness. Since early book reading is predictive of future reading abilities in the elementary grades (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994), it is imperative that early reading interactions foster a positive attitude towards reading.

Dialogic reading techniques utilize prompts and questions that progressively shift the role of the storyteller from the parent to the child by asking open-ended questions, repetition and modeling proper language and literacy skills (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994; Ezell & Justice, 2005; Whitehurst et al., 1988; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The program focuses on three main principles (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994):

1. **Evocative techniques** are used by the adult to encourage the child to become an active participant during story time. Asking ‘wh’ (who, what, what, where, why) questions require the child to interact with the adult and think more deeply about the story.

2. **Parent feedback** arises in the form of modeling, expansive language, corrections and praise. Parents provide and model examples of more advanced language for the child to imitate.

3. **Progressive change** in adult expectations of the child. This encourages the child to think, question and discuss more than they typically would. This principle is based on Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development.

In dialogic reading the role of the adult is to facilitate, expand and respond to the child’s verbalizations (Blom-Hoffman, O’Neil-Pirozzi, & Cutting 2006). When reading with 2-3 year old children, adults are instructed to ask ‘what’ questions; follow the child’s answers with questions; repeat the child’s answers modeling proper language;
provide assistance as necessary; praise and encourage the child; follow the child’s interests; and have fun (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994; Blom-Hoffman et al., 2006).

Dialogic reading strategies differ depending on the age of the child; the older the child the more challenging the prompts (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). As a result, two acronyms were developed to help caregivers recall the prompts when reading with children 4-5 years of age; CROWD and PEER. The CROWD and PEER prompts are explained below (Blom-Hoffman et al., 2006; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003):

- **Completion**: Fill in the blank questions. “When it rains we use our _____?”
- **Recall**: Questions that ask the child to recall details from the book. “What did Lucy do when she was scared?”
- **Open-ended**: Statements that prompt the child to talk about the book. “Now you tell me about this page.”
- **Wh-prompts**: What, where, and why questions. “What color is the ball?”
- **Distancing**: Questions that ask the child to link events in the book to his/her own life. “You traveled on an airplane like Harry, where did you go?”
- **Prompt**: Reminding the child to identify items in the book and talk about the book. “Look at this page, what is that called?”
- **Evaluate**: Statements that praise correct answers or correct the child’s incorrect responses. “Yes, that is right, the dog is brown.”
- **Expand**: Repeating what the child said and providing additional information. “Yes, that is a dog. It’s called a German Shepard.”
• **Repeat**: Encouraging the child to repeat his/her response. “Say that again. What do you call that animal?”

These prompts increase conversational language skills and become a type of socially mediated instruction. As mentioned previously, dialogic reading is rooted in the Vygotskian social interactionist theory and zone of proximal development (Arnold & Whitehurst 1994; Crain, 2005; Ezell & Justice, 2006). According to Vygotsky, a child’s development and learning occurs through socially mediated instruction that is guided by a more knowledgeable peer or adult (Ezell & Justice, 2005). For example, dialogic and shared storybook reading would be considered a socially mediated construct. As the child continues to experience this construct and the concepts that are communicated from the adult to the child, they begin to internalize the knowledge being shared and gain ownership and knowledge of the concepts (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Accordingly, storybooks present new vocabulary that the child hasn’t been exposed to (Ezell & Justice, 2005); therefore, by using the prompts to discuss new vocabulary parents are scaffolding their child’s learning within the zone of proximal development.

**Dialogic Reading, Language and Literacy**

Dialogic reading is an interactive shared book reading experience, in which, adults use specific prompts to foster a child’s imagination and thought process. As the adult provides expanded responses to the child’s remarks they are also facilitating the child’s oral language development (Lonigan, & Whitehurst, 1998; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003). But what other factors have influenced the effects or benefits of reading dialogically?
Whitehurst et al. (1988) conducted the first longitudinal study of interactive book reading (later termed dialogic reading) that set the framework for future research. The study was conducted on 2-3 year olds from middle-SES households. The data showed statistically significant results in the participants expressive language skills. Expressive language scores in the experimental group were several months ahead of the control group scores post intervention. Children in the experimental group had higher mean length of utterance (MLU), higher frequency of phrases and lower frequency of single word responses. Longitudinally, the positive effects presented were still evident 9 months post intervention; thus, showing the potential for long-term impact.

Since publication of that first study, many more have followed with a broadened scope of participants and a redirected focus of investigation. Although, interactive reading techniques were later expanded, refined and termed ‘dialogic reading,’ the goal of discovering supportive language and literacy tools has remained. As such, researchers have used dialogic reading intervention in various research settings hoping to yield similar results.

A decade later, a second studied demonstrated the lasting impact of dialogic reading but this time focused on low-income, preschool aged children enrolled in Head Start. An assessment of language measures and emergent literacy skills showed that children who received the intervention made the most significant gains in their language abilities, knowledge of letters, phonemic awareness and writing abilities (Whitehurst et al., 1999). The children retained their emergent literacy gains through their kindergarten year.
Ezell and Justice (2002) found similar results related to print concepts within a high-risk population. Their results showed that adults who explicitly referenced print (i.e. asking print related questions, pointing to specific words and pictures in print) while reading with children resulted in greater print-related verbal interactions and awareness, such as, identifying specific words, book title, etc (Ezell & Justice, 2002). Additionally, dialogic reading was a contributing factor for the acquisition of children’s writing skills and concepts about print (Whitehurst et al., 1994). When dialogic reading is highly supported in the home, children from low-income households showed an increase in linguistic awareness (identifying letters and first sounds of words) and enhanced listening comprehension and alliteration skills (Longigan, Anthony, Bloomfield, Dyer, Samwel, 1999).

In schools today, socioeconomically disadvantaged children are entering kindergarten with less developed language skills than peers from higher SES households (Ezell & Justice, 2005; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003, p. 187). Therefore, prompting the need for literacy intervention programs.

Dialogic reading between adults and children has been found to improve the expressive and receptive language skills of preschool children from low income, low-SES and at-risk populations (Taverne & Sheridan, 1995; Whitehurst et al., 1994). Emergent literacy skills are also shown to improve with dialogic intervention (Ezell & Justice, 2002; Lonigan et al., 1999; Whitehurst et al., 1999). Overall language abilities, concepts about print, letter identification, and phonological awareness are specific emergent literacy skills that are highly related to future reading abilities (Ezell & Justice, 2005, p. 7). Furthermore, when children experience shared reading with dialogic techniques they
make significant gains in terms of their emergent literacy capabilities prior to entering school (Ezell & Justice, 2005, p. 7).

The more responsive the adult is to the child the more supported, comfortable and able to learn the child becomes (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Adult responsiveness, as noted by Roberts et al. (2005), is a factor positively associated with expressive and receptive language, receptive vocabulary and emergent literacy skills development. As such, it is no wonder that adult responsiveness is a major component in dialogic reading. The level of adult responsiveness is characterized by following the child’s lead, pace and topic; promoting interactions by asking open-ended questions; and modeling language that the child is familiar with but extending that model of language to an area that is new to the child (Ezell & Justice, 2005). The frequency and quality of parent-child literacy interactions determines the level and quality of the child’s literacy development (Halsey, 2009).

Early language and literacy research suggests the importance of developing language and literacy simultaneously (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006), as well as, the importance of high quality, responsive language and literacy activities and interactions (Ezell & Justice, 2005; Roberts et al., 2005). Dialogic and shared storybook reading techniques create high quality, interactive and responsive literacy experiences between an adult and a child. Dialogic reading experiences are both developmentally appropriate and supported by such developmental theories as Vygotsky’s social interactionist theory (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994; Crain, 2005; Ezell & Justice, 2005; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) and the Montessori theory of sensitive periods in development (Crain, 2005).
This literature review has presented evidence that dialogic reading can advance oral language development, strengthen expressive and receptive language skills, increase family verbal interactions and is considered cross-culturally effective in all ranges of socioeconomic status. Reading dialogically with young children provides the language and literacy skills needed for school readiness. Therefore, the researcher will attempt to validate proven outcomes through a study of home-based dialogic interventions with typical developing, preschool age children from upper-middle SES households in Northern California.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul, than the way in which it treats its children.

~Nelson Mandela

The purpose of this study was to validate the vocabulary benefits of dialogic reading with preschool age children. This study focused on normal developing preschool aged children from middle and upper SES families whose parents implemented dialogic reading techniques.

Design of the Investigation

This study was conducted in rural Northern California. Six parent and child dyads were recruited via social connections of the researcher based on age of the children and family income status. Four parent and child dyads were assigned to the experimental group; two dyads became the control group.

The researcher chose six storybooks and targeted four vocabulary words per book. Each book was chosen based on the length, sophistication of text and children’s presumed level of interest and engagement with the book. Each vocabulary word was chosen based on potential unfamiliarity to the children and ability to represent the word in picture form. Prior to dialogic intervention, children were pretested on the expressive and receptive target vocabulary associated with the six selected books.
Prior to beginning the intervention, each parent attended an introductory meeting. At this meeting, parents were introduced to the design of the study and their responsibilities within the parameters of the study. If agreeable, parents signed the Parent Consent Form (Appendix A), completed the Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix B) and the Home Literacy Checklist (Appendix C).

Once the parent paperwork was completed and assessed by the researcher to determine to qualifying measures (child age, normal development & household income), an instructional video was shown. The Read Together, Talk Together Dialogic Reading Program Parent Video (Appendix D) discussed the basic reading prompts and techniques associated with dialogic reading and demonstrated parent and child reading interactions. Following the video, the researcher addressed parent questions and provided parents with reference material packets. Parent note cards, CROWD and PEER reference prompts sheets (Appendix D) and vocabulary word definitions were included. It was at this time that the researcher administered the vocabulary picture pretest to all participating children.

The parent and child dyads in the control group were not present at the time of the parent meeting. Rather, the researcher met them individually at their homes to explain the study. After completing the paperwork mentioned above, they were given the assigned book and were asked to read it to their child as they typically would totaling three times across four days. At this time, the researcher administered the pretest to the children in the control group.

The parents were asked to engage in reading three times across four days with each reading on a different day. The researcher returned to assess the child on the four
vocabulary picture cards associated with the assigned book. One side of the picture card represented the target vocabulary word (expressive) and the other side of the card contained four related pictures, one being the target vocabulary word (receptive). The children were given the expressive vocabulary measurement test cards before the receptive measurement test cards.

Population

All participants were recruited via social connections based on the researcher’s basic knowledge of their child’s age and family income level. None of the parents reported that they qualified for assistance from state funded programs. Three of the primary parent participants worked outside the home. Five of the parent participants reported having college degrees. Four of the participating dyads reported that one of the primary caregivers in the home held a doctoral degree.

All children were within their fourth year of age during the study. All participating children were determined to be typically developing without obvious signs of delay. This information was both observed by the researcher during the initial meeting and pretest, as well as, gathered through the parent questionnaires.

Additional information regarding the participants gender, age, abilities, pre- and post-test scores will be discussed in Chapter IV, the Results section of this study. This was done to maintain uniformity and accessibility of pertinent participant data.

Treatment

The researcher targeted four vocabulary words per book. The target words were chosen based on the amount of times it was used within the text, the unfamiliarity to
preschool aged children, and the potential to be represented in a picture. The researcher used his/her prior knowledge of child development and vocabulary to select vocabulary words best suited for this study.

Using the target vocabulary words the researcher developed picture cards by selecting generic images from the Internet. One side of the picture card represented the target vocabulary word and the children were asked to label the image. This method was designed to measure the expressive vocabulary knowledge of the child. The other side of the card contained four related pictures, one being the target vocabulary word and the children were asked to identify the targeted vocabulary word. This method was designed to measure the receptive vocabulary knowledge of the child.

The expressive picture test cards (single picture cards) were administered first at every testing session. During the individual book tests, if the children could not identify all of the individual pictures then they would be shown the multiple picture cards and asked to show the researcher the target vocabulary word; thus, measuring receptive vocabulary knowledge. When using the multiple picture cards, the researcher would say the target word in the prompt to the child. For example, “Can you show me the foal?”

During the pretest and post-test, children were first shown the single picture cards (24 total), then all multiple picture cards (24 total) regardless of performance on either expressive or receptive vocabulary measures.

Data Analysis Procedures

Prior to the intervention, each child participant was pretested on all 48 picture cards, expressive and receptive test cards. The purpose of the pretest was to measure each
child’s prior knowledge of the target vocabulary words. During the intervention, each child was tested on the four words that pertained to the book they read during each rotation, the books rotated every four days. Following the intervention, each child was given the post-test in exactly the same format as the pre-test.

The scores on the expressive and receptive vocabulary pre and post-tests were then compared. The researcher calculated the overall growth for each participant per vocabulary test domain (expressive and receptive); the average growth between participants per domain in both the experimental and control group; and the standard deviation for both study groups per test domain. Also, the Home Literacy Environment Checklist scores were compared to the vocabulary test scores.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of the Findings

Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.

~Chinese proverb

This study investigated the vocabulary growth of preschool children who were read to by their parents in the home setting using dialogic reading techniques. The specific questions investigated were, (1) does dialogic reading intervention improve expressive and/or receptive vocabulary skills, (2) does the home literacy environment effect vocabulary acquisition, and (3) do gender and/or age related patterns exist? The findings are presented using pseudonyms to describe each participants results. Then, an overall discussion of group patterns and vocabulary learning is provided.

Dialogic reading is an interactive shared reading experience between an adult and a child or a small group of children. Adults use evocative techniques to prompt verbal responses, provide positive parent feedback as a supportive language model, and encourage progressive change to create an appropriate challenge for the child. By following these three principles and the use of various prompts (CROWD and PEER), the role of the storyteller slowly shifts and the child becomes the teller of the story.
Participant Overview

Overall development, age, reading and writing abilities were all reported by the parent participants in the Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix B). The Home Literacy Environment Checklist (HLEC) (Appendix C) was also filled out by the parent participants. Based on the individual scores (out of 37), it was determined if the home environment had ‘most’ of the necessary supportive elements (score of 30-37), ‘many’ supportive elements (score of 20-29), ‘some’ supportive elements (score of 11-19), or needs improvement in supporting literacy development (score of 0-10).

Participant 1 - ‘Cara’

Cara was 4 years 2 months old at the time of the study. She is the second and youngest child in her family. She is able to recognize her name, familiar names and simple words in print. She can draw some shapes, letters and write her name. She attends a preschool program part time and will begin Kindergarten in the fall of 2013. Both parents hold a doctoral degree. As reported by her parent participant, their home literacy environment had ‘most’ of the necessary supportive elements according to the HLEC score of 32/37.

Prior to the study, Cara knew 3/24 of the target vocabulary words expressively and 23/24 of the words receptively. At the post-test she identified 16/24 of the target words expressively and 22/24 of the words receptively. Overall, she identified 13 more vocabulary words expressively by the end of the study. Her receptive vocabulary score decreased. The researcher attributes this decrease to the possibility that the child was guessing on the receptive picture cards either during the pre-test, post-test or both.
The researcher noted that during the pre-test, Cara would point to the correct (familiar) picture before the researcher stated the prompt. She seemed to recall the pictures from the expressive pre-test, thus, inflating her receptive pre-test scores. This behavior was not recognized by the researcher during the post-test, in which Cara appeared to scan all four pictures prior to her selection at the time of the post-test.

Participant 2- ‘Laura’

Laura was 4 years 9 months old when the study began. She is the second of three children. She is able to recognize her name in print, familiar names in print and simple words. She can write her own name, as well as, small words. She attends a local preschool program part time and will begin kindergarten in the fall of 2013. One parent has a high school diploma and the other parent holds a four-year college degree. Her home literacy environment had ‘many’ supportive elements according to the HLEC score of 28/37, as reported by her parent.

At the time of the pre-test, Laura possessed 6/24 of the target vocabulary words expressively. She scored 19/24 on the receptive pre-test. Her post-test scores were 22/24 (expressive) and 24/24 (receptive). Her expressive pre-test score was higher than any other pre-test scores due to her parent’s occupation corresponding to certain target words. Overall, her expressive vocabulary grew from 6 to 22 words. Her receptive vocabulary increased from 19 to 24 words at the post-test.

During the post-test, she was able to recall the definition of a particular vocabulary word but could not recall the word itself. Although, knowing the definition is a sign of expressive knowledge, stating the definition alone did not fit within the parameters of the study so the researcher did not score that word. Also, it is important to
note that during testing if Laura did not recall the vocabulary word quickly she got very quiet, looked away, fiddled with her hands and waited several seconds before saying ‘pass’. She exhibited nervous behaviours when she did not recall the word quickly. Although her scores were very high, this nervous tendency could have negatively impacted her expressive vocabulary score.

Participant 3- ‘Sarah’

Sarah was 4 years 0 months old during the study. She is the second of three children in her family. She is able to recognize her own name in print. She can write some shapes, some letters, her own name and some small words. She attends a preschool program part time and will begin Kindergarten in the fall of 2014. One parent has a two-year college degree and one parent holds a doctoral degree. As reported by her parent, their home literacy environment (HLEC) score of 29/37, had ‘many’ supportive elements.

Sarah was the youngest participant. Her expressive pre-test score was 1/24 and her receptive pre-test score was 14/24. She scored 13/24 (expressive) and 23/24 (receptive) on the post-test. Overall, she gained 12 words expressively and 9 words receptively during this study.

Her identification of the target words that she never fully acquired expressively did not change. For example, she identified the ‘laundromat’ vocabulary picture card as ‘washer machines’ at both the pre-test and post-test.

Participant 4- ‘Garrett’

Garrett was 4 years 11 months old during the study. He turned five just after the study commenced. He is the second and youngest child in his family. He is able to recognize his name, familiar names and simple words in print. He can draw, write some
shapes, some letters, and his own name. He attends a local preschool program part time and will begin Kindergarten in the fall of 2013. Both parents have four-year college degrees. As reported by his parent participant, his home literacy environment had ‘many’ supportive elements according to the HLEC score of 26/37.

Garrett’s pre-test scores showed that he previously knew 4/24 target words expressively and 12/24 words receptively. His expressive post-test score was 19/24 and the receptive score was 22/24. His overall vocabulary knowledge grew from 4 to 19 expressively and from 12 to 22 receptively.

Similar to other participants, the researcher noted that Garrett consistently identified certain words incorrectly using the same word during both the pre- and post-tests (ie. Target word ‘paws’: stated ‘footprint’ during testing). Therefore, Garrett’s initial identification of certain picture cards were solidified and unchanged by the intervention. Also, during the receptive pre-test, Garrett, answered quickly and excitedly. He did not focus on the pictures before responding. Rather, his responses were very fast which could have negatively impacted his score. However, at the subsequent testing sessions Garrett slowed his response time. Therefore, his initial excitability could have been due to his unfamiliarity of the study’s testing process.

Participant 5- ‘Zena’

Zena was 4 years 10 months old during the study. She is the oldest of three children in her family. She is able to recognize her name in print, familiar names and simple words in print. She can draw pictures that depict a story, write some shapes, some letters, some words and her own name. She attends a local preschool program part time and will begin Kindergarten in the fall of 2013. One parent holds a four-year college
degree and the other parent holds a doctoral degree. Her home literacy environment has ‘most’ of the necessary supportive elements according to the HLEC score of 36/37, as reported by her parent.

Zena was one of two child participants in the control group. She did not receive dialogic reading intervention. Her pre-test scores were 3/24 on the expressive test, and 21/24 for the receptive test. Her post-test scores showed an increase of 16 words expressively (19/24) and 3 words receptively (24/24).

Of the target words that Zena missed on both tests, she also maintained consistency in the word she used to identify the picture card (ie. Target word ‘Firehouse’: stated word ‘fire apartment’ on both tests). Her vocabulary growth is consistent with that of the participants in the experimental group. She was quick to respond to the researchers prompts during testing.

Participant 6- ‘Brian’

Brian was 4 years 5 months old during the study. He is the second of three children in his family. He is able to recognize his own name, familiar names and simple words in print. He can draw pictures that depict a story, some shapes, some letters and can write his own name. He attends a local preschool program part time and will begin Kindergarten in the fall of 2013. One parent holds a four-year college degree and the other parent holds a doctoral degree. His home literacy environment has ‘most’ of the necessary supportive elements according to the HLEC score of 35/37, as reported by his parent.

Prior to the study, Brian identified 3 out of 24 target words expressively and 14 out of 24 target words receptively. His post-test scores were 14/24 on the expressive
measure and 20/24 for the receptive measure. Overall, his expressive vocabulary knowledge increased by 11 words and his receptive vocabulary improved by 6 words over the course of the study.

Brian is the second child and the only male in the control group. He did not receive dialogic reading intervention. His overall scores and vocabulary growth was on the lower end of the group scores; however, the scores were comparable to the participants in the experimental group. During the pre-test and post-test, he also maintained consistency in his incorrect identification of certain target words. During testing, Brian tried to identify each word as quickly as he could. It is important to note that this could have negatively affected his score because he did not allow proper processing time.

Discussion of the Findings

Initially upon reviewing the individual data score sheets, it appeared that dialogic reading greatly increased the participant’s expressive and receptive vocabulary, thus, affirming the initial research question. However, once the experimental group data was compared to the control group, it was apparent that there were not large differences. All participants made substantial gains in their expressive and receptive vocabulary skills during the study.

Expressive and Receptive Vocabulary Growth

The expressive vocabulary test was a more reliable measure because all participants started from a similar baseline, 1.63 standard deviation compared to a 4.45 standard deviation at the receptive vocabulary pre-test. Overall, all children acquired at
least 11 more words expressively and an average expressive vocabulary growth of 13.84 during the course of the study. The overall receptive growth was at an average of 5.66 at the post-test comparison (Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
<th></th>
<th>Receptive</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Cara</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Laura</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Sarah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Garrett</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Zena*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Brian*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>17.17</td>
<td>13.84</td>
<td>17.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Dev.</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*: Expressive pre-test scores were similar with a standard deviation of 1.63 from the mean vs. 4.45 for the receptive pre-test. The expressive assessment was more reliable than the receptive assessment. *Indicates control group participants.

The experimental group identified an average of 14.5 more words expressively at the post-test when compared to the pre-test. Receptive vocabulary growth was at an average of 6.25 words. The smaller growth is due to the fact that the receptive pre-test scores were significantly higher than the expressive pre-test scores. This observation is both consistent amongst both participant groups and is developmentally
and age-appropriate because expressive language is preceded by mastering receptive language skills (Table 2).

Table 2

Comparison of Vocabulary Growth of the Experimental Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expressive Pre</th>
<th>Expressive Post</th>
<th>Expressive Growth</th>
<th>Receptive Pre</th>
<th>Receptive Post</th>
<th>Receptive Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Cara</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Laura</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Sarah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Garrett</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>14.50</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>23.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Dev.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>St.Dev.</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Children started with higher receptive vocabulary scores than expressive scores. The growth of expressive vocabulary is greater than expressive. Average expressive growth in the experimental group is 1.29 standard deviations from the mean and is therefore more consistent measurement.

The overall scores of the control groups had higher variability than the experimental group scores. The standard deviation between the two control group participants overall expressive vocabulary growth was 3.54. The expressive vocabulary growth scores of participant, Zena, was comparable to the highest scores in the experimental group. Furthermore, the expressive vocabulary growth of Brian was below the lowest score of the youngest participant in the experimental group. Brian’s overall growth was consistent with the researcher’s anticipated growth. However, Zena’s overall
growth was much higher than anticipated and that could be due to her age, birth order, desire to read, engagement during story time and her recall ability level (Table 3).

Table 3

*Comparison of Vocabulary Growth of the Control Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expressive</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Receptive</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-Zena</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-Zena</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Brian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>6-Brian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.50</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>St.Dev.</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.54</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.54</strong></td>
<td><strong>St.Dev.</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.95</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.83</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.12</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The average expressive growth between control group participants is 3.54 standard deviations from the mean score; therefore, it is less consistent than the expressive growth of the experimental group.

**Home Literacy Environment and Vocabulary Growth**

The data reveals a pattern indicating that children whose home literacy environment (HLEC) scores were lower prior to the intervention had higher overall vocabulary growth at the end of the study. The researcher attributes this pattern to the increase in the frequency of shared reading experiences that occurred in the home environment, which is a direct result of the intervention. Due to the small sample size, statistical analyses of these data were not pursued (Table 4).

It is also important to mention that all parent participants reported having supportive literacy elements in the home environment prior to intervention. In fact, all participants HLEC scores were within the two highest ranges of supportive criteria.
Table 4

*Overall Growth Compared to the Home Literacy Environment Checklist Score.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Exp. Growth</th>
<th>Rec. Growth</th>
<th>Total Growth</th>
<th>HLE Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Cara</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Brian*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Zena*</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Laura</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Sarah</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Garrett</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* As HLEC scores decreased the total growth increased. *Indicates control group participants.

Accordingly, all expressive pre-test scores were relatively consistent with a standard deviation of 1.63.

**Age and Gender Relationship to Vocabulary Growth**

The research did identify gender and age related patterns between the scores. The researcher recommends that future research on larger sample sizes might explore gender and age differences.

Notably, the lowest receptive post-test scores were that of the male participants (1 experimental group; 1 control group). Male participants had lower average scores for both expressive and receptive post-tests when compared to female participants. When controlling for age, both male participants scored lowest on overall expressive growth. Both male participants scored below the study group’s average score on the
receptive vocabulary post-test. Yet, the average male receptive vocabulary growth was higher than that of female participants. Moreover, male receptive vocabulary pre-test scores were greater than six words below the average female receptive pre-test scores, therefore, contributing to overall receptive growth post intervention (Table 5).

Table 5

Comparison Scores Based on Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
<th></th>
<th>Receptive</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Cara</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Laura</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Sarah</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Zena*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>19.25</td>
<td>23.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Dev.</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Garrett</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Brian*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Dev.</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Expressive pre- and post-tests were higher for females. Receptive growth was higher for males.

Also important to note, Sarah, the study’s youngest participant, who was in the experimental group, scored below her fellow gender mates in all pre and post-test scores. However, her overall expressive and receptive growth was just at or above the
average score. The younger the participant the less overall expressive vocabulary growth was reported (Table 6).

Table 6

*Comparison of Vocabulary Growth Based on Participant’s Age.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
<th>Receptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>4y0m</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>4y2m</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian*</td>
<td>4y5m</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>4y9m</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zena*</td>
<td>4y10m</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrett</td>
<td>4y11m</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4y6m</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>17.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Younger participants had greater receptive vocabulary scores than expressive because receptive skills must be mastered before expressive language skills. *Indicates control group participant.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Children are our most valuable resource.
~Herbert Hoover

The purpose of this study was to measure the expressive and receptive vocabulary acquisition of preschool children who were read to using dialogic reading techniques by their parents in a home setting. In order to understand the framework behind dialogic reading techniques, the researcher presented a literature review that focused on a child’s development of language and the experiences that influence language development from birth to school age. Basic child development theories, such as, the Montessori theory of Sensitive Periods for language development, Vygotsky’s social interactionist theory of learning and zone of proximal development exposed the importance of reading with young children. A review of the importance and impact of parent involvement, as well as, the role home literacy environments play in the development of language. Furthermore, a basic understand of dialogic reading was presented, along with current research on the topic.

The review presented a chain or ladder of connected and contributing factors (theory, parent involvement, HLE, etc.) that influence a child’s language development
and pre-emergent reading skills. All contributing factors are also key aspects of dialogic and shared book reading techniques; thus, surmising that the implementation of said techniques can positively contribute to the development of a child’s language and literacy skills.

The investigation was primarily reported as a series of case studies of middle to upper income families in Northern California. Once eligibility was determined for the six parent and child dyads, they were introduced to dialogic reading through an informational meeting and an instructional video. Prior to intervention, each child participant was pre-tested on their prior knowledge of the target vocabulary words through two assessments, expressive and receptive. Each participant rotated through six storybooks. One book was issued at a time. Parents were asked to read the book three times on three different days. During individual book testing sessions, the children were tested on both formats and then given a new book. Four days after their last individual book test each participant was post-tested to determine vocabulary growth.

Although all participants made improvements in their expressive and receptive vocabulary word knowledge, the sample size was too small to pursue tests of statistical significance on any of the measures. However, several notable patterns did emerge from the data and were discussed. Regardless of the intervention, every parent participant read with their child on a regular basis during the study. Although the children’s overall vocabulary growth did not yield a significant positive relationship between dialogic reading and vocabulary acquisition; it could be assumed that consistent parent involvement and reading aloud with a child increased the child’s vocabulary skills.
The home literacy environment checklist (HLEC) provided interesting information related to vocabulary development of children. All home literacy environments (HLE) met the supportive criteria; however, the children whose parents reported lower HLEC scores made the greatest improvements in total vocabulary growth (expressive and receptive growth). One could ascertain that the mere participation of parents in literacy activities facilitated the development of their child’s language and literacy skills.

Furthermore, patterns regarding age and gender differences surfaced as a result of this study. It was found that female participants’ average expressive and receptive post-test scores were higher than their male counterparts. Also, the younger participants performed better on the receptive tests than the expressive tests. As expected, they scored lower on the expressive post-test and overall expressive growth than the older participants affirming the belief that children acquire more complex language skills as they grow older. Receptive language skills are a prerequisite to expressive language skills.

Conclusion

Past studies, similar in design have yielded much more significant results (Arnold, Lonigan et al., 1994; Whitehurst et al., 1988). The small participant sample size and short time frame are amongst the first and possibly the greatest limitations of this study.

As it was presumably every parent participant’s intention to follow the parameters of the study, self-reporting measures are another limitation of the study. The
researcher was unable to observe the frequency or quality of the shared reading
interactions. The parents understanding and accurate implementation of the dialogic
reading techniques is also a limitation.

Additionally, all participating dyads lived in two-parent households. Yet, the
dialogic training was given to only one parent; therefore, if the second parent received
dialogic training from the participating parent, then that too limits the validity and
reliability of this study.

Recommendations

Replication of this study is recommended with a larger sample size, more
specific parent training and greater observation of dialogic techniques. Also, this study
was conducted on children with normal language and literacy development from low-risk
households with educated parents with secure employment; therefore, it is recommended
that future research sample a population that differs demographically, developmentally,
socioeconomically or all previously mentioned.

Given the important role of parent involvement, language, and literacy
development on academic achievement and success, the fundamental need for continued
literacy research remains vital. Especially within the arena of dialogic and shared book
reading, continued research on parent and child, as well as, teacher and child
implementation should be conducted. Also, continued research regarding the accessibility
of dialogic and shared book reading programs for teachers and parents. Compelling
evidence demonstrates significant outcomes when parents and teachers work together to
educate children. Therefore, literacy programs that are easily integrated into a busy
classroom and an active household are requisite in cultivating and sustaining the future academic success of all children.
REFERENCES


DESCRIPTION:
You and your child are invited to participate in a research study regarding parent implemented Dialogic Reading strategies at home with your preschool age child. The purpose of the study is to measure your child’s vocabulary growth as a result of the Dialogic Reading techniques. Parents will participate in a short training on Dialogic Reading strategies and techniques. After the parent training, both the parent and child will be asked to read 1(out of 6) weekly assigned book at least one time per day on 3 different days followed by a vocabulary picture test. The researcher will administer a vocabulary picture test (pre-test) at the beginning of the study, at the end of every week on the vocabulary words related to the weekly assigned book and at the end of the study (post-test) to determine vocabulary gains. The testing sessions will be audio and/or videotaped but confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:
There are no risks associated with this study to either the parent or the child. The benefits that may reasonably be expected to result from this study are potential vocabulary growth and the benefits of reading consistently to your child.

TIME INVOLVEMENT:
Parent and child participation in this experiment will take approximately 2 hours per week. Additionally, each parent will participate in a training that will take approximately 2 hours total.

PAYMENTS (If applicable):
No payment for participation.

SUBJECT’S RIGHTS:
If you have read this form and have decided to allow your child to participate in this project, please understand your child’s participation is voluntary and your child has the right to withdraw his/her consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he/she is otherwise entitled. Your child has the right to refuse to answer particular questions.

Your child’s individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. At no time will a participant’s name be mentioned or made public.

Project Dates
Start Date: February 2013
End Date: March 2013
California State University, Chico
Parent or Legally Authorized Representative Permission Form

Researcher: Kasie LeRoux, M.A. Education candidate
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Michael Kotar, School of Education
Project Title: Parent Implemented Dialogic Reading Strategies and Vocabulary Development

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions, Concerns, or Complaints:
If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research study, its procedures, risks and benefits, you should ask the researcher, M.A. in Education candidate, Kasie LeRoux, 530-519-2193 or by email at kleroux3@msn.com.

Independent Contact:
If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Michael Kotar, at 530-898-6610 or by email at mkotar@csuchico.edu.

Questions and requests for assistance may also be directed to the Institutional Review Board by contacting Marsha Osborne 530-898-5413.

CONSENT:

I give consent for my child to be audio recorded and/or videotaped during this study:

Please initial: _____ Yes   ____ No

I give consent for audio and/or video recordings resulting from this study to be used for reviewing data collection of testing sessions.

Please initial: _____ Yes   ____ No

I understand that my child’s identity will not be revealed in any written data resulting from this study.

Please initial: _____ Yes   ____ No

Signature(s) of Parent(s), Guardian or Conservator                              Date
Parent Implemented Dialogic Reading Strategies & Vocabulary Development
Kasie LeRoux
California State University, Chico
M.A. Education Candidate

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Please list NAME, AGE, & GENDER of all participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>AGE/BIRTH ORDER</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>ID. CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please list all addresses that the researcher may visit your child to conduct the weekly vocabulary picture tests and book exchange.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Please list the name and phone number of any adult the researcher may contact regarding this study (discuss child’s needs & behaviors, arrange meeting days/times, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PHONE NUMBER</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHILD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Please list the education level of the two primary caretakers (ie. Mom/A.S.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1- Relationship/Education Level</th>
<th>2- Relationship/Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Do you QUALIFY to receive assistance from any state programs (TANF, Medi-Cal, etc.)?  

| YES | NO |

6. In your opinion, has your child met their age-appropriate developmental milestones?  

| Yes | No |

7. Do you or your physician have any concerns regarding your child’s development?  
   a. If so, please explain  

__________________________________________________________________________

8. What are your child’s reading abilities? (circle all that apply)  

   My child can…  
   a. Recognize their name in print.  
   b. Recognize familiar names in print. (mom, dad, sibling names, favorite restaurant, etc.)  
   c. Recognize simple words (ie. Cat, hat, the, is, dog)  
   d. Read short sentences (ie. The cat is fat.)  
   e. Read aloud beginning level books.  
   f. Read aloud storybooks.  
   g. None of the above.  

9. What are your child’s writing abilities? (circle all that apply)  

   My child…  
   a. Does not draw.  
   b. Draws and scribble.  
   c. Draws pictures that depict a story or experience.  
   d. Does not write.  
   e. Writes some shapes  
   f. Writes some letters.  
   g. Writes his or her name.  
   h. Writes small words.  
   i. Writes sentences.  

10. What is your child’s favorite book?  
   a. ________________________________________________________________
## Home Literacy Environment Checklist

Is your home literacy-friendly?

You are your child’s first teacher. Your home is where your child will get his or her first experiences with books and reading. Look around your home and think about what you do with your child. If the statement on the checklist is true, place a check in the “true” column. If the statement is false, place a check in the “false” column. When you are finished, count up the number of checks in the true column and find that number on the chart at the end of the checklist. Use the results as a guideline to see what you can do for your child.

### What my child has...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child has at least one alphabet book (e.g., Dr. Seuss’s ABC book).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has magnetized alphabet letters to play with.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has crayons and pencils readily available for writing and drawing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has paper readily available for writing and drawing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has a table or surface readily available for writing or drawing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has at least one rhyme book (e.g., Joseph Slate’s Miss Kindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has more than one rhyme book.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has at least 10 picture books.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has at least 20 picture books.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has at least 50 picture books.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child plays beginning reading and alphabet games on a computer (e.g., Reader Rabbit or Bailey’s Book House).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child has materials and games to help learn the alphabet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What I or another adult do...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house read a picture book with my child at least once a week.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house read a picture book with my child at least four times a week.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house teach new words to my child at least once a week.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house teach new words to my child nearly every day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house have a detailed and informative conversation with my child at least once a week. (e.g., “How do you think ice cream is made?”).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house have a detailed and informative conversation with my child nearly every day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn nursery rhymes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house encourage my child to tell me what he or she wants using complete sentences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house take my child to the library or a bookstore at least once every two months.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What my child sees me or another adult doing...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child sees me or another adult in the house reading books, magazines or the newspaper at least once a week.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child sees me or another adult in the house reading books, magazines or the newspaper nearly every day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What I am...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am a good reader.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a large vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I began to read picture books with my child before he or she was a year old.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy reading picture books with my child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect that my child will work to his or her potential in school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Now or in the past, I or another adult encourage or help my child...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house encourage my child to watch beginning reading shows on TV or tapes (e.g., Between the Lions on PBS).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house encourage my child to play with computer games that introduce the alphabet and beginning reading (e.g., Reader Rabbit).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn to sing or say the alphabet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn to name letters of the alphabet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn to write letters of the alphabet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn to write his or her name.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn to write other people's names.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn how to rhyme.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I or another adult in the house help my child learn the sounds that letters of the alphabet make (e.g., &quot;M makes the mmmm sound&quot;).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Count up the number of statements marked TRUE and put that number in the box to the right. See the chart below to find out how literacy-friendly your family child care program is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38 – 37</td>
<td>Home literacy environment has most of the necessary supportive elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>Home literacy environment has many supportive elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 19</td>
<td>Home literacy environment has some supportive elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 10</td>
<td>Home literacy environment needs improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The PEER Sequence

*Read Together, Talk Together™* provides steps to follow in asking questions and responding to a child during reading. These steps are called the PEER sequence. PEER stands for *prompt*, *evaluate*, *expand*, and *repet*. You can use the PEER sequence with almost anything you read with children.

The chart below shows the steps and sample questions and responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>HOW DO YOU DO IT?</th>
<th>HOW DOES IT HELP?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| P = Prompt the child. | • Ask the child a question or invite the child to talk about something on the page.  
• You can prompt the child to name an object on the page or talk about something in the story. | • Focuses attention  
• Engages the child in the story  
• Helps the child understand plot  
• Builds vocabulary |
| E = Evaluate what the child says. | • Think about what the child says. Is the answer correct? What information can you add? | • Prompts the adult to correct the child’s response and add information |
| E = Expand on what the child says. | • Add a few words to the child’s response.  
• In some cases, gently provide the correct response. | • Encourages the child to say just a little more than he or she would naturally  
• Builds vocabulary |
| R = Repeat. | • Ask the child to repeat the expanded or correct response. | • Encourages the child to use language |
Different Kinds of Prompts
As you know, the kinds of questions you ask a very young child are different from the questions you ask an older child. For example, it’s easier for older children to recall events in a story and make connections between those events and their own lives than it is for a toddler. Read Together, Talk Together™ recommends specific kinds of questions, or prompts, that match young children’s verbal language skills.

The letters in the word CROWD stand for the kinds of questions (the prompts) developed for dialogic reading—completion, recall, open-ended, wh-, and distancing. Recall and distancing questions are suggested only for older preschoolers and kindergartners. The chart below shows sample prompts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KIND OF PROMPT</th>
<th>HOW DO YOU DO IT?</th>
<th>HOW DOES IT HELP?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> = Completion</td>
<td>• Ask the child to complete a word or a phrase. Completion questions are often used in books that rhyme.</td>
<td>• Encourages the child to listen to and use language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong> = Recall</td>
<td>• Ask the child details about what happens in the story.</td>
<td>• Builds a sense of story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O</strong> = Open-ended</td>
<td>• Ask the child what the characters do.</td>
<td>• Helps the child recall details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W</strong> = Wh-prompts</td>
<td>• Ask the child to tell what is happening in the picture.</td>
<td>• Provides an opportunity for the child to use language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> = Distancing</td>
<td>• Point to something in a picture and ask the child to name the object or action.</td>
<td>• Builds vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong> = Encourage questions that relate something in the story to the child’s life.</td>
<td>• Helps the child make connections between books and life</td>
<td>• Provides an opportunity for the child to use language</td>
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BOOK LIST, VOCABULARY WORDS & DEFINITIONS

• A Pocket for Corduroy by Don Freeman

  1. Laundromat- A store where you can wash and dry your dirty clothes.
  2. Washcloth- A small towel. Used for your hands.
  3. Cave- A dark opening in the ground where animals and bugs can live or hide in.
  4. Artist- A person who uses their imagination to create pictures.

• Farm Babies by Jacqueline McQuade

  1. Ducking- A baby duck.
  2. Piglet- A baby pig.
  4. Foal- A baby horse.

• Corduroy by Don Freeman

  1. Escalator- A staircase that moves up and down.
  3. Sofa- A place to sit. Another name for a couch.
  4. Paws- The feet of a four-legged animal with nails or claws.

• The 3 Bears and Goldilocks by Margaret Willey & Heather Solomon

  1. Scarf- A piece of fabric the wraps around your neck to keep your neck warm.
  2. Forest- A large area with a lot of trees, plants and animals.
  3. Cabin- A small house that is in the forest.
  4. Porridge- Boiled oats. Another name for oatmeal.

• A Trip to the Firehouse by Wendy Cheyette Lewison

  1. Firehouse- A house where the firemen live when they are working.
  2. Fire helmet- A special helmet that firemen wear to protects your head from hard objects and fire.
  3. Suspenders- Two straps that go over your shoulders and clip to your pants. They keep your pants from falling down.
  4. Locker- A special place to keep your clothes and belongings when you’re not at home.

• A House for Hermit Crab by Eric Carle

  1. Hermit crab- A small crab with a soft body that lives in a shell.
  2. Claw- A sharp and pointy part of an animal that is used to grasp or pinch things.
  3. Coral- A hard, rock-like animal that lives in shallow waters of the ocean.
  4. Urchin- A soft bodied sea animal that has many spikey tentacles.
# Book Schedule

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**KEY**
- 1-A Pocket for Corduroy
- 2-Farm Babies
- 3-Corduroy
- 4-The 3 Bears and Goldilocks
- 5-A Trip to the Firehouse
- 6-A House for Hermit Crab