



The Reading Together Project - Summary Report

The Aim of the Project

The Reading Together Project was a randomised control trial (RCT) of shared book reading with children aged 2 ½ to 3 years. In this project we wanted to find out why reading with children is so good for their language development. We wanted to find out whether what caregivers do and say when reading with children can help support children's language development.

The Design of the Project

All families took part in two visits with one of our team. One visit was at the start of the project and another was 6 weeks later. In these visits the children played games, which involved looking at pictures, listening to words and playing games with toys. We also video recorded families reading and playing with toys. In between the two visits we gave each family a set of story books and asked them to regularly read to their child at home.

Families were randomly allocated to one of three groups:

Intervention group 1: Caregivers in this group were trained to read to their child using a **dialogic reading style**.

Intervention group 2: Caregivers in this group were trained to read to their child using a **pause reading style**

Control: Caregivers were asked to read with their child but were given **no instruction** on how to share the books with their child.

The Results of the Project

Caregiver Behaviour

Caregivers in the intervention groups significantly changed their reading style after they received the training. Caregivers in the control group did not change their reading style over the course of the intervention. This tells us that we successfully managed to train caregivers to use either a pause reading or dialogic reading style.

Language Outcomes

Children in all groups showed significant improvement between the first and second visit for their understanding of language and their production of language. There was no difference in the size of improvement between the groups. This tells us that all groups did equally well regardless of whether caregivers were given specific instructions on how to share books with their child or not.



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There are a few things we need to bear in mind when we interpret our findings.

1. We didn't have a control group that did nothing. So, we can't tell whether the improvement we see in all of our groups is due to reading or just due to being involved in an intervention which encouraged interaction between the child and caregiver.
2. Our intervention was very short. It might be the case that our interventions would have led to bigger language gains than the control group if our intervention had been longer.

We have published lots of resources on shared book reading for families and early years practitioners on our website. You can find them here,

<http://www.lucid.ac.uk/resources/for-practitioners/supporting-families-with-shared-reading-activity-in-the-home/>

Thank you very much to all the families for taking part. If you have any questions about the study please do not hesitate to contact us by email, reading@liverpool.ac.uk or by phone, 0151 794 1109.