

BRIDGING THE WORD GAP RESEARCH ROUNDUP

A META-ANALYSIS OF PARENT-IMPLEMENTED LANGUAGE INTERVENTIONS: WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?



WHAT DID YOU STUDY?

- In this meta-analysis, we evaluated the effects of parent-implemented interventions on the vocabulary and general language development of young children at-risk or with primary language impairments (LI) and children with developmental disorders with a secondary language impairment.
 - A *primary language impairment* refers to children who have an expressive and/or receptive language disorder but no other significant disability.
 - A *secondary language impairment* refers to children whose primary disability affects their language skills, like children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or hearing impairment.

HOW DID YOU STUDY IT AND WHAT DID YOU FIND?

We reviewed twenty-five randomized controlled trials published between 1980-2016 focusing on parent-implemented interventions. Fourteen of these studies focused on children at-risk or with primary language impairment and eleven focused on children with secondary language impairment.

We addressed the following research questions:



Are parent-implemented language interventions effective for improving children's receptive and expressive vocabulary?

Results: Parent-implemented intervention led to moderate effects ($g=.42^*$) on children's expressive vocabulary, but no significant effects ($g=.18$) on receptive vocabulary.



Do the effects of parent-implemented language interventions on expressive vocabulary vary by the type of intervention?

Results: Parent-implemented interventions conducted using both shared-book reading ($g=.37$) and play/routine activities ($g=.50$) led to significant and moderate effects on children's expressive vocabulary.



Are parent-implemented language interventions effective for improving children's global expressive and receptive language skills?

Results: Children made small to moderate gains in their expressive language ($g=.27$), but no significant gains on their receptive language ($g=.07$).



Do parent-implemented language interventions increase their use of language-facilitating behaviors?

Results: Parent-implemented language interventions had a significant and large effect ($g=1.20$) on their use of language-facilitating behaviors (i.e., parent responsiveness).



Do the effects of parent-implemented language interventions vary by the etiology of children's language impairment?

Answer: While children at-risk or with primary language impairment made large gains ($g=.78$) on their expressive vocabulary, children with secondary language impairments did not make significant gains ($g=.48$).

WHY DOES THIS STUDY MATTER?

The results of this meta-analysis have two major implications:

- First, that parent-implemented language interventions using either shared-book reading and play-based activities can improve the expressive language skills of children with or at-risk for primary language impairments; however, these types of interventions by themselves may not be as effective for promoting language outcomes for children with secondary language impairments.
- Second, both of these language interventions might be useful in home visiting programs for training parents to engage in language-facilitating behaviors that lead to improvements in young children's expressive language skills.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Because the available studies on parent-implemented language interventions focused almost exclusively on vocabulary, more research is needed to study the impact of these interventions in other areas of language. Very few studies of parent-implemented interventions targeted children who were at risk for language delay because they were from low-SES backgrounds. More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of these interventions with children and families from these contexts.
- Future research is needed to determine the long-term effects of parent-implemented interventions on the language, reading, and school readiness skills of children at-risk or with primary language impairments.
- Future research directions should expand and compare approaches to early communication intervention across contexts, language targets, populations, and over time.

WHO WE ARE:

Reference: Heidlage, J. K., Cunningham, J. E., Kaiser, A. P., Trivette, C. M., Barton, E. E., Frey, J. R., & Roberts, M. Y. (2020). The effects of parent-implemented language interventions on child linguistic outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 50, 6-23.

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