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ABSTRACT

Reading aloud and training in phonemic awareness have been promoted as two ways to increase children's reading ability. Reading aloud encourages children to find pleasure in reading and use literature to aid in learning. Children with early awareness of individual sounds in words, called phonemes, and the ability to manipulate them are more likely to become good readers. Using a multiple baseline across subjects design, the present study compared two preschool age children, matched on age, reading experience, and a pretest measure, during reading aloud and specific strategies targeted at training phonemic awareness. The training program was "Ladders to Literacy" and the children's progress was monitored using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Four DIBELS measures, Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Sound Naming Fluency (SNF), Initial Phoneme Ability (IPA), and Phonemic Segmentation Ability (PSA) were used. Results showed that following training, each child's performance on SNF, IPA, and PSA improved; performance on LNF varied. Conclusions and future research are discussed. Contains 54 references, and a table and 6 figures of data. Appendixes contain a questionnaire and 16 lessons. (Author/RS)

Running Head: EFFECTS OF SPECIFIC STRATEGY TRAINING

Effects of Specific Strategy Training on Phonemic Awareness and Reading Aloud with Preschoolers: A Comparison Study

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Abstract

Reading aloud and training in phonemic awareness have been promoted as two ways to increase children's reading ability. Reading aloud encourages children to find pleasure in reading and use literature to aid in learning. Children with early awareness of individual sounds in words, called phonemes, and the ability to manipulate them are more likely to become good readers. Using a multiple baseline across subjects design, the present study compared two preschool age children, matched on age, reading experience, and a pretest measure, during reading aloud and specific strategies targeted at training phonemic awareness. The training program was Ladders to Literacy and the children's progress was monitored using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Four DIBELS measures, Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Sound Naming Fluency (SNF), Initial Phoneme Ability (IPA), and Phonemic Segmentation Ability (PSA) were used. Results showed that following training, each child's performance on SNF, IPA, and PSA improved; performance on LNF varied. Conclusions and future research are discussed.

Effects of Specific Strategy Training in Phonemic Awareness and Reading Aloud with Preschoolers: A Comparison Study

> "If we would get our parents to read to their preschool children 15 minutes a day, we could revolutionize the schools." (Ruth Love, Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, 1981 as cited in Trelease, 1982)
>
> "Reading to the child is the best-known, most researched and most frequently recommended parental practice that is significantly related to positive attitudes toward reading and reading achievement" (Becher, 1985, p. 44).

The acclaim of reading aloud is ever present. It has been proclaimed as the best exercise that parents and teachers can do to increase their children's reading ability. In studies that examined what factors contribute to children becoming good readers, reading aloud repeatedly emerges as the one factor to positively influence children's reading achievement (Hewison & Tizard, 1980; Meyer, Stahl, Linn, & Wardrop, 1994; Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982). Trelease (1982) expressed that "reading aloud to children stimulates their interest, their emotional development, and their imagination." (p. 28) A common characteristic observed in homes of children who read early is that they are read to regularly (Durkin, 1966; Hewison & Tizard, 1980). Furthermore, it has been shown that training at home is more influential than training at school. Tizard, Schofield and Hewison (1982) found that when children received extra practice in reading at home, they exhibited greater improvements in reading achievement than those children who received extra practice at school.

In spite of these compelling findings, many parents do not know exactly what to do when reading aloud to their children. Becher (1985) found that parents express their uncertainty about amount of time and what kinds of activities work best when reading aloud. Many parents are unaware of how reading aloud benefits their child. They also are

uncertain about how to actively involve their child while reading aloud. Such uncertainties make the practice of reading aloud difficult to be effective.

In 1994, Meyer, Stahl, Linn, and Wardrop researched storybook reading effects on reading achievement. They found that children must be involved in activities that are directly associated with the reading process in order for reading aloud to be effective. Moreover, they discovered a negative relationship between time teachers spend reading to kindergarten children and the children's reading achievement (Meyer et al., 1994). It appears that the greater connection children make with the words and the more active they are in the reading process, the greater the benefits.

Making the connection to words does not come readily when beginning to learn to read. The ability to decode printed words is one of the most important skills a child can possess when learning to read (Beck & Juel, 1995). In addition to knowing that printed material communicates a message to the reader, and that letters form words, children must understand that a specific letter in each word is connected to a specific sound in the spoken word. The latter aspect of language is crucial to children's reading success. A reader must be able to decode a word by translating the letters into individual sounds. Even before decoding can occur, a child must be able to hear the individual sounds within a word. Once the code is broken, a child can read any word. *Phonemic awareness* is the skill that makes decoding possible.

A phoneme is the smallest speech sound that can change the meaning of a word. For example, by replacing the first phoneme /b/ in "bill" with the phoneme /p/ to make

"pill", the entire meaning of the word is changed. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that particular sounds correspond to particular letters in spoken language. When a child is aware that /t/ is the sound of the letter "t", he or she is phonemically aware.

Encompassing phonemic awareness is *phonological awareness*, which is the awareness of how to move, combine, or delete sounds in spoken words; it is the ability to manipulate the phonemes in spoken words. When children acquire an *alphabetic understanding*, they comprehend the converse of phonemic awareness. They grasp the concept that letters represent sounds and that words are constructed by individual sounds, and groups and patterns of sounds.

The English language is alphabetic in nature. We communicate using the sounds that create words which in turn convey meaning. The understanding of both phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding leads to insight into the alphabetic *principle.* There are two aspects of the alphabetic principle that are essential for children to grasp before becoming good readers. First, the pre-reader should understand that when speaking, individual phonemes are not noticeable to the speaker and listener. The phonemes are blended together or co-articulated. For example, in the word "red" each sound is not articulated when spoken; rather, each sound is blended into the next, making it easy to say and hear. Therefore, when teaching children about phonemes, it is often a struggle for the child to hear individual, separate phonemes. The second aspect is that one

phoneme may be represented by two letters. For instance, the sound /ch/ is a single phoneme but it is represented as two letters; phonemes and letters do not always correspond one-to-one. Or, the addition of letters may change the sound of the phonemes (e.g., pan vs. pane, lot vs. lotion, lit vs. light). Potentially adding even more confusion, the pronunciation of words changes even when the same letter combinations are present (e.g. yacht and choir) (Torgesen & Mathes, 1998). Phonemic awareness is the foundation children must have as they learn to read.

Phonemic awareness has been the focus of a plethora of research. Teachers consider it one of the "hottest" topics in education today (Cassidy & Cassidy, 1998). In numerous studies, researchers have examined its predicability of later reading achievement\ (Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Juel, 1988; Lundberg, Frost & Peterson, 1988; Maclean, Bryant & Bradley, 1987; Wagner & Torgesen, 1987), and whether phonemic awareness can be taught (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Byrne, & Fielding-Barnsley, 1991, 1993, 1995; Cunningham, 1990; Lundberg, Frost & Peterson, 1988).

There is strong evidence supporting the predictability of later reading achievement from phonemic awareness upon later reading achievement. In 1983, Bradley and Bryant examined the correlation between children's ability to categorize sounds and their later success in reading and spelling. They found that a child's ability to categorize sounds was moderately correlated with reading scores three years later. The correlation between sound categorization and the Schonell reading test was .57 for children who were tested at 4-years-old initially and .44 for 5-year-olds. The correlations for the Neale

reading test were .53 and .48, for 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds, respectively. Bryant and Bradley (1983) concluded that their evidence was the first to adequately show a causal link between phonological awareness and reading. Juel (1988) conducted a longitudinal study of 54 children from the time they were in first through fourth grades. She found that there was an 88 percent chance that a child who was a poor reader in the first grade would be a poor reader in the fourth grade. Those children who were considered poor readers in first grade had little phonemic awareness.

The evidence that phonemic awareness can be taught is strong as well. Ball and Blachman (1991) trained kindergarten children either in letter names and letter sounds only, or letter names and sounds with phonemic segmentation. The children's reading and spelling skills improved significantly when they received both types of training. The group who received training in only letter names and sounds did not show significant improvement.

Cunningham (1990) studied the effects of explicit and implicit phonemic awareness training. With kindergarten and first-grade children, she trained one group with an implicit approach in which the steps of segmenting and blending phonemes were taught. The second group was trained with an explicit approach in which emphasis was placed on the application, value and utility of phonemic awareness. The results showed that the children who received the training at the explicit level scored significantly better on measures of reading achievement.

The results of Cunningham's (1990) study and those of Meyer et al. (1994) demonstrate the importance of specific strategies in training phonemic awareness. When comparing reading aloud and phonemic segmentation, there are solid results as well. Share, Jorm, Maclean, and Matthews (1984) discovered that the correlation between reading achievement of Australian children in the first grade and the factor called "parents read to their child" was .21. However, the factor called "phoneme segmentation" correlated .62. Such results support the significance of phonemic awareness.

One important result of the aforementioned findings has been the rise of reliable measures of assessing phonemic awareness and early literacy skills. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) was designed for this purpose. The DIBELS are succinct measures of important early literacy skills, designed by a group of researchers at the University of Oregon (Good & Kaminski, 1996). The DIBELS are not comprehensive measures of specific early literacy skills; however, they are reliable and valid measures that take approximately 1 to 3 minutes to administer. The present study focuses on the four DIBELS measures: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Sound Naming Fluency (SNF), Initial Phoneme Ability (IPA), and Phonemic Segmentation Ability (PSA).

Elliot, Lee, and Tollefson (in press) conducted a study which examined the technical adequacy of four modified DIBELS measures, LNF, SNF, IPA, and PSA. They found that the DIBELS-M significantly predicted teachers' judgments of students' levels of achievement and the Reading and Skills Clusters on the Woodcock-Johnson

Achievement Battery Revised (WJ-R). Additionally, their results showed that variance in students' achievement scores were explained more by the DIBELS than by the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT) or the Test of Phonological Awareness (TOPA). They concluded that the DIBELS-M are favorable for recognizing children who are at-risk of becoming poor readers. They also concluded that the DIBELS-M are useful measures for monitoring progress.

Another important result of the research in phonemic awareness has been the publication of training programs such as Ladders to Literacy. Written by Angela Notari-Syverson, Rollanda E. O'Connor, and Patricia F. Vadasy, Ladders to Literacy: A Preschool Activity Book was written to help develop children's early literacy skills. The activities were designed to be included in a preschool classroom curriculum. The three areas that are addressed are print/book awareness, metalinguistic awareness and oral language.

The present study was designed to compare the effects of specific strategies in training phonemic awareness versus a reading aloud program in preschool-age children. We were interested in (1) determining whether training in phonemic awareness with activities targeted at preschool-age children would positively influence performance on a measure of early literacy skills and (2) assessing the practicality of such a training program at home, for parents. Using a multiple baseline across subjects design, we compared two children's performance.

Method

Participants

A sample of 60 preschoolers from a preschool in a suburb of a large Midwestern city was the pool from which two preschoolers were chosen to participate in the study. Preschool children were chosen because of a convenient sample available and the lack of exposure to a specific literacy curriculum; their literacy skills were minimal. Information about the study and questionnaires about the child, the child's family and the child's experience with reading were distributed to two classrooms of 30 preschoolers each. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) asked about demographic information and information about the child's experience with reading stories. The story reading experience questionnaire was adapted from one used by Yaden, Smolkin, and Conlon (1989). The particular preschool was chosen because of its proximal convenience to the researchers, its known quality, and demonstrated parental participation. From the original sample of 60, ten parent/child pairs agreed to participate in the study. Of those ten, three were chosen to participate in the study (one child was an alternate) based upon similarities in age, story reading experience, and scores on the four DIBELS measures. They were in different classrooms but were taught by teachers who work collaboratively. The participants, children and adults, were encouraged to participate because of the benefits of reading aloud to both children and adults, and the advantages of early practice with phonemic awareness.

One child, Patrick (names have been changed), is a 4 year, 4 month (52 months at the time the study began) old male who lives with his mother and father who are married.

He has a younger sister who was seven weeks old at the time training began. There were no complications during his prenatal development or during his birth. He was six months old when he began crawling, walked at 10 months and was talking between 10 and 12 months. He never experienced any developmental delays. His father is in the business of banking and his mother is a director of a children's ministry. The parents' levels of education are graduate school or above. They do not have extended family within 100 miles from them but spend time with relatives a few times in the year. As Patrick's mother explained in a the survey, Patrick watches television less than 1 hour a day, and in the last six months had attended the theater, movies, and musical concerts. His mother explained that he looks forward to school every day. He is not receiving special education services.

Both his mother and his father read to him for about 15 to 30 minutes each night. Patrick will usually select the books to be read. They get their books at the public library and at home. Both the parents and child select the books when checking them out. Patrick does try to read the books himself, and he has asked questions about the pictures, characters, names of letters and sounds of letters. He does not ask the same question repeatedly, and typically does not request books to be reread during the same reading session. Patrick's mother has heard her child use words that probably come from books such as "actually," "experiments," and "science projects." She also explained that he retells stories while playing. While reading, she points to certain words that she is reading and moves a finger along under the line of text being read. They are just beginning to

play with word games such as tongue twisters. Patrick's mother believes that reading teaches verbal skills, opens a whole new world, lengthens attention span, promotes creativity, is a huge source of learning, and increases his knowledge.

The second child (referred to as Anne) is a 4 year, 8 month (56 months) old female who lives with her mother and father who are married, 8-year-old brother and 10-year-old sister. There were no complications during her prenatal development or during her birth. She began crawling at the age of 4 months, walked when she was 10 months and began talking at 14 months of age. She had not experienced any developmental delays. Her father is a teacher and her mother is a vocal coach. The parents' levels of education are at or above the college level. As a family, they spend time with extended family, who live farther than 100 miles away, a few times during the year. Anne's family had been to museums, the theater, school productions, movies and musical concerts within the last 6 months of the time the questionnaire was distributed. As her mother indicated, she watches television less than 1 hour a day. The programs she enjoys are "Arthur" and "Sesame Street." Anne "loves school" and is not receiving any services for special education through an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

Her mother, father, and siblings read to Anne approximately seven to eight times per week. They usually read to her for 20 minutes in the evenings. Usually she will select the book. She gets her books at the public library where they go about once a month, and has approximately 50 books at home. Her favorite books are Green Eggs and Ham, Spot Goes to School, the Peter Rabbit series, books about Barney, Clifford and Arthur's Eyes.

She requests these books to be read approximately three to six times a month, and she tries to read them by herself. While being read to, Anne asks questions about the pictures, characters, meanings of words and the content of the stories. She will ask the same question repeatedly, and the question will occur in the same place in the particular book. She will not ask questions about the books at times other than when reading. Her mother never asks her to sit still and just listen to the story. Anne will request books to be reread during the same session.

Her mother has heard her use words that come from books they have read together such as "I would not, could not, on a boat." Her mother has also heard her child, while playing, use language that comes from a book. Her mother explains that, "when she plays dolls, she talks like the moms in the books." As she is reading, Anne's mother points to certain words and follows along with her finger. Together, they play word games such as Dr. Seuss Rhyme and Climb. Her mother explains that she believes story reading shows her daughter how fun reading is and that it can open ideas and places to her.

Settings

Pretesting was conducted at the preschool in a classroom which was quiet, free of interruptions and located across the hall from the child's regular classroom. The classroom is used as a work room when the children are doing art projects and other activities that require additional space. The tables and chairs are all child-size.

Progress monitoring occurred in two places: the preschool and the children's homes. At the preschool, the hallway located outside the children's classroom was used. It received minimal traffic by children and adults was used at school. The child and researcher sat at child-size table and chairs. When progress was monitored at the children's homes, the child and researcher sat on the floor or on a couch in the living room or family room.

Dependent Measures

Children's progress was evaluated with the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). In the LNF test, the child is shown a printed piece of paper with upper and lower case letters evenly distributed in 11 rows with 10 letters in each row. Within the time limit of 60 seconds, the child is asked to name as many letters as he or she can. The child is instructed to read the letters left to right and down the paper. The examiner says the name of the letter, if the child hesitates longer than 3 seconds. The total score is the number of letters the child names correctly. The procedure for the SNF test is identical to the LNF test except the child says the sound the letter makes rather than the name of the letter.

The IPA test consisted of 10 words printed on a form that only the examiner used. Most words used were consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as "pup", "sir", "pad" and "Dan." The examiner read each word to the child, instructing him or her to say the first sound they heard in the word. The examiner provided the response if the child hesitated longer than 5 seconds. In the PSA test, the form had 10 words consisting of 30

phonemes in all. The child was instructed to say all the sounds they heard in the word. He or she could receive partial credit for producing correct phonemes. The utility of Ladders to Literacy was assessed with a follow-up survey and phone interview.

Procedures

Pretesting

Once permission was obtained from parents, pretesting began. Pretests were administered to the 10 children whose parents agreed to participate. The testing was done during the school day. Administration of the DIBELS measures took approximately 20 minutes for each child. The researcher took each child from his or her classroom at a convenient time for the child and teacher. The researcher followed the DIBELS protocol for each of the four measures. After the 20 minute pretest session, the children received a sticker of their choosing and returned to their classroom. Pretesting lasted for three days.

Following pretesting, the children's scores on each of the DIBELS measures were collected and examined along with age, and reading experience. These three factors were considered most salient because of their influence on phonemic awareness. It was determined that Patrick and Anne were most closely matched on these factors. The child who acted as the alternate was a close match on the factors as well. Parents and children were notified by telephone whether or not their child would be participating. For the children who were participating, the pretesting measures served as baseline data.

Experimental Design

A multiple baseline across subjects design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. The initial DIBELS pretesting measure was established as a baseline. Due to time limits, a desirable baseline for Patrick was not possible. He only had one baseline data point.

Training Procedures / Intervention

Once the two participants were chosen, intervention began for Patrick, who received Ladders to Literacy training for 12 weeks. Anne received training for 5 weeks. The child to receive training first was determined randomly. Before progress monitoring began, the participants of the study were personally visited. Anne's mother received information on guidelines for reading aloud based on Jim Trelease's book, The Read-Aloud Handbook (_ _). The researcher explained the time line of the study, what her daughter would be doing during the first 6 weeks, what the parent's responsibilities would be, and what the parent and daughter would do during the latter half of the study. The meeting took place in the participant's home.

Another meeting took place with Patrick's mother, also in their home. At the meeting, a time line was provided as well as the first two lessons for training. The researcher provided a detailed explanation of the lessons, a written description, and the necessary materials, such as paper, crayons, and markers, that would be used throughout the study. The mother and child were given an opportunity to ask questions about the lessons. The researcher also modeled the activities

in the lessons to ensure accuracy. Parents were encouraged to call the researcher if any questions arose.

Sessions explaining the lessons to Patrick's mother typically lasted 30 minutes and usually occurred on Tuesdays. On Wednesdays or Thursdays, the participants' progress was monitored at school. Each participant was taken from his or her classroom at a convenient time for the teacher and student for about 20 minutes. The same DIBELS measures (LNF, SNF, IPA, and PSA) were administered for progress monitoring. When the children were no longer in school (during the summer), progress monitoring occurred in the families' homes. One to two new lessons were presented each week in the same manner as was previously described. For Patrick, a total of 18 lessons were given. For Anne, a total of 9 lessons were given.

The lessons were selected from Ladders to Literacy: A Preschool Activity Book by Syverson, O'Connor and Vadasy (1998). Ladders to Literacy was chosen as the training instrument because of its psychometric properties, focus on preschoolers and child-friendly lessons. The lessons were grouped according to the DIBELS measures being monitored. Lessons 1-6 were aimed at the LNF skill, lessons 7-12 were aimed at SNF, lessons 13-16 were aimed at IPA, and 17-18 were aimed at PSA. For example, Lesson #1 was entitled "Making an Alphabet Book." (See Appendix B for all lessons) The subsequent lessons followed the same format. Two lessons were repeated because of their dual relevance to the skills.

Treatment Integrity

The researcher explained verbally in detail, the lessons that the parent would be teaching. A written description was also provided for the parent to keep. The mother and child were given an opportunity to ask questions about the lessons. The researcher also modeled the activities in the lessons to ensure accuracy and understanding. It was made known to both participating parents that if they had any questions about the lessons or training, to call the researcher. Permanent products of the lessons were obtained from the parents to ensure treatment integrity.

Following the study, a survey was administered and a phone interview was conducted to further ensure appropriate administration of the lessons.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed visually using methods discussed in Tawney and Gast (1984) and Neuman & McCormick (1995). The data were analyzed for changes in trend and level.

Results

Inter-rater Reliability

Inter-rater reliability estimates for the DIBELS measures were in the high .80s for LNF, SNF, and IPA. Estimates were in the low .80s for PSA.

Patrick

The results of Patrick's progress can be seen in Figure 1A. Pre-testing on 3/31/99 served as baseline data. Training with specific strategies in phonemic awareness from Ladders to Literacy began on 4/13/99. The data for IPA, PSA, and SNF show a distinct

level change after training began. The data for LNF is more variable. After the means of the DIBELS measures for IPA, PSA, and SNF increased, they maintained a flat trend.

Anne

The results of Anne's progress are seen in Figure 1B. Baseline data was gathered for six weeks before the intervention of training began. Missing data points for 4/27/99 and 5/17/99 were due to Anne's illness. The data for her show a subtle level change in all DIBELS measures after training began. During the last four weeks of training, an increasing trend change is also evident.

DIBELS Measures

Letter Naming Fluency

The DIBELS scores of the LNF test for both participants are shown in Figure 2. The data show no distinct trend or level change in the fluency of letter naming for either participant.

Sound Naming Fluency

Figure 3 shows the DIBELS scores of the SNF test for both participants. The data show a significant level change for Patrick, who began training initially. He maintained a flat, high trend through the completion of the study. Anne showed an increase in SNF scores after she began receiving training with specific strategies.

Initial Phoneme Ability

The DIBELS scores for Anne and Patrick of the IPA test are shown in Figure 4. For both participants, there is a trend change once training in phonemic awareness began.

Patrick's scores continued to increase until two-thirds of the way through the study and then leveled off. He showed a level change as well. There was no clear level change for Anne as her scores decreased during the last week of the study.

Phonemic Segmentation Ability

The DIBELS scores of the PSA test for both participants are shown in Figure 5. Two weeks after training began for Patrick, his scores significantly increased, displaying an increase in level. He maintained this level throughout the study. The DIBELS scores for Anne also increased when training began; however, her data show no distinct level or trend change.

Parent Interviews

A post-intervention survey showed positive reactions of both parents and children who participated in the study. . The parents felt the activities were very helpful, easy to do, and well presented. They spent between 30 minutes and 2 hours each week on the activities. One child's favorite lessons were "Sound Isolation" (#10) "Making Signs" (#5), "Guess the Word" (#12), and "The Rhyming Book" (#14). The other child really enjoyed the "Making an Alphabet Book" (#1) lesson and the "Home Post Office" (#2) lesson. Both parents said that they now read differently to their children; they talk more about beginning and ending sounds.

One mother explained that her child became curious about the fact that labeling meant something. Both children's attitudes toward reading continued to be positive with more questions about sounds. Both parents expressed that they would participate in the

study again. One parent expressed that the DIBELS measures were advanced for her child's level in comparison to the lessons.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that specific strategies used in training of phonemic awareness positively influence children's performance on a measure of early literacy skills. This was especially true on the SNF, IPA, and PSA measures. The variability in the LNF measure is possibly due to the conditions surrounding the children's responses. During progress monitoring, the LNF measure was always assessed first, followed by SNF, IPA, and PSA, in that order. The children's attention during the LNF test was not as engaged as during the other three measures.
Often the children were wiggly at the beginning which likely affected their performance.

The second goal of the present study was to determine the practicality of a training program for parents. The results demonstrate that such a program is feasible and worthwhile for parents and children. The parents who participated were enthusiastic about the activities and their children's progress. With clearly written explanations, strategies could be implemented at home, giving children the early preparation for reading.

The irregular nature of the LNF measure relates to the results of the study by Ball & Blachman (1991). They found that training in letter names and sounds only does not significantly improve reading ability. Perhaps simply knowing the alphabet is only a preliminary skill that is fundamental but not sufficient for early reading skills.

The results support several findings of previous research. The present study's results converges with evidence of the benefits of explicit training. As Meyer et al. (1994) and Cunningham (1990) found, the more connection the child has with the process of reading, the better their performance on measures of reading ability. While reading aloud may expose children to new vocabulary and the sheer enjoyment of literacy, it appears that it has little effect on skills necessary for reading. The results also support the the findings of Elliot et al. (in press). They concluded that the DIBELS were a good set of measures for monitoring progress. The DIBELS were easy to administer and did not require and excessive amount of time.

Limitations and Future Research

There were two noticeable limitations of the present study. First, the collection of baseline data was insufficient for Patrick. Due to time constraints, an adequate baseline could not be established. The second limitation was the overall duration of the study. Ideally the phase of intervention for Anne would have been longer. These limitations should be considered for future research.

Of importance for future research is a replication of the present study. It would be beneficial to have additional participants as well. Another consideration would be to systematically vary the order of administration of the DIBELS measures; the LNF test should not be administered first every time.

Concluding Comments

The research discussed in the present study demonstrated that specific strategies for training young children in phonemic awareness is possible. Certainly being read to is a necessary part of every child's life and we do not wish to discourage the practice. It is equally important, however, to give parents the tools that will give their children an advantage when learning to read. In combination with reading aloud, activities that secure a strong foundation in phonemic awareness will prepare the good reader to be a great reader. Thanks goes out to the parents and children who put forth tireless effort for this project. It is greatly appreciated.

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Table 1
DIBELS scores for phonemic measures

	Anne				Patrick			
Dates	LNF	SNF	IPA	PSA	LNF	SNF	IPA	PSA
3/31	11	2	0	0	18	3	0	0
4/13	8	0	2	1	19	11	5	0
4/20	7	2	3	2	14	11	7	13
4/27		--sick--			12	11	6	11
5/04	10	1	1	2	9	7	9	11
5/11	11	1	1	1	14	11	7	10
5/17		--vacation--			18	11	8	14
5/24	15	4	1	1	12	10	10	11
6/01	13	4	5	5	7	8	10	13
6/08	20	6	6	7		--vacation--		
6/15	13	7	8	9	22	10	9	16
6/22	15	5	5	6	16	9	8	15

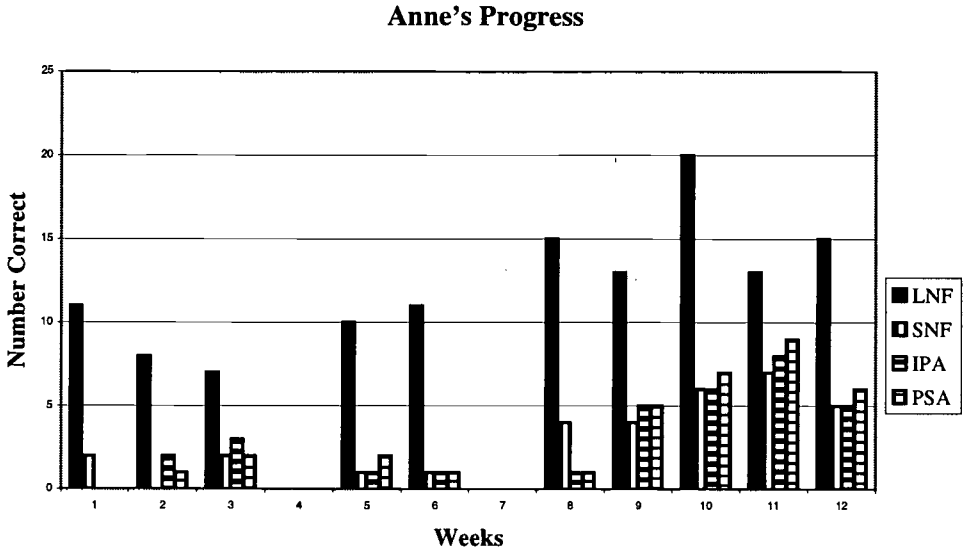
Anne's Progress
Number Correct
25
20
15
10
5
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Weeks
LNF
SNF
IPA
PSA

fig 1a

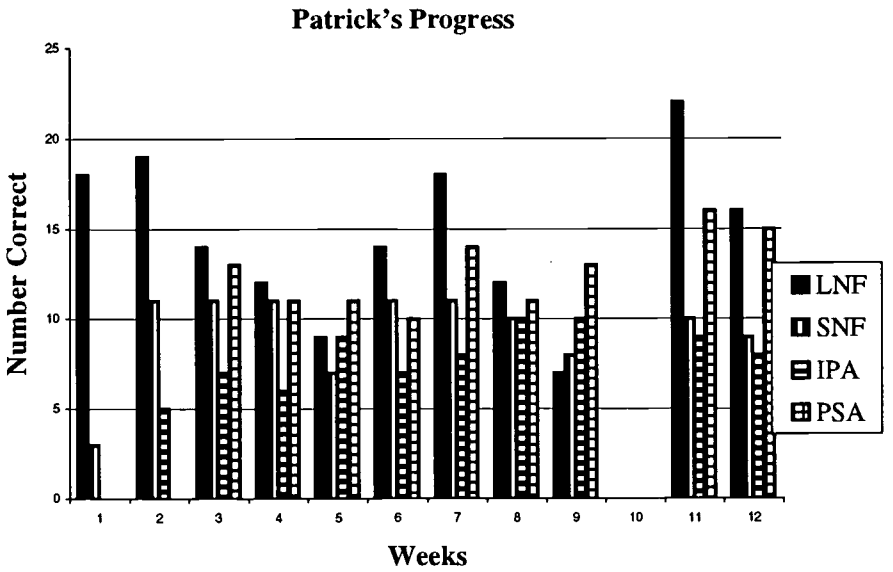
Patrick's Progress
Number Correct
25
20
15
10
5
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Weeks
LNF
SNF
IPA
PSA

fig 16

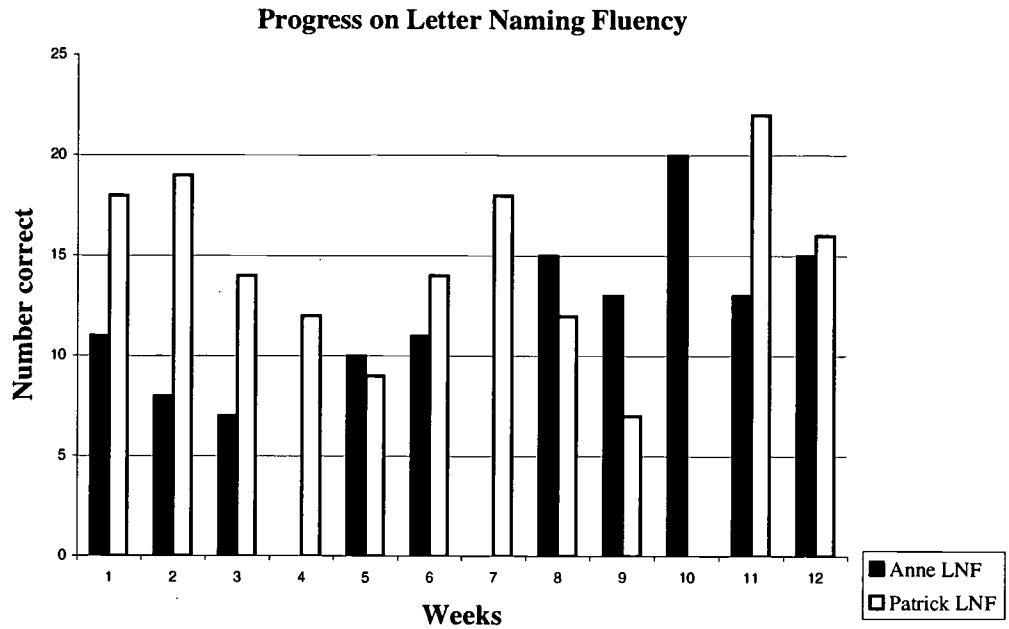
Progress on Letter Naming Fluency
Number correct
25
20
15
10
5
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Weeks
Anne LNF
Patrick LNF

Fig. 2

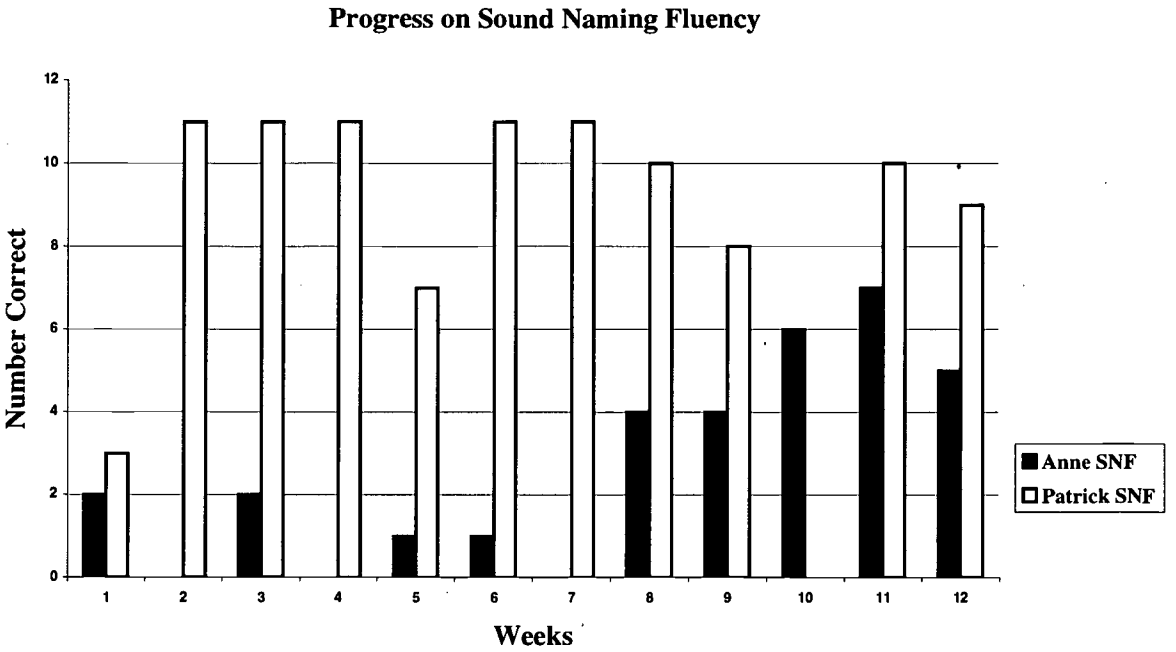
Progress on Sound Naming Fluency
Number Correct
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Weeks
Anne SNF
Patrick SNF

fig. 3

Progress on Initial Phoneme Ability

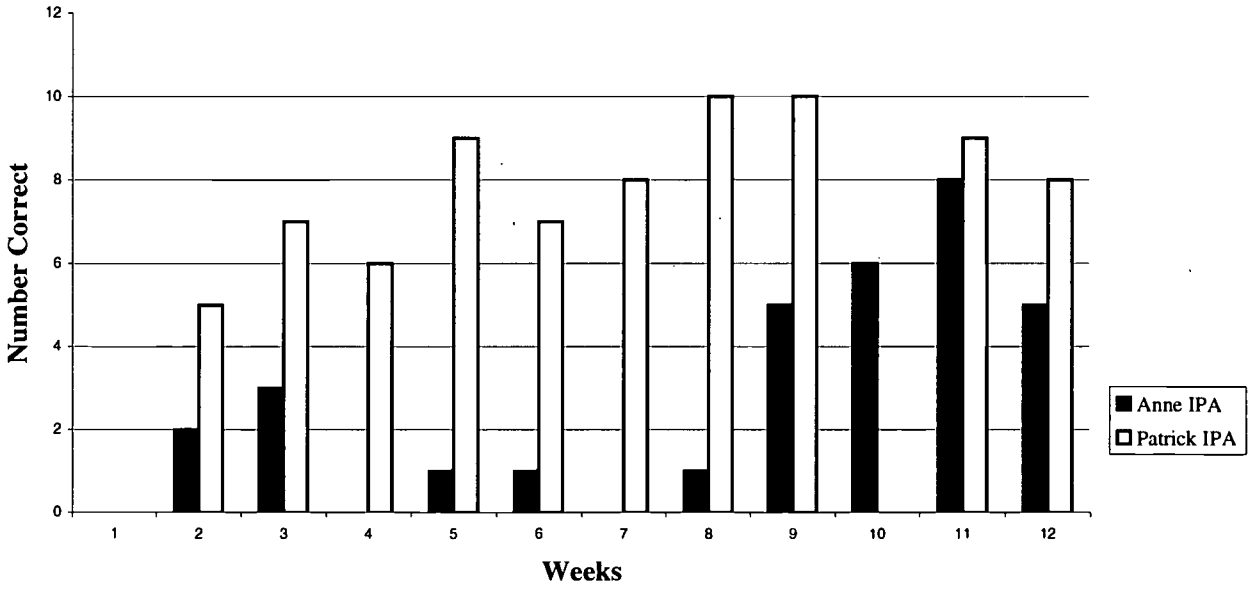

fig. 4

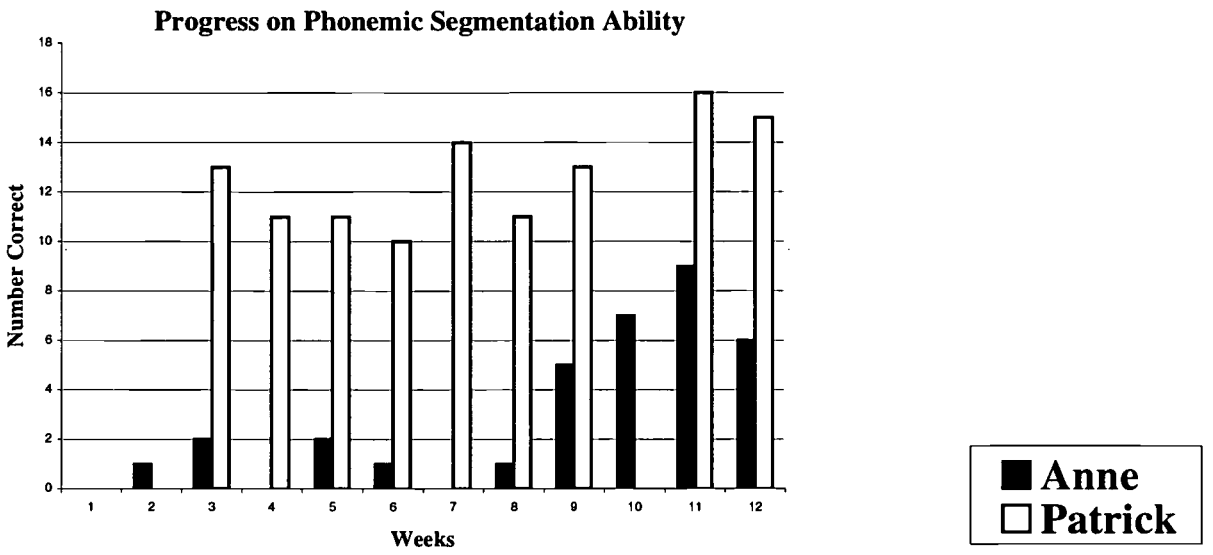
Progress on Phonemic Segmentation Ability
Number Correct
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Weeks
Anne
Patrick

fig. 5

APPENDIX A.

Story Reading Experience Questionnaire

Name: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____ School: _____ Teacher: _____

1. Does anyone read to your child now? YES NO (Circle one)
   a. Who? Mother/Father/Sibling/Other _____

   b. How often? Approximate times per week
   _____

   c. At what time? (Circle one) Morning Afternoon Evening

   d. How long do the sessions last? Time in minutes _____

   e. Who selects the book(s)? (Circle one) Parent Child

2. Where does your child get his/her books? School library Public Library
   Home

   a. How many books does the child have at home?
   Approximate number _____

   b. How often are books checked out from the library?
   Times per month _____

   c. Who selects the books to be checked out? Parent Child

   d. Does the child have any favorite books? YES NO

   e. How often does he/she request them to be read? Times per month _____
   What are the titles? _____

   f. Does your child try to read them him/herself? YES NO

   g. Has your child ever indicated the reason why the book is liked so well?

   YES NO

   h. Does your child have a library card? YES NO

3. Does your child ever ask questions while you are reading to him/her? YES NO

   a. About what kinds of things does he/she ask? (Check all that apply)

_____ Pictures in books _____ Written form of words

_____ Characters in books _____ Meanings of words

_____ Names of letters _____ Content of stories

_____ Sounds of letters _____ Other (Explain:

b. Will he/she ever ask the same question over and over again? YES NO

c. Does the same question ever occur in the same place in a book? YES NO

d. Do you ever ask your child to just sit still and listen to the story?

NEVER SOMETIMES OFTEN

e. Does he/she request books to be reread during the same session? YES NO

f. How many times have you reread one book in one session? (Approx. # of times)

_____

4. Does your child ask questions about books at other times when you are not reading to him/her? _____

a. When?

b. How often? FREQUENTLY SOMETIMES SELDOM

c. Do you try and answer as many questions as you can? YES NO

5. Does your child every copy/trace titles of books or attempt to draw a picture related to stories that have been read? YES NO

a. What aspects of the books are traced/copied?
b. What are the kinds of pictures drawn?

6. Have you ever heard your child use words that you feel come from the books that you have read? YES NO

What are some examples? _____

b. Have you ever heard your child use language in play that sounds like it comes from a book? YES NO

a. What are some examples?

_____

8. When you are reading to your child, do you feel like she/he knows you are saying the written words? YES NO

   a. Do you ever point to certain words that you are reading? YES NO
   b. Do you follow along with your finger, moving it across the line of text you are reading?

      YES NO

9. Do you ever play word games with your child? YES NO (such as rhyme games or tongue twisters)

Describe the types of games _____

10. What do you feel that story reading does most for your child? (use back if necessary) _____

_____

Source:

Meyer, L.A., Stahl, S.A., Linn, R.L., & Wardrop, J.L. (1994). Effects of reading storybooks aloud to children. Journal of Educational Research, 88, 69-85.

APPENDIX B

Lesson #1
Letter Naming
"Making an Alphabet Book"

Main Purpose
To become familiar with letters and to use print as a communication tool

Materials
Paper (book), crayons, markers, pictures, paint, glue

Description of Activity
This activity will be something you and your child work on for the next few weeks, until the book is complete. There is a page for each letter of the alphabet, which will contain pictures of objects or words that start with the specific letter. Begin with helping your child write the letters on the pages of the book (one letter for each page). Then allow your child to select which letter he or she would like to start with. He or she will then say names of objects, or words that start with that letter and draw a picture of the object, or write the word.

Support Strategies

- Encourage and praise your child's attempts at writing and invented spellings.
- Help children break down words into individual letters and sounds. ("What is the first letter in tiger?")
- Spell and read aloud parts of words or letters children have written. ("Remember here how you wrote /b/. Dog. You wrote /d/ and /o/.")
- Have your child read aloud words and identify letter names and sounds they wrote themselves. Emphasize the sound of the letter in words by stretching ("sssspider") or iterating the sound ("b-b-b-bear").
- Have your child identify one letter or sound at a time. ("How do we write cat? What's the first letter?" "How do we write a /b/? On which side of the circle is the stick? And what about the /d/?")
- Provide choices: "Does cat start with a c or an s?"

Source for ALL lessons:

Notari-Syverson, A., O'Connor, R.E. & Vadasy, P.F. (1998). *Ladders to Literacy: A Preschool Activity Book.* Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Lesson #2
Letter Naming
"Home Post Office"

Main Purpose
To use written messages as a communication tool. Children learn to use words to construct a written message that others will read. They use words and pictures to describe events and experiences in their lives and share them with others.

Materials
Paper, crayons, markers

Description of Activity
Help your child decide on a message he or she would like to send to their family members. Let your child choose the content of the message. If needed, offer topic suggestions such as the weather, seasons, animals, books, television shows, or favorite foods. Have your child dictate a short message and draw pictures to illustrate.

Support Strategies

- Allow your child to use invented spelling and letter sounds to write words
- Help your child choose and plan the message: "What would you like to say? Who would you like to write to?"
- Show children how to sound out words: "Dad. /D/ /a/ /d/. /D/ is the letter d, /a/ is the letter a, and /d/ is the letter d again.

Lesson #3
Letter Naming
"Snack and Lunch Menu"

Main Purpose
To use print as a communication tool.

Materials
Index cards, snack or lunch (or dinner) foods (3 times)

Description of Activity
Before a meal, make a menu of what your child is going to be eating (or what he can choose from) by writing the foods on the index cards. Ask your child to identify words in order to anticipate the snack and make choices as appropriate. Your child can help write the letters if he wishes. During the meal, ask your child to associate specific items with their corresponding labels. Encourage discussion about from where foods come or how certain foods are made ("How do you think we make muffins?" "Where do bananas grow?") Encourage your child to describe foods, to recognize the larger categories in which they belong, and to express likes and dislikes about foods.

Support Strategies

- Ask your child to choose a food or drink to talk about by reading words on the menu cards: "Which food shall we talk about today?"
- Show how the letters in the printed word correspond to the sounds in the spoken word; touch under each letter as you sound out the word:

  Apple. Here's how I know this word is apple. It starts with "a" and that says /aaa/. Here's "p" and it says /p/. Aaap. Now see the "l"? That says /lll/. Now we have aaaplll -- apple!"
- Point out distinctive features, similarities, and differences between the targeted letter or word and other letters or words.

  Look. Here's spaghetti and here's sauce. How do these words start? Can you tell which word is spaghetti?
- Provide verbal information about food.

  It's a fruit that monkeys like to eat.

Lesson #4
Letter Naming
"Following Recipes"

Main Purpose
To use print a s a tool of thought.

Materials
Cookbook or recipes, paper, pencil/pen/marker /crayon (2 times)

Description of Activity
When cooking, have your child look at the recipe and ingredients with you. Explain that you will be copying the recipe on a new sheet of paper as you bake. (You may pick certain items for your child to copy). Facilitate language by having your child discuss aspects of the activity, label objects, and talk about the foods. Encourage children to think of words that rhyme with the ingredients (e.g., flour rhymes with power) and the colors (e.g., red rhymes with Fred).

Support Strategies

- Ask your child to describe the activity using the written recipe as reference:
  How much of this ingredient will we need? Let's find what we need to add in first.
- Ask your child to make predictions based on the information in the written recipe:
  What do you think will happen when you mix the flour and the water?
- Explain how print provides the information:
  I can find out what to add next by looking at this word.
- Make the task more concrete by having children describe what they are doing and associate actions and objects with words on the written recipe:
  Here's some water. Can you find the word water on the recipe?
- Provide choices: Is this word water or salt?

Reference for recipe ideas:

Katzen, M., & Henderson, A. (1994). *Pretend soup and other real recipes: A cookbook for preschoolers and up.* Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press.

Lesson #5
Letter Naming
"Making Signs"

Main Purpose
To use print as a tool of thought.

Materials
Paper, crayons, markers

Description of Activity
You and your child will make signs labeling objects, rooms, play areas, and behaviors (e.g., a quiet sign). Once again, if your child wants to write the letters, guide him in doing so. Support inventive spelling but in this lesson, work on spelling the word correctly. Make it a game to see how close to the actual spelling he can make it. You do not have to leave all of the signs up -- perhaps choose a few that are used most often.

Support Strategies

- Examples of signs might be: quiet, door, Jeremy's room (or John's room), kitchen, table, chair, toys, bear, dog, outside, couch, books, computer, bed, etc. Be as creative as possible.

- Ask your child what he intends to represent or communicate with the sign.

- If your child would like, he may draw a picture along with the words.

Lesson #6
Letter Naming
"Morning/Afternoon Message and News"

Main Purpose
To use print as a communication tool.

Materials
Paper, markers, magazines, newspapers

Description of Activity
In this activity, you and your child will create a message board in the form of a newspaper. The content of the newspaper can be generated by your child and you can make suggestions as well. Perhaps there was something you did on the weekend that you would like to write about. Or, maybe there is some big news that your child would like to talk about/ write about. You can also write about the weather, what your child did at school (or in during the day), the schedule for the day, perhaps what is for lunch or dinner! Pictures can be drawn or cut out of magazines or newspapers. The creation of the newspaper can last the entire week -- it does not have to be completed in one sitting. Help with spelling, again *emphasizing the letter names and the sounds they make.*

Support Strategies

- Ask your child to volunteer to spell a word that he or she dictated. (Yesterday it rained. How do we write rain?)
- Encourage your child to self-evaluate and correct responses by asking them for clarification. (Why do you think there is a "t" in milk?)
- Have your child identify one letter at a time. (How do we write cat? What's the first letter?)
- Help your child make distinctions and comparisons of relevant features of letters and sounds. (How do we write a b? On which side of the circle is the stick? How does it look different from a d?)

Stretch and iterate sounds to help your child identify them. Provide choices. (Ssss-sunday, T-t-t-today; Does cat start with a c or an s?)

- Ask your child to help spell words by identifying single letters and sounds. (The first sound in snow is /s/. Which letter is that?)

Lesson #7

Sound Naming
"Sound Representations"

Main Purpose

To develop awareness of sound and the relationship between sound and meaning.

Materials

Toy animals and vehicles, pictures, books about animals or objects that make sounds.

Description of Activity

During story time, pretend play, or song time, encourage your child to make onomatopoeic sounds to represent animals (e.g., woof-woof, meow, grrrrowl), toy vehicles (e.g., beep-beep, varrroooooom), and other events (e.g., an explosion, a waterfall, the wind). Look at books with animal or object sounds. Have your child guess which sounds got with the animals or objects. (What does a cat say? Boom! What could have made this sound?)

Support Strategies

- Encourage children to invent sounds and play with the pronunciation of words. (The cat says, "meow" what else could he say if he lived on Mars and spoke another language?)

- Help children sequence phonemes. (Which sound came first?)

- Decrease memory demands by saying the initial phoneme and having your child only say the last two. (/S/ /a/ /m/. S...now you say the second sound.)

- Ask your child to repeat a series of three phonemes. (This puppet is from another planet. He's saying "Hi" in his language. /A/ /s/ /i/. Can you say "Hi" back to him in his language?

- Model playing with sounds and the pronunciation of words, and ask your child to add to the list. (Danny, Fanny, Manny...)

Lesson #8
Sound Naming
"Clap the Syllables"

Main Purpose

To understand that words can be conceptualized as a collection of parts. The child will recognize that words can be subdivided at the syllable level. This activity introduces children to differentiating the sound of words from their meaning. Children come to view words as collections of sounds apart from their meaning.

Materials

Drums (or sticks beaten on the carpet), other musical instruments, paper, crayons or markers

Description of Activity

Begin the activity by modeling the clapping behavior and encourage taking turns between you and your child. (You can also involve Dads and/or brothers, sisters). Say each person's name, then say the name in syllables (spacing them out), clapping for each beat. Encourage your child to clap the beat with you. Lead your child in clapping twice. After the first few times, your child should join you in clapping syllables. To extend this activity, call out the names of objects around you ("table" ta-ble). Have your child repeat the word, clapping the syllables along with you. Pictures and labels with names can be used as visual support.

Support Strategies

- Explain how to segment words. (Table has two beats. Ta-ble. Do you hear the two beats in table? Ta-ble.)

- Model saying words in syllables, and have your child count the number of syllables before clapping themselves. (Hippopotamus. Count the parts. Hip-po po-ta-mus! How many parts did you count?)

- Have your child segment familiar words such as his name and family members' names.

- Have your child blend familiar words such as his name or objects around you. (Bet-ty. What word is that?)

Lesson #9
Sound Naming
"Syllable Puzzles"

Main Purpose

To understand that words can be conceptualized as a collection of parts.

Materials

objects, pictures

Description of Activity

Have your child draw pictures of objects (animals, toys, people, food, etc.) that are multi syllable or compound words. Cut pictures into a number of parts corresponding to the number of syllables or word parts. (The word elephant would be cut into three pieces). Your child will take apart and put together the pictures as he segments or blends the word. Make puzzles of different lengths so that longer words have longer puzzles. (An 8-inch long alligator puzzle, a 4-inch long spider puzzle).

Support Strategies

- After modeling a segmented word, ask your child to make new words by changing just a little part of the word. (Ti-ger. That's 2 parts. Let's change the first part and make a new word. Mi-ger!)

- To help your child segment words, suggest that they count puzzle pieces to identify the corresponding numbers of syllables in words. Help your child identify segmented words and blended words by associating segmentation with saying the word slowly and blending with saying the word fast.

- Demonstrate the relationship between the length of the puzzle and the length of the word. (Look, here's table and here's table cloth. -- add a puzzle piece for cloth -- See how the word gets longer?)

- Say words segmented into parts, and have your child use pictures to identify the word. Vol-ca-no. What word did I say? Look at the picture.

Lesson #10
Sound Naming
"Sound Isolation"

Main Purpose
To encourage children to learn that sounds can be isolated from words. Phonological activities require children to attend to sounds of language, yet many children have little experience uttering sounds in isolation. This activity develops familiarity with the phonemes and smaller-than-word units.

Materials
A collection of songs familiar to children (you may choose your child's favorites).

Description of Activity
Use any tunes children know (e.g., "Happy Birthday," "I'm a Little Teapot") or familiar rhythms (knocking patterns). Instead of words and beats, substitute isolated phonemes or meaningless pairs of phonemes. Have your child sing "Lala lala la la" to the tune of "Happy Birthday," and substitute "Beebee beebee, bee, bee" and "Tata, tata, ta, ta." When your child is able to articulate meaningless phonemes, try starting all the words in a familiar tune with the SAME phoneme ("Bappy Birthday bo bou...") Integrate the tasks within a play context. For example, introduce the B puppet man who only says words that start with "b." Ask your child to select a "sound of the hour."

Support Strategies

- Make rules explicit to your child: We change the first sounds of the words only. We start all of the words with the same sound.

Lesson #11
Sound Naming
"Letter sound of the week"

Main Purpose
To isolate and identify first sounds in words. Children develop awareness of the first sound in words and the letter which accompanies that sound. Children also develop familiarity with phonemes and smaller-than-word units.

Materials
Pictures, isolated letters, drawing materials

Description of Activity
This activity takes place over several days. Select a letter to study every two days. Focus on the sound of the letter rather than on its name. Introduce a letter, and say its most common sound [Here's an S. It says /s/. Let's think of things that start with /s/"] Begin to identify objects that begin with /s/. Make a list of /s/ words, and post it prominently, or review it throughout the day. Include some pictures of items that start with /s/.

Support Strategies

- Make sure children differentiate the letter name (i.e., S) from its sound (i.e., /s/). "Which letter is this? What sound does it make?"

- Stress the first sound of several examples of words by stretching ["ssss-snake, ssss-Sally, ssss-salad] or iterating [t-t-t-turtle, T-t-t-Tommy, t-t-t-top].

- Tell your child to listen for a particular sound at the beginning of words. "Listen for the /k/ at the beginning of this word: cat. Do you hear the /k/ at the beginning?"

- Ask your child direct questions after teaching. Which sound does apple start with?

- Make the first sound obvious by stretching or iterating it; have your child repeat, and then elicit identification of the first sound. M-m-monday. /M/ is the first sound you say in Mmmm-Monday.

- Model lists of words that start with a same sound, and ask your child to add a new word. "Tell me a word that starts the same as these: bear, ball, bell..."

Lesson #12
Sound Naming
"Guess the Word"
(Blending)

Main Purpose
To demonstrate how sounds can be blended into spoken words. Children learn how to blend initial sounds to form words.

Materials
Picture cards and word cards of simple words

Description of Activity
Begin by telling your child there is an association between the word you are saying and the pictures you are showing them. ("Guess the word I'm saying. It's one of these pictures"). Pronounce words segmented into phonemes (c-a-t), onset-rime (d-og), and syllables (ti-ger). Begin with words that start with sounds that can be stretched (s, m, z, f). Spread four pictures across the floor or table ("sssss-snake"). When your child guesses snake, have him give you the picture with the picture and word on the card. With the card in hand, point to the letters in the word and have your child say the sound that each letter makes. Repeat the game with other pictured words. Gradually introduce pictures with words beginning with stop sounds (e.g., k, t, d, p). Children may have more difficulty with words that cannot be stretched out. This game can also be played with objects and miniature toys.

Support Strategies

- Use words with continuous sounds (e.g., sssaaam, ffffaaat) rather than stop sounds (e.g., p-e-t, c-a-k-e) so that words can be stretched without breaking between sounds. Use pictures and objects to represent the words to be blended. Ask your child to name the objects or pictures before guessing the words from separated phonemes.

- Have your child repeat the segmented word before blending it.

- If your child is struggling, reduce the number of pictures from 4 to 3 or 2.

- Reverse roles: have you child slowly say the word and you guess the picture.

Lesson #13
Initial Phonemes
"Nursery Rhymes"

Main Purpose
To develop awareness of the sounds of words.

Materials
Picture sequence of story in nursery rhyme; text with rhyming words highlighted; crayons

Description of Activity
With your child, show him pictures that illustrate well-known nursery rhymes, accompanied by text. Use different pictures that illustrate the sequence of events in the rhyme. Recite the rhyme; and proceed to sequence the pictures, eliciting the participation of your child. Encourage your child to learn to recite parts of the nursery rhyme. Draw your child's attention on the match between the ending sounds of two or more words that rhyme. (ALSO EMPHASIZE HOW WORDS BEGIN WITH THE SAME SOUNDS). Give your child pictures that illustrate the rhyme to color.

Support Strategies

- Have your child choose a nursery rhyme to recite to you. Encourage your child to talk about the story that is told in the rhyme and to comment about related personal experiences.

- Ask your child to choose two rhyming words from the rhyme and to add a new one of his/her own.

- Have your child repeat his or her rhyming words or repeat back to them their answers, and ask your child to reevaluate if his/her words rhyme. ("Wall. Horse. Do these two words sound the same?")

- Explain the concept of rhyme. Words that rhyme end with the same sound. Funny. Bunny. They both end with -unny. They rhyme.

- Say three words, two of which rhyme, and ask your child to pick the one that does not match. (See second page.)

Lesson #14
Initial Phonemes
"The Rhyming Book"

Main Purpose
To develop memory for words and rhyming skills. Children learn to listen to and repeat words and phrases and become aware of words that rhyme.

Materials
Blank books; notebooks; pictures; crayons

Description of Activity
Make the rhyming book together with your child. The book can consist of collections of pictures of words that rhyme (e.g., a book of words that rhyme with "cat") or of a story or a song with rhyming verses. One example for a rhyming song book, which can be illustrated and used regularly is an "I went to a party..." book. Your child will choose words that rhyme from pictures contained in the book or separate pictures and objects that are available. Also, your child can propose his or her own words. Ask your child to insert the first rhyming word, for example, snail ("I went to a party. I asked my (snail). He wanted to bring something. So we took a look in his rhyming book. To see what he could bring! The (snail) brought the..."). Ask your child to choose a second rhyming word, for example, whale ("And we all went to the party! We danced all night. 'Til they turned out the light!... And we had to go home in the morning!").

Support Strategies

- Ask your child to help make up songs and text by proposing pairs of words that rhyme. ("Who shall we ask to go to the party? What did the cat bring?") Also ask your child to add other rhyming words. The snail brought the whale, what else?

- Have your child repeat his or her answers, or you repeat the answers back your child and reevaluate if the words rhyme. (Dog. Bat. Do these two words sound the same?)

Lesson #15
Initial Phonemes
"Rhyming Games"

Main Purpose
To recognize that some words share common sounds. The child learns that words are made up of sounds that can be disassociated from the entire word. Rhyming has been identified as one of the earliest competencies that demonstrates phonological awareness. It is a skill that may help children to isolate the smaller sounds in words.

Materials
Pictures of rhyming word pairs; rhyming puzzles; rhyming mazes.

Description of Activity
Take the pictures of rhyming words and lay them out on the floor, beginning with one pair of pictures and gradually expanding the set. To help your child find rhyming mates, each pair of rhyming pictures has matching jagged, puzzle-like edges. Ask your child to match the rhyming pair, say the rhyming words represented by the pictures, and fit the pairs together. Rhyming mazes can also be prepared to help children match rhyming words. For example, a maze may have a snake trying to find its way to eat a cake, or a mouse could be looking for his house. Encourage children to ask questions and talk about the pictures.

Support Strategies

- Ask your child to produce new rhymes, using either real or nonsense words.

- Encourage your child to repeat names of objects aloud to determine whether words rhyme

- Select three pictures of objects (two of which rhyme), and have children pick the odd word or the two words that rhyme. (Cat. Truck. Hat. Which two pictures go together. Which one doesn't fit?)

Lesson #16 (and Lesson #10)

Initial Phonemes/ Sound Naming
"Sound Isolation"

Main Purpose

To encourage children to learn that sounds can be isolated from words. Phonological activities require children to attend to sounds of language, yet many children have little experience uttering sounds in isolation. This activity develops familiarity with the phonemes and smaller-than-word units.

Materials

A collection of songs familiar to children (you may choose your child's favorites).

Description of Activity

Use any tunes children know (e.g., "Happy Birthday," "I'm a Little Teapot") or familiar rhythms (knocking patterns). Instead of words and beats, substitute isolated phonemes or meaningless pairs of phonemes. Have your child sing "Lala lala la la" to the tune of "Happy Birthday," and substitute "Beebee beebee, bee, bee" and "Tata, tata, ta, ta." When your child is able to articulate meaningless phonemes, try starting all the words in a familiar tune with the SAME phoneme ("Bappy Birthday bo bou...") Integrate the tasks within a play context. For example, introduce the B puppet man who only says words that start with "b." Ask your child to select a "sound of the hour."

Support Strategies

- Make rules explicit to your child: We change the first sounds of the words only. We start all of the words with the same sound.

Extension...

- Practice saying words "like a broken tape recorder." Pretend you can only say each part of the word, syllable by syllable or sound by sound. (I a-mmm g-o-ing t-o th-e s-t-o-re t-o g-e-t mmm-o-re m-i-lll-k.) Then gradually "speed" up the tape recorder.

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