

2018

Reading to Children at an Early Age: The Emotional and Academic Impact on Later Development

Sherri M. Weber Ph.D.
webersm@buffalostate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/cwcpstriaininginstitute>



Part of the [Early Childhood Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Weber, Sherri M. Ph.D., "Reading to Children at an Early Age: The Emotional and Academic Impact on Later Development" (2018).
NYS Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Training Institute. 14.
<http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/cwcpstriaininginstitute/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Institute for Community Health Promotion (IHP) at Digital Commons at Buffalo State. It has been accepted for inclusion in NYS Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Training Institute by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Buffalo State. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu.

Reading to Children at an Early Age: The Emotional and Academic Impact on Later Development

For ICHP/CRI: A Research Project
Sherri M. Weber, PhD

Why We Read to Children

The single most important activity for building knowledge for their eventual success in reading is to read aloud to children.

(Commission on Reading, 1985)

Why We Read to Young Children

- Today we know that early literacy development begins as early as infancy or even while a baby is in the womb.
- It builds a foundation of lifelong learning and development.
- Reading stimulates the baby during those first few weeks and months.

Reading to Babies

- ◆ **Bonding** occurs because your baby will enjoy hearing the cadence of your voice, feeling your heartbeat, and smelling your familiar scent. Over time, your baby will associate books with close intimate time with you.
- ◆ **Early Language Skills** will slowly start to develop as your baby hears you read and is exposed to the vowels, consonants, and syllables that form his or her native language.

Reading to Baby

- ◆ **Cognitive Stimulation** will help your baby's brain canvas to develop with the colors, textures, and sounds in books to accelerate mental growth and awareness of surroundings.
- ◆ **More Restful Sleep** will occur by using more calm, unhurried readings into Baby's early bedtime routine. This helps set the stage for a more restful night's sleep.
- ◆ **Healthy Expression and Communication** helps Baby be better equipped to relate to others and express his or her own emotions.

One Thing to Keep in Mind

- ◆ Read with enthusiasm
- ◆ Read stories that include rhythms and rhymes
- ◆ Follow your child's interests
- ◆ Read favorites over and over
- ◆ Engage in reading just long enough to maintain engagement

Reading Aloud to Children

- Present books as sources of pleasant, valuable, and exciting experiences.
- Provide background knowledge to help children make sense of what they hear, see, and read.
- The more they know of the world, the better they will understand their place in it.
- The more they read, the more vocabulary they will know.
- Children who value reading will be motivated to read on their own.

Reading Aloud to Children

- ◆ Allows parents and teachers to be **role models** for reading. Adult enthusiasm is contagious.
- ◆ Can serve to introduce **different genres** -- poetry, biographies, and short stories, for example -- that children might not find on their own.
- ◆ Introduces children to new and unfamiliar language. **Book language** is more descriptive and uses more formal grammatical structures.
- ◆ Allows children to **use their imagination** to explore people, places, times, and events beyond their own experience.

Read Aloud to Toddlers So They Can...

- ◆ Remember and join in with repetitive rhymes and phrases.
- ◆ Begin creating pictures in their minds while listening to stories.
- ◆ Begin to understand a few print concepts: pictures as symbols for real things, for example, and that we read words, not pictures.

Read Aloud to Toddlers So They Can...

- ◆ Continue to associate reading with warm, pleasant feelings while learning about words and language.
- ◆ Expand their listening skills.
- ◆ Build their vocabulary with words they understand and can use.
- ◆ Consider books as fun and valuable play materials.
- ◆ Make links between pictures and stories in books, things, and events in the world.

Reading to Older Children

- ◆ Reading books with **rich language** is better than speaking for increasing a child's vocabulary.
- ◆ We, as adults, tend to use the same vocabulary over and over again.
- ◆ Picture books are two to three times as likely as parent-child conversations to include uncommon vocabulary that is not included in the 5,000 most frequently used English words.
- ◆ Reading aloud is one of the best ways to help develop word mastery and grammatical understanding, which forms the basis for learning how to read.

Literacy's Impact on Emotional Psychosocial Development

- ◆ Children who are not read to may enter school with poor listening skills, speaking, and/or phonological processing.
- ◆ Ten to eighteen percent of these children will be diagnosed with Reading Disorder (RD).
- ◆ Behavior problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are also associated with RD.
- ◆ RD children also have difficulty internalizing problems such as shyness and anxiety.

How Reading Helps with Children's Emotions

- ◆ When you read a story about feelings, it helps children understand and accept how they feel.
- ◆ Children learn that they are not alone, because others may feel the same way they do. This helps them to know that their feelings are ok.
- ◆ Parents may learn how their children feel by observing their reaction to expressions of emotion in a story.
- ◆ When parents read to their children, it shows that they understand how their children are feeling.

Reading Aloud Helps Develop Confidence

- ◆ Reading books or telling stories about family history such as “When Mommy was a Girl” help children feel a sense of belonging. Which in turn helps develop self confidence.
- ◆ Reading aloud can help children escape from the stresses and pressures of their world as the story takes their imaginations to other places.
- ◆ Reading books together can become a special sharing time and help children feel loved and lovable.

What Parents Can Do

- ◆ Read to your child every day even for a few minutes.
- ◆ Be a reading role model. Let your children see you reading lots of different texts, such as books, magazines, newspaper, and recipes.
- ◆ Visit the local library.
- ◆ Find toys or puppets that are like the people in your child's favorite story, in order to encourage them to remember and act out the story.
- ◆ Let your children know that you are proud of their reading.

What to Look For in Books

- ◆ Books that vary the important roles.
- ◆ Books which do not assume that people will act in a certain way.
- ◆ Books with interesting words and rhymes.
- ◆ Stories about your child's own hopes and wishes.
- ◆ Stories that explore anger and other negative feelings as well as happiness and other positive emotions.
- ◆ Fairy tales and other stories.

Tips for Parents

- ◆ Toddlers enjoy books with colorful pictures, simple rhymes and stories about things they know.
- ◆ Very young children want their favorite books read over and over again. This helps them grow and learn.
- ◆ Young children will often enjoy sharing in the reading by saying some of the words as they get to know the story.
- ◆ As your children get older let them pick the books out.

Tips for Parents

- ◆ Be guided by what your child likes but try a range of books and stories so they have a choice.
- ◆ Follow your child's lead when you are reading so they can be a partner in the reading time. Stop when they want to stop and skip the bits they want to skip.
- ◆ Use books that only have pictures and make up the stories with your child.
- ◆ Keep books simple and short for younger children.

Tips for Parents

- ◆ For older children don't make story time a reading lesson. It is a time for sharing, fun, and relaxing.
- ◆ Help children find books about their interests.
- ◆ Don't expect too much too soon when your children are learning to read. Reading is a complex process.
- ◆ Don't worry if your children like reading comics and other picture books as they get older- it is all a part of the reading process.

References

- Daunic, A., et al. (2013). Brief Report: Integrating social-emotional learning with literacy instruction: An intervention for children at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 39* (1), 43-51.
- Doyle, B., & Bramwell W. (2006). Promoting emergent literacy and social-emotional learning through dialogic reading. *International Reading Association, 554-564*.
- Dunst, C., Simkus, A., & Hamby D. (2012). Effects of reading to infants and toddlers on their early language development. *Center for Early Literacy Learning, 5* (4), 1-8.

References

Haas, M., & Haas, L.J. (2000). *Read it aloud!: A parent's guide to sharing books with young children*. Natick, MA: Reading Railroad.

Irwin, O.C. (1960). Infant speech: Effect of systematic reading of stories. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research*, 3, 187-190.

Neuman, S.B. & Wright, J. S. (2007). *A parent's guide to reading with your young child*. New York: Scholastic.

Tomblin, B. (2010). Literacy as an outcome of language development and its impact on children's psychosocial and emotional development. *Language and Literacy*, 1-5.

**This study was supported in part by the SUNY Buffalo
State Institute for Community Health Promotion
Collaborative Research Initiative.**