

Appendix E

Annotated Bibliography

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Early childhood literacy:

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Brain and language development

1.

Halfon, N., Shulman, E., & Hochstein, M. (2001). Brain development in early childhood [PDF version]. In N. Halfon, E. Shulman & M. Hochstein, (Eds.), *Building Community Systems for Young Children*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities. Retrieved from <http://www.healthychild.ucla.edu/Publications/Documents/halfon.health.dev.pdf>

KEYWORDS: brain development, early childhood, child development

This report, aimed at families, legislators, and service providers, works to answer the question of how science can inform child development practices. Scientific understandings are part of a continuous process and therefore what is known will change with time. The authors share four things that are currently known about early childhood brain development. First, although the scaffolding on which future brain development relies is built prenatally, the human brain is not mature at birth. Second, the brain is an adaptive organ, and therefore develops in response to experiences and use. Third, the timing of experiences can be important; regions develop, organize and become fully functioning at different times. And finally, relationships impact social and emotional development, making them a crucial part of a child's development.

While the authors acknowledge the difficulty of evaluating intervention practices, they argue, "that programs and policies that support families — especially those at risk for

depression, poverty and substance abuse — can help parents promote optimal brain development” (17). They also warn families and practitioners of untested novel approaches to supporting child development. While such methods may promote interaction between young children and their caregivers, they also often cause the validity of evidence-based practices to be questioned.

2.

Makin L. (2006). Literacy 8-12 months: What are babies learning? *Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development*, 26(3), 267–277. doi 10.1080/09575140600898449.

KEYWORDS: emergent literacy, infant/toddler education, shared book reading

Makin notes that while literacy development is often recognized as beginning from birth, the majority of research on shared book reading does not focus on babies. In response to the lack of research this study focused on 10 mothers with babies aged 8-12 months. The mothers in this study were Anglo-Australian and were participants in an early literacy intervention program. Each mother was videotaped for ten minutes as they engaged in shared book reading with their baby. While this method of observation has limitations it allowed for researchers to examine interactions in detail. Researchers found variation in language use and interaction style, as well as engagement on part of the babies.

Makin discusses how parents and programs focus on the importance of reading to children without considering interaction patterns between child and adult. Whether or not a child is encouraged to take an active role may have an impact on development and a children’s understanding of reading and learning. Makin argues that during

shared reading experiences “child and adult co-construct the foundations of literacy concepts and behaviours” (268). Makin stresses the importance of shared reading experiences as being enjoyable for all who participate. If children are restrained or forced to participate in shared reading the experience will not likely be positive for the child.

3.

Petitto, L. (2009). New discoveries from the bilingual brain and mind across the life span: Implications for education. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 3(4), 185-197. doi: 10.1111/j.1751-228X.2009.01069.x

KEYWORDS: bilingual, brain development, language, education

With the development of new brain imaging technology researchers have been able to explore brain function in new ways. This article looks at the brain and linguistic development of bilingual and monolingual children and discusses implications for educational practices. For the purposes of this research bilingual children are defined as those in “bilingual home and educational programs where the goal is for them to achieve equal and equally high language and reading competence in each of their two languages (186). Currently in the United States the “hold back” method for language development is predominant. This method assumes that exposure to more than one language will result in language delays for children. This has resulted in children learning English as a second language being withheld their first language in educational settings. Contrary to many current practices this research has found that children exposed to two languages from birth achieve their linguistic milestones from each language at the same time as monolingual children and that bilingual exposure has a positive impact on multiple aspects of a child’s development. Researcher also

found that the optimal age for bilingual exposure is before 5 years of age and that community and home environments, rather than school settings, provide optimal learning contexts.

4.

Roberts, J., Jurgens, J., & Burchinal, M. (2005). The role of home literacy practices in preschool children's language and emergent literacy skills. *Journal of Speech, Language & Hearing Research, 48*(2), 345-359. doi:10.1044/1092-4388(2005/024)

KEYWORDS: home literacy, language, emergent literacy, preschool children, family literacy

This research examined how home literacy practices predict children's language development between ages three to five. The home literacy practices studied were the frequency of shared book reading, maternal book reading strategies, child's enjoyment of reading, and maternal sensitivity. Additionally, researchers looked at a global measure of the home environment. The authors provide detailed descriptions of the research methods utilized. The children and mothers or primary caregivers that participated in this study were African American and primarily from low-income families.

The authors note that there is a large body of research connecting a child's home environment to their development. However, due to a lack of varied and long-term research, the relationship between home literacy practices during the preschool years and children's language and early literacy skills is not fully understood. In this study correlation between specific home literacy practices and a child's development were not significant or consistent enough to confirm links. Researchers found the global

measure of the home environment to be the most consistent predictor of children's language and literacy skills. While this research helps to advocate for further research on the impact of specific home literacy practices it also helps to reinforce the importance of the overall home environment on a child's development.

5.

Wolf, M., & Stoodley, C. J. (2007). *Proust and the squid: The story and science of the reading brain*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

KEYWORDS: brain development, language, reading, dyslexia

As Wolf's first nonfiction work for a general audience *Prost and the Squid* is both compelling and accessible. Wolf begins the first chapter stating that "We were never born to read" (p. 3). She goes on to explain that humans have only been reading for a few thousand years, and over those years our brains have had to reorganize in order to adapt to this new challenge. While Wolf focuses more on the "biological and cognitive" rather than "cultural-historical" aspects of the reading brain, social causes and consequences are found throughout (p. 17). Wolf notes that the invention of reading has changed the way human brains process information, which has "altered the intellectual evolution of our species" (p. 3). "This book consists of three areas of knowledge: the early history of how our species leaned to read, from the time of Sumerians to Socrates; the developmental life cycle of humans as the learn to read in even more sophisticated ways over time; and the story and science of what happens when the brain can't learn to read," focusing specifically on dyslexia (p. 4).

Policy and economics

6.

Canadian Language & Literacy Research Network. (2009). *National strategy for early literacy*. Retrieved from <http://docs.cllrnet.ca/NSEL/finalReport.pdf>

KEYWORDS: early literacy, national strategy, Canada, literacy

This report covers many areas, beginning with a discussion on the definition and measurement of literacy in Canada. The report notes that 42% of Canadian adults lack sufficient literacy skills. While the report does not focus exclusively on early childhood literacy skill, it acknowledges the importance of early literacy to set the foundation for adult literacy success. The authors go into detail regarding the importance of literacy for the success of individuals, as well as nations. They discuss the impact literacy rates have on a nation's economy, labour market, innovation, democratic processes and social engagement.

The report provides details on individual and systemic barriers to literacy. It discusses the needs and challenges faced by the general population and by francophone, immigrant, and aboriginal children, as well as those with disabilities. The authors argue for the importance of a national strategy that promotes evaluation, networking and sharing of knowledge. The report concludes with four key recommendations that include a discussion on their rationale as well as actions to be taken. The recommendations are as follows: "To encourage and assist initiatives that facilitate children's language and literacy development from a very young age; To ensure that appropriate teaching strategies... are used in all Canadian classrooms; To encourage community engagement and support for ongoing literacy development throughout the year; To ensure that initiatives are systematically and rigorously evaluated and to improve communication and the sharing of literacy-related knowledge and resources"

(p. 38-42).

7.

Cleveland, G., Krashinsky, M. (1998). *The benefits and costs of good child care: The economic rationale for public investment in young children*. Toronto: Centre for Urban & Community Studies, University of Toronto.

KEYWORDS: economics, public investment, cost-benefit analysis, quality care, policy

Although now more than ten years old, this oft-cited study by two University of Toronto economists is a clear, well-written, and accessible (to non-economists) discussion of the financial incentives for public investment in early childhood education and care (ECEC). According to their 1998 cost-benefit analysis, funding quality childcare programs would accrue \$10.54 billion/year while costing taxpayers \$5.3 billion, for a total benefit ratio of 2:1. Cleveland and Krashinsky further explore public incentives for quality early childhood development, including increased labour force participation of mothers, its influence on family income levels, later school performance, and the impact of quality care for disadvantaged children. Using the language of economics, the authors outline why market-based competition fails children, how childcare is a public benefit and thus a “mixed good”, and how in order to remain competitive in today’s advanced economy, children must be well educated. Cleveland and Krashinsky discuss the importance of quality care and demonstrate why parents do not always make the best selection of care for their child.

In order to understand the long-term benefits of quality ECEC, Cleveland and Krashinsky examine a series of longitudinal studies. According to the authors three key policy pieces emerged: the need for a comprehensive quality care policy for all children between the ages of two and five; the importance of comprehensive parental leave for parents of very young children; and the need to redefine the school system

to include the care of school-aged children during typical work schedules. The authors are clear: care impacts school readiness and can result in “unacceptable inequity among young children who have no choice in the matter and no voice. The government must speak for these children” (p. 76).

8.

Cleveland, G., Krashinsky, M. (2004). *Financing early learning and child care in Canada*. Discussion paper prepared for Canadian Council on Social Development national conference on child care in Canada. Winnipeg, Man: CCDA.

KEYWORDS: economics, policy, public investment, non-profit programs, quality care

Written regarding funding for the Liberal government’s proposed national child care plan in 2004, this article still offers important considerations for financing early literacy initiatives today. According to Cleveland and Krashinsky, financing an early learning and care system should ensure “adequacy and dependability of financing; public accountability for dollars spent; equity in the distribution of the costs and benefits; [and] efficiency in the use of public dollars” (p. 3). The authors deliberate funding the demand side of care with the risk of creating a two-tiered system, and funding the supply side of care and thus enabling price regulation, curriculum guidelines, and quality control. The authors provide a balanced assessment but favour the latter, emphasizing the importance of quality programming and the difficulty for individual families to assess quality. Non-profit centres have proven to provide higher quality care in part because they hire more educated staff, provide better wages, and support professional development.

Cleveland and Krashinsky outline a number of core considerations including how to meet varied public interests or needs, how to ensure quality in service, whether to require parental contributions, and how to implement a national plan. Although the authors again focus on the care aspect of early childhood development, Cleveland and

Krashinsky emphasize the importance of financing early literacy initiatives in “a way which supports services, is carefully monitored and publicly accountable, distributes benefits equitably, and spends scarce public resources” and as such, this article is relevant for all early literacy initiatives.

9.

Dodge, D. (2003). *Human capital, early childhood development, and economic growth: An economist's perspective*. Retrieved from <http://www.sparrowlake.org/news/SparrowLakeAlliance-speech-2May03-smallprint.pdf>

KEYWORDS: economics, policy, human capital, public investment, return on investment, institutional framework

Former Governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge traces the evolution of “human capital” as an economic construct from the 1960s to today, where economists increasingly value the impact of early childhood development (ECD) on economic success. Dodge emphasizes the crucial role of the early years for later human development; “[t]he returns to human capital investments are greatest for the young for two reasons:” states Dodge, “(a) younger persons have a longer horizon over which to recoup the fruits of their investments and (b) skill begets skill” (p. 6). At present a large portion of the costs of ECD are borne privately, by individual families, and Dodge considers public funding allocations that would support all parents.

Dodge identifies two main policy considerations. First, as baby-boomers retire and Canadian fertility rates decline, the small cohort of children who will support society must be highly productive, enter the labour force quickly, and hence literacy is essential. Public spending on ECD reaches those of all cognitive ability, whereas investment in education is currently targeted to the more exclusive postsecondary education. Secondly, Dodge calls for the creation of a government institution

mandated to coordinate ECD and establish partnerships at the local level. This institutional framework could respond to the multifaceted nature of ECD, and ensure support for diverse families in their communities. Throughout his writing Dodge is clear in his analysis and accessible in his approach. Although framing ECD in terms of efficient labour force participation oversimplifies ECD outcomes, his call for public investment and the creation of an institutional framework is essential.

10.

Hertzman, C., & Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2004). *Making early childhood development a priority: Lessons from Vancouver*. Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Office.

KEYWORDS: economy, policy, Early Development Instrument, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, quality programming, public investment

In this clear and comprehensive paper Hertzman discusses findings of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) study, which measured school readiness in 23 Vancouver neighbourhoods. Hertzman situates results within the context of early literacy in Canada generally and key findings from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth specifically. Given that children from all socioeconomic backgrounds are vulnerable, and that while the highest risk remains in poorer neighbourhoods the largest number of vulnerable children are spread across the middle class, Hertzman recommends a publicly-funded system of universal access to learning and developmental opportunities for children from birth to age five. Equal access is essential, and the author outlines current barriers to participation, including varying levels of knowledge of ECD, work-life scheduling conflicts, transportation constraints, language barriers, and feelings of illegitimacy in relation to middle class professionals. As demonstrated in Vancouver, however, these barriers can be overcome through effective programming.

In addition, Hertzman outlines why an intersectoral and multi-level approach is critical for responding effectively to a child's entire environment and hence development. Hertzman cites family literacy programs as an example of services that do this. At present, however, most programs are underfunded, unstable and ad hoc. Rather, despite significant evidence of the crucial role of development before the age of five, effort remains focused on the education of children ages six and up. Hertzman provides several policy recommendations, namely: expanding the focus to children's entire environments, improving intersectoral collaboration, and equalizing access to quality care across neighbourhoods. In order to do so, Hertzman recommends a unique approach to funding; "demographic harvest" would hold real spending on education relative to the GDP while the number of school-aged children declines then reassigning the surplus to the younger age group. Although focused on the Vancouver area this study is highly applicable to communities across Canada, and is a valuable assessment of current conditions and potential policy solutions.

11.

Manuel, T. (2009). *Refining the core story of early childhood development: The effects of science and health frames*. Retrieved from <http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/ECD/refiningthecorestoryofecd.pdf>

KEYWORDS: policy, core story, early childhood

This article helps to illustrate how the framing of a message impacts how the public and policy makers understand an issue. Although early childhood literacy and development have garnered attention in the last ten years opportunities remain to alter conversations in ways that will influence policy and benefit practices. Manuel notes the importance of the core story of early child development and discusses how it can be strengthened. In this article a core story is defined as the "fundamental scientific principles that need to be understood in order to achieve a rough

appreciation for the process of early child development” (p. 7).

Manuel also notes the importance of values and discusses how they facilitate connection to powerful cultural models. Manuel found that core stories highlighting prosperity and ingenuity have the greatest impact when regarding child development. Manuel also found that arguments resting on vulnerable child/fairness had little impact on public support. In addition to values Manuel discusses simplifying models and principles, which aid public comprehension of an issue. This article has the potential to help practitioners and advocates streamline their messages regarding early child development to help increase support and secure funds.

12.

McCain, M. N., Mustard, J. F., Shanker, S. & Council for Early Child

Development. (2007). *Early years study 2: Putting science into action*. Retrieved from

<http://wwwFOUNDERS.net/fn/news.nsf/24157c30539cee20852566360044448c/5e0d29958d2d7d04852572ab005ad6a6!OpenDocument>

KEYWORDS: economics, policy, public investment, return on investment, service integration, collaboration, quality programming

In this follow-up report to McCain and Mustard’s original Early Years Study from 1999, the authors clearly identify Canada’s need for an early child development (ECD) strategy and further outline the role of government in developing, implementing and funding such a strategy. Despite neuroscientific evidence, economic imperative, and international example, Canada requires the political will to translate our knowledge into practice. The authors back strong, straightforward policy proposals with research, including: universal, quality service provision is most successful in impacting

development and neighbourhoods that are socially cohesive better support vulnerable children despite socioeconomic background.

The authors identify communities' common goal of providing their children with opportunities to grow and develop. Most communities identify similar means to achieving this goal including quality care, parenting support and advice, recreation programs, book lending, and links between health, education and social services. The authors thus illustrate how service integration is essential to respond to the multiple determinants of development and to link research with practice. Collaboration is happening, they note, but it is often ad hoc. As such, they call on senior governments to provide policy and financial resources that would support an integrated and sustainable approach to care on a national scale. As the authors note, "quality early childhood programs are not only good for children and families, they are good for the bottom line. Focused public spending on young children provides returns that outstrip any other type of human capital investment" (p. 135). McCain, Mustard and Shanker back their case for public investment with research and statistics; they calculate the return on investment as 8:1 for early child development programs. Public funding, they state, is a prerequisite for program integration, quality and universality. The authors provide a succinct (despite the report length) summary and straightforward analysis of early literacy in Canada; the strength of our practitioners and research community and why government needs to implement and fund service integration. Throughout they list further resources and innovative initiatives across Canada.

13.

Mustard, J. F. and Young, M.E. (2007). Measuring child development to leverage ECD policy and investment. In *Early child development from measurement to action: A priority for growth and equity* (14). Retrieved from <http://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Cwa0LZOkv3MC&oi=fnd&pg=PA2>

53&ots=69mmSxVp5P&sig=SAw8_KEORO5gxyfjnC_ydXO_rYl#v=onepage&q&f=false

KEYWORDS: early child development, policy, measurement, Early Development Instrument

The authors of this article advocate for the use of the Early Development Instrument developed at McMaster University, to measure early childhood development on a national level. The authors argue that such measurements allow for communities and governments to appreciate the importance of early childhood development programs. Measuring the outcome of early childhood development programs is challenging for many reasons. Evaluations require multiyear studies and extensive ethical consideration because participation by children is required. Additionally, many of the benefits associated with early childhood development programs are long-term, some benefits may not be seen for over 20 years.

The authors provide many reasons for measuring early childhood development using a common assessment tool, including to stimulate discussion, evaluate early childhood development initiatives, and establish best practices and informed policies. While such measurements could be used to assess school readiness the authors argue that should not be the primary goal. One of the reasons they selected the Canadian developed Early Development Instrument as a measurement tool was because its intended use is for measuring populations rather than individuals. Although the authors acknowledge that national measurement tools work best in countries with universal kindergarten, the article ends with a discussion on how countries of varied economic positions could implement the Early Development Instrument.

Health

14.

Klass, P., Dreyer, B. P., & Abrams, M. A. (2009). Health literacy and children: introduction. *Pediatrics*, 124. Retrieved from http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/124/Supplement_3/S262

KEYWORDS: American Academy of Pediatrics, health literacy, child development

In 2008 the American Academy of Pediatrics held a national conference on health literacy: *A Health-Literate America: Where Do Children Fit In?* This article provides information on the content of the conference and discusses some of the issues that were raised there. The article begins by establishing that children must be considered when working towards health literate communities. The authors note that the goals for children are the same as for adults: "to use the health literacy perspective and its insights and evidence base to enhance the health care system, increase access and inclusion, reduce disparities, and improve health outcomes" (p. 5262). Despite similar goals, pediatric health literacy is different because adult caregivers' health literacy must be considered in addition to children's own health literacy development. The authors refer to the Institute of Medicine's definition of health literacy: "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (p. 5263)." The authors state that the best way to improve health literacy among children is to promote education in literacy health and self-efficiency throughout their development.

15.

Mustard, J. F. (2000). Does early childhood matter for human development and health?

Literary Review Canada, 8(8), 25-28. Retrieved from
<http://wwwFOUNDERS.net/fn/papers.nsf/0176625ce34a8895852566360044448b/50205524bf7e693e852569b4006045aa!OpenDocument>

KEYWORDS: early childhood, human development, health, health literacy

This literature review helps to articulate the importance of having a common framework and language within multidisciplinary fields, such as early childhood development. Without such a shared understanding it is difficult to bridge the gap between the natural and social sciences, which are often polarized. Mustard uses multiple perspectives to argue for the importance of the early years for human development. Additionally, Mustard states that those (Bruer, 1999; Harris, 1998) who in the past failed to recognize the importance of the early years did so in part because they failed to bring together findings from the natural and social sciences. This insight may help those trying evaluating resources that challenge the science that supports early childhood development. While citing Eleanor Maccoby (2000), an American psychologist, Mustard puts forth that arguments that dividing child development into debates between “nature” and “nurture” are not helpful. One is not more important than they other. Child development is complex, and is dependant on both for healthy development.

16.

van der Gaag, J. (2002). From Child Development to Human Development. In M.E. Young (Eds.), *Early child development to human development*. Retrieved from
http://www.ecdgroup.com/pdfs/van_der_gaag_paper_CHILDDEV-20_05_2003-18_13_22.pdf

KEYWORDS: child development, human development, health, education, social capital, inequality

van der Gaag notes that many early childhood development programs are justified by immediate consequences, without regard for the long-term positive benefits they also produce. The goal of this article is to illustrate critical pathways that connect early childhood development with human development. For this article human development refers to societal, rather than individual development. Four pathways are identified and discussed: Education, health, social capital, and inequality. While the evidence connecting early childhood education and health with human development has been well documented, the social and equality based benefits are not as well defined. Despite the current research gaps there is evidence suggesting the importance of social learning and contributions early childhood development initiatives make to breach inequality. While there is often a need to present immediate benefits of such programs in order to secure funding or public support, the long-term societal implications should not be ignored.

Shared reading/Family

17.

Bayley, J., Wallace, L. M., & Choudhry, K. (2009). Fathers and parenting programmes: Barriers and best practice. *Community Practitioner: the Journal of the Community Practitioners' & Health Visitors' Association*, 82(4), 28. Retrieved from <http://www.commprac.com/index.php>

KEYWORDS: fathers, parenting, barriers, best practices

This UK based research explores barriers and best practices for engaging fathers in

parenting and support services. The authors note that parenting programs can promote “confidence and skills in parenting and associated improvements in child behaviour” (p. 28). Although the positive impact of parental engagement is well documented many programs target mothers and female caregivers over fathers. This research draws on literature, government and community organization reports, and input from practitioners and fathers. The authors identify several barriers, including: lack of awareness of services and service value, work commitments, female-orientated services (staff, advertisements), and lack of organizational support (organizations do not have detailed policy on fathers and lack information on how to support them). While the authors acknowledge that further research on fathers is needed, they discuss approaches to target and welcome fathers into parenting services. They suggest actively promoting services to fathers, rather than parents and offering alternative delivery methods. Additionally they note the importance of advertising the service as well as its value for father and child. The authors stress the need for organizations to make long-term commitments to recruiting and supporting fathers in order to narrow the gap in parental involvement in parenting programs and services.

18.

Berkule, S. B., Dreyer, B. P., Huberman, H. S., Fierman, A. H., Mendelsohn, A. L. (2007).

Attitudes about shared reading among at-risk mothers of newborn babies.

Ambulatory Pediatrics, 7, 45–50. Retrieved from

<http://www.ambulatorypediatrics.org/>

KEYWORDS: developmental outcomes, early childhood, infancy, literacy, parenting

The objective of this study was to examine at risk mothers’ attitudes towards shared reading with their newborn babies. The authors argue that understanding factors that impact attitudes could assist pediatrician in providing anticipatory guidance. The

study addressed three questions: What are mothers' attitudes regarding plans to begin reading during infancy? Are there books for babies in the home at the time of delivery? And, are there concerns regarding ability to engage in effective shared reading? The study found characteristics that correlated with maternal attitudes towards reading in infancy. However, the authors found that close to 20% of mothers, from all groups and regardless of education level, had concerns about "effectively sharing books with their infants" (p. 47). Some of the characteristics examined included: maternal education, ethnicity, marital status, and baby's sex. The authors suggest that during pregnancy or early in the postpartum period mothers should be provided with anticipatory guidance regarding shared reading with their infant.

19.

Berkule, S. B., Dreyer, B. P., Klass, P. E., Huberman, H. S., Yin, H. S., Mendelsohn, A. L. (2008). Mothers' expectations for shared reading following delivery: Implications for reading activities at 6 months. *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, 8(3): 169–174. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2435014/pdf/nihms51421.pdf>

KEYWORDS: parenting, infancy, reading, developmental outcomes

This article is based on findings from a large study done in the United States on parents, shared reading, and literacy information. It focuses on the connection between maternal intentions and behavior after 6 months. Although the optimal time to begin shared reading has not been established, the authors note that there is evidence that shared reading at 6 months is a predictor of later reading activities. The study found that maternal intentions and resource access during the postnatal period were predictors of shared reading behaviors at 6 months. The authors note that there

is a need for further research on the impact of guidance on shared reading during pregnancy and early infancy.

20.

Dreyer, B., Huberman, H., Klass, P., Mendelsohn, A., & Berkule-Silberman, S. (2010). Sources of Parenting Information in Low SES Mothers. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 49(6), 560-568. doi: 10.1177/0009922809351092

KEYWORDS: parenting, child development, anticipatory guidance

This article focuses on a study that asked three questions: What are sources from which low socioeconomic status mothers of newborns receive parenting information? To what extent are sociodemographic characteristics associated with sources? And, to what extent are sources associated with intentions regarding activities with infants? The study assessed five sources of parenting information (Television, print, internet, physicians and other health care professionals, family and friends) and the impact they have on parenting behaviors related to development. The authors note that regardless of source, interpretation of parenting information is mediated by previously attained attitudes and intentions. Across demographics the three sources of information cited as important were grandmother (48.8%), books (32.4%), and other family members (30.0%) (p. 564). The findings from this study have implications for practitioners working to inform parents and families on issues of childhood development and health.

21.

Ortiz, C. (2001). Parental influence on child interest in shared picture book reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 16(2), 263-81. doi:10.1016/S0885-

KEYWORDS: parents, interest, shared reading, literacy

It has been suggested that children's interest in reading during the early years has an impact on later reading achievement. The study discussed in this article explored the influence parents can have on their child's interest in shared reading. Parents in this study used strategies thought to foster interest in shared reading. Intervention strategies used included: "following the child's lead, getting the child actively involved, being enthusiastic and close with the child, using positive feedback, selecting stories of interest to the child, and not pushing the child if the child was not interested in reading at the moment" (p. 266). The author refers to Bus, van IJzendoorn, and Pellegrini (1995) who note that encouraging parents to increase shared book reading with children who are not interested may be detrimental to their children's literacy development. While there were ambiguous results in the study discussed, the author argues for greater investigation to interest related interventions and their short and long term effects on literacy.

22.

Pan, B. A., Raikes, H., & Duursma, E. (2008). Predictors and outcomes of low-income fathers' reading with their toddlers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23(3), 351-365. Retrieved from http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/620184/authorinstructions

KEYWORDS: fathers, toddlers, shared reading, child development, low-income, language development

The vast majority of studies on family literacy and shared book reading focus on the role of mothers. This article discusses a study on the role of father in children's literacy development. The study, which focused on shared book reading between children and fathers of low-income families, addressed the following four research questions: How often do low-income fathers report reading to their 24- and 36-month-old children? How does the frequency of reading by fathers report differ from that of mothers? What paternal and child characteristics predict frequency of father-child reading? Is frequency of father-child reading in toddlerhood related to children's cognitive and language development at age 36 months? Like many studies on maternal shared book reading practices, paternal shared book reading was a predictor of children's language development. In addition to the studies findings, this article discusses the importance of quality over quantity, and conflicting data regarding gender differences in vocabulary use and parental interaction with children.

23.

Zimmerman, F.J., Gilkerson, J., Richards, J.A., Christakis, D.A., Xu, D., Gray, S., et al. (2009). Teaching by listening: The importance of adult-child conversations to language development. *Pediatrics*, 124(1), 342-349. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>

KEYWORDS: language development, reading, television

The importance of adult language input for child language development has been well established in the literature. As a result parents and caregivers have been encouraged to engage in shared reading and storytelling with their children. This research works to expand the understanding of the impact of adult language input by

looking at adult-child conversations. Conversations were measured by conversation turns between adult and child vocalizations. Children who participated in this study were aged 2 to 48 months. While further research is needed this study found that adult-child conversations contribute to healthy child language development. The authors argue that in addition to engaging in shared reading, parents should be encouraged to “engage their children in two-sided conversations” (p. 342). They suggest parents ask question during shared reading as a means to encourage conversation.

Literacy programs

24.

Anderson, J., & Morrison, F. (2007). “A great program...for me as a Gramma”:

Caregivers evaluate a family literacy initiative. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30, 68-89. Retrieved from <http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE30-1/CJE30-1-AndersonMorrison.pdf>

KEYWORDS: families, literacy, school, family literacy, Parents As Literacy Supporters (PALS)

This article discusses a British Columbian literacy program that worked to build mutual understanding between families and teachers. The program included 137 parents and caregivers who attended sessions with their children over a period of 8 months.

Although the program was intended for children aged 3 to 5 years, many families brought younger children to the sessions. The authors discuss the parents’ evaluation of the program as well as the theoretical frameworks that informed its design. At each session teacher facilitators and families would share a meal before participating in program actives. Session took place in classroom settings and included time for adults

and children to interact together as well as independently. Sessions also included an opportunity for adult participants to share their knowledge and experiences with school and literacy. Sessions covered a variety of topics, including reading, math, and technology. For the evaluation of the program adult participants were asked to write an anonymous letter with their views on the strengths and limitations of the program and what they had gained from participating. The authors conclude by noting the importance addressing the nuanced position of families and communities when developing literacy programs. While there are challenges common in many family literacy programs, this study found that problems identified in the literature were not as great as they are often suggested to be.

25.

Burts, D. C., & Dever, M. T. (2002). An evaluation of family literacy bags as a vehicle for parent involvement. *Early Child Development and Care: Ecdc*, 172, 359-370.

Retrieved from

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713640830~db=all>

KEYWORDS: family literacy bags, literacy, parent involvement, reading, language development

There have been many home-based literacy programs developed by practitioners. This article describes and evaluates the Family Literacy Bag (FLB) and its implementation in three rural and one city school district in the United States. In each of the four districts kindergarten teachers were provided with enough FLB for student to take one home for one week, every three weeks. The bags were designed to engage families and promote interest in reading and related activities at home. The evaluation of the FLB included feedback from parents and teachers. The bags

contained high quality children's books as well as a guidebook for parents. Each bag contained material in English as well as Spanish.

Findings from the evaluation suggest that the FLB encouraged families to participate in reading at home. Additionally, families learned of their children's language development, new books, and book reading and teaching strategies. There were four themes that emerged from the feedback on the project and are discussed by the authors: organization, information, engagement, and opportunity. Despite the positive feedback some parents viewed the bags as homework. This is important to keep in mind when developing and communicating the purpose of such programs to parents.

26.

Floyd, L., & Vernon-Dotson, L. (2009). Using home learning tool kits to facilitate family involvement. *Intervention in School & Clinic, 44*(3), 160-166. Retrieved from <http://isc.sagepub.com/>

KEYWORDS: literacy, home, tool kit, reading, family, education, special needs, teachers

The importance of family involvement in children's education is well known. Home learning kits are one way to help close the gap between school and home. While there are many programs and initiatives that promote family engagement in student achievement, some efforts are more successful than others. The project discussed in this article was the result of teachers and parents recognizing the need to develop better connections between families and school. Home Learning Tool Kits were developed and over two years their impact was monitored. In total 76 families with children between kindergarten and grade 5 participated. The tool kits were

developed for families to take home and keep. While children with special needs were kept in mind while the kits were being developed, their effectiveness was not restricted to families with children with special needs.

Teachers found that families responded positively to the project and children were enthusiastic about the books and activities included in the tool kits. In addition to the books and activities included, the tool kits were intended to model how everyday household items can be used to reinforce a child's development and education. Although this initiative was based in a school setting with children in kindergarten to grade five, the design of the kits as models for families distinguish the Home Learning Tool Kits from other home literacy initiatives. The model of these tool kits could be applied to initiatives targeting children of all ages.

27.

McKend, H., & Provincial and Territorial Public Library Council (Canada). (2010).

Early literacy storytimes for preschoolers in public libraries. Fredericton, NB: Provincial and Territorial Public Library Council.

KEYWORDS: public libraries, storytimes, ALA and Every Child Ready to Read, best practices for programming, research

McKend's report was commissioned by the Provincial and Territorial Public Library Council (PTPLC) to better "position public libraries to address early literacy needs in Canada" and to establish a framework of best practices in programming (p. 1). The research consisted of two stages; a literature review and a telephone survey of 35 practitioners known for providing excellent storytimes, representing 400 libraries. Through the interviews McKend discovered that 346 out of 400 libraries have formally or informally adopted elements of the American Library Association's (ALA) Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) program. Based on these findings McKend recommends

that the PTPLC as well as each province and territory adopt ECRR as best practices for preschool storytimes, that national, provincial and online training on ECRR be explored and/or funded, that PTPLC investigate a partnership with the ALA/ECRR to develop Canadian content and French-language translations, and that PTPLC facilitate the dissemination of ECRR in partnership with the CLA and other organizations. ECRR includes scripts and booklists for program delivery, training, and emphasizes the role of practitioners as “literacy coaches”.

Throughout the report McKend applies early literacy research to library storytime practice, whether in consideration of brain development, quality of programming, frequency of practice, or regarding librarians’ responses to diverse community needs. As such the report is a valuable snapshot of library storytime programming across Canada and provides context for how research integrates with practice.

McKend emphasizes that public libraries are well positioned to foster important partnerships and disseminate best practices, both locally and on a national scale. The study discusses common themes: the dedication of practitioners, the need for effective staff training and consistent access to resources across Canada, while reinforcing evidence-based practice.

28.

Needlman, R., Toker, K. H., Klass, P., Dreyer, B. P., Mendelsohn, A. L. (2005). Effectiveness of a primary care intervention to support shared reading: A multi-center evaluation. *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, 5(4), 209–215. Retrieved from <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/pqdweb?did=877324121&sid=2&Fmt=6&clientId=15814&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

KEYWORDS: books, literacy, primary care, Reach Out and Read, reading

It is known that a failure to read at grade level is a predictor for future economic disadvantage. It is also known that exposure to reading aloud helps to promote literacy. As a result, there are many early childhood literacy programs targeting a wide variety of demographics. The success of these programs however is not always known. This article discusses a study that was initiated to determine the association between Reach Out and Read (ROR) and its objective to increase reading aloud among families with young children. "The ROR model incorporates anticipatory guidance about reading aloud and distribution of free picture books at health supervision visits from 6 months through 5 years as well as reading aloud in the waiting room" (p. 209). The study included children aged 6-72 months. The results found that ROR was associated with increased reading aloud between primary caregivers and children, with the intervention being most effective for families at the greatest risk.

29.

Wallace, B. M., & Zeece, P. D. (2009). Books and Good Stuff: A strategy for building school to home literacy connections. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(1), 35-42. Retrieved from <http://www.springerlink.com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/content/y8687024rl414374/fulltext.pdf>

KEYWORDS: literacy, family literacy, literacy activities, take-home literacy kits, BAGS (Books and Good Stuff) kits, current children's picture books, creating literacy kits

This article discusses the development of Books and Good Stuff (BAGS), a take home literacy kit, and provides practical suggestions for the development, implementation and evaluation for this model. The author discusses how some parents lack

confidence in their role as educator to their children. The BAGS kits are intended to help support families participating in literacy related activities with children and develop parents' confidence as literacy models.

The author also includes reviews of sixteen current children's picture books and recommendations for themes. While the books selected might not be ideal of all programs, the review gives readers a framework to consider when choosing books for home literacy kits. In addition to information regarding the bags, the author discusses some important factors related to early childhood development that should be considered when developing literacy kits. While seasoned practitioners may not find new information in this article, practitioners may find the guidelines helpful when developing similar kits for the first time.

Research and practice

30.

Bauerlein, M., Munson, L., Prehoda, L., Stotsky, S., Greene, J. P., & O'Connor, E. (2008). To read or not to read: Responses to the new NEA Study. *Academic Questions*, 21(2), 195-220. doi:10.1007/s12129-008-9055-9

KEYWORDS: National Endowment for the Arts, reading, literacy, review

In 2007 the National Endowment for the Arts released the study "To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence." While the study did not produce new data, it presented findings from various national studies in the United States. For this article five experts share their, often conflicting, perspectives on the study and its implications.

While Mark Bauerlein provides a review of the study, Lynne Munson and Lauren Prehoda discuss the report's finding that those who read for pleasure, specifically classic literature, have more active lifestyles than non-readers. Sandra Stotsky draws from the writings of other academics on the social and neurological implications of a national decline in readings and questions the role of the American school system. Erin O'Connor and Jay Greene discuss the limitations of the report. While O'Connor challenges critics of the report Greene critiques its proposed implications.

The varying perspectives help to provide greater context around the report and stimulate discussion. Reviews of reports such as the one discussed in this article can greatly contribute to one's understanding of the information presented. Such reviews can be especially helpful for those who have limited time, resources, and connections with other professionals in the related fields.

31.

Dunst, C., & Trivette, C. (2009). Using research evidence to inform and evaluate early childhood intervention practices. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education: Special Issue on Technical Assistance and Systems Change*, 29(1), 40-52.
doi: 10.1177/0271121408329227

KEYWORDS: research evidence, early childhood, intervention practices, evaluation, childhood special education

This article discusses how research evidence can be used as a benchmark to evaluate early childhood intervention practices. Although this article is targeted at childhood special education interventions the framework proposed by the authors could be applied to other early childhood practitioners working to close the gap between

research and practice. This article may be especially helpful for practitioners who do not have the resources to conduct an in-depth analyses of the programs they host. The article includes an example (physician referrals to early intervention services for toddlers) to give readers an understanding of how sets of evidence based practice characteristics can be used as benchmarks.

The authors discuss the importance of identifying “practice characteristics that are associated with desired outcomes and benefits” (p. 40). The goal of the framework is to use successful characteristics as the core feature of an intervention while insuring that the practice makes sense to practitioners and parents. In their conclusion the authors stress the importance for practices to make sense to practitioners and parents. When translating a practice characteristic from one setting to another (for example, from an education centre to home) less complex approaches are often the most effective.

32.

Odom, S. L. (2009). The Tie that Binds: Evidence-Based Practice, Implementation Science, and Outcomes for Children. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 29(1), 53-61. Retrieved from <http://tec.sagepub.com/>

KEYWORDS: implementation, professional development, research and practice

Although this article focuses on practitioners working with children that have developmental delays, the author’s insight on strategies for connecting evidence with practice make it relevant to a broad spectrum of practitioners who work with children. Odom notes that although the field of early intervention and early childhood special education has grown with a focus on using science to identify effective approaches, gaps remain between what is known from research and what is done in practice.

Odom argues for a focus on strategies for implementation under real-world conditions. Odom structures this article around three categories of ideas inspired by *Wired* magazine: expired, tried, and wired. Although he discusses ideas from all three categories, his discussion on what he has categorized as wired are the most relevant for they are what he feels will move the field forward. While he advocates for the use of implementation science, Odom argues that enlightened approaches to professional development offer great support to effective implementation.

33.

Sparkman, K. L., Wesley, P. W., & Buysse, V. (2003). Communities of practice:

Connecting what we know with what we do. *Exceptional Children: Journal of the International Council for Exceptional Children*, 69(3), 263-277. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9323706&site=ehost-live>

KEYWORDS: communities of practice, research and practice, education

In this article the authors explore the integration of educational research and practice using the communities of practice model. They discuss the conceptual and theoretical underpinning of the model and implications for practice. The authors argue that conventional methods for identifying best practices are not efficient and often do not result in relevant recommendations. The authors suggest that research production and research understanding are part of the same process. A community of practice model depends upon ongoing endeavors that invite multiple groups to “share, build upon, and transform what they know about effective practices” (p. 265). Such models require the development of partnerships with consumers. While such partnerships are often motivated by funding, they are also motivated by an genuine desire to

understand issues important to consumers and identify methods for creating useful policies and practices. In addition to their discussion the authors use the theoretical framework for communities of practice to evaluate educational practices and offer suggestions on how each example could have strengthen connections between research and practice.