

# Empowering Primary Caregivers to Employ Dialogic Reading Techniques: A Systematic Review of Dialogic Reading Interventions When Implemented by Primary Caregivers, Teachers, and Clinicians



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## Introduction

The dialogic reading method is based on the research completed by G. J. Whitehurst (1984) and has been found to increase oral language and literacy skills in children. With increasing emphasis on interventions provided in naturalistic environments to increase functionality of skills, it is possible that dialogic reading implemented by parents in the home could be as effective, if not more effective, than dialogic reading interventions at the small-group or classroom level that a child might receive at school. Only limited research has been done on this comparison; therefore, a systematic review is needed.

## Objective

The purpose of this systematic literature review is to compare results of dialogic reading interventions when implemented by primary caregivers versus when implemented in schools either in small group or classroom settings.

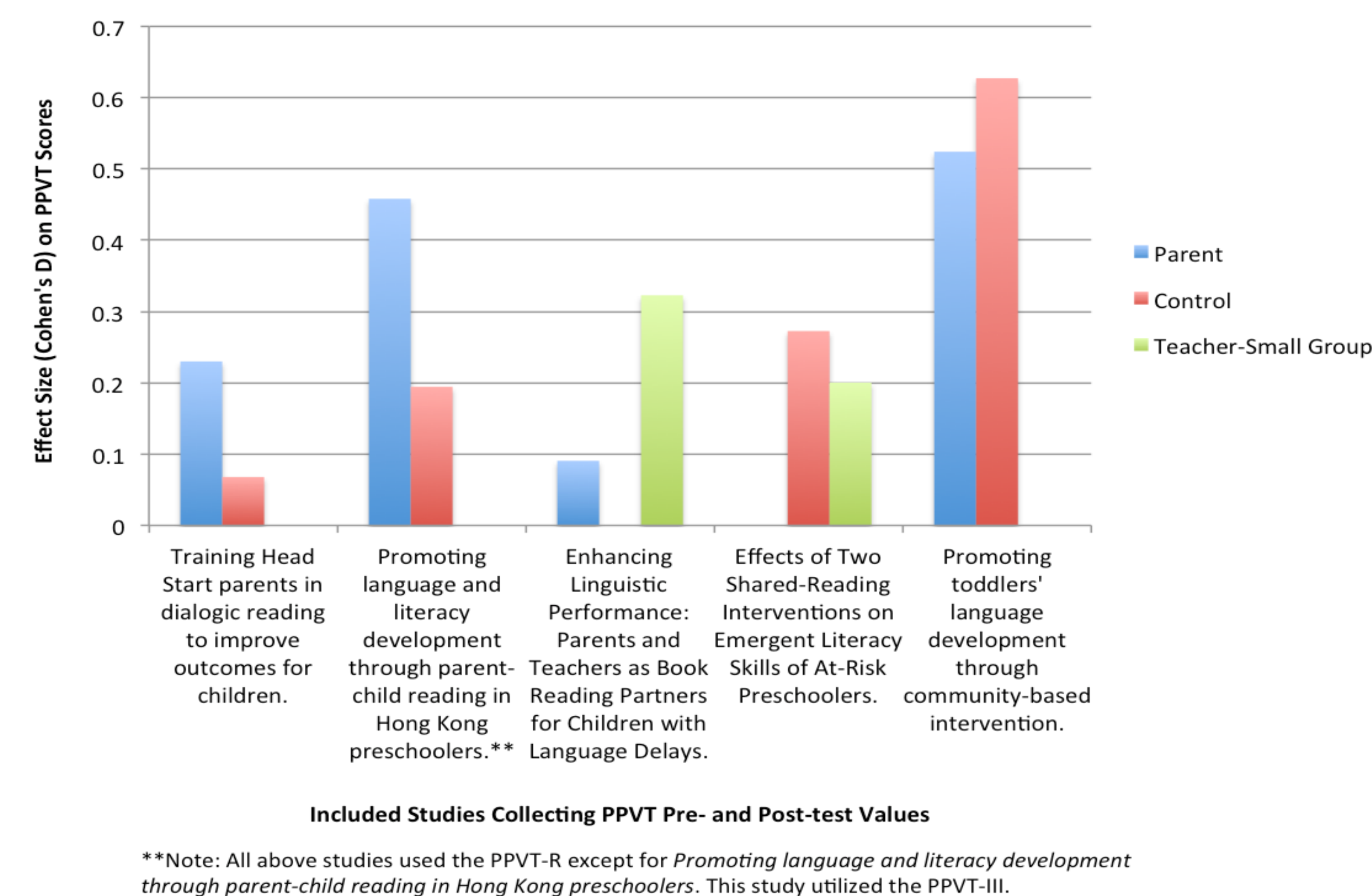
## Method

Three databases were utilized: ERIC, Education FullText, and PSYCInfo. Titles and abstracts were independently assessed against inclusion criteria by two reviewers. Disagreements were resolved.

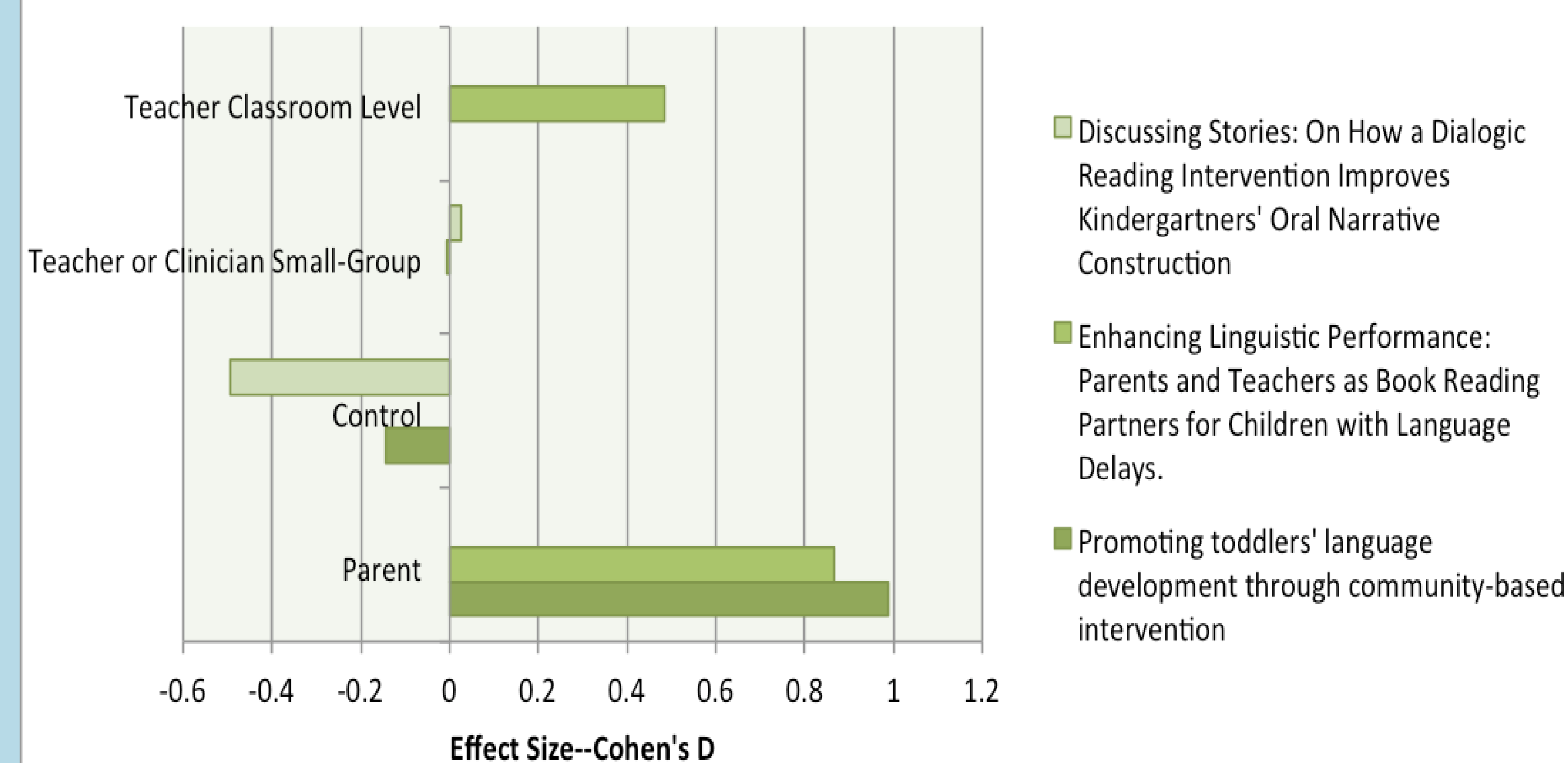
## Results

The search resulted in 128 titles and abstracts, with 20 of these being includable based upon title and abstract reviews. With further review of the articles themselves, the results were narrowed to 6 relevant randomized controlled trials, which were then fully appraised by reviewers independently and found to range from poor to moderately-high in quality. The majority of the randomized controlled trials found no statistically significant gains in either receptive or expressive vocabulary, regardless of whether parents or teachers/clinicians were implementing the dialogic reading intervention. All studies evaluating increases in mean length of utterance found statistically significant gains for the dialogic reading group. Statistically significant gains were noted in individual studies for a myriad of other oral language and language complexity tasks, such as number of words used and number of multiword utterances.

Effect Sizes on Receptive Vocabulary as Measured by Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test



Effect Size of Dialogic Reading on Mean Length of Utterances by Type of Implementation



## Clinical Implications

No clear differences between parent implementation or clinician/teacher implementation were seen.

The literature review did not indicate that primary caregivers produce more desirable outcomes than teachers or clinicians; however, the results did not suggest that primary caregivers are *unable* to be as successful as teachers or clinicians when implementing the dialogic reading method.

Teachers and clinicians have limited time with children who need additional resources in order to fulfill their potential. Primary caregivers know their children better than anyone and spend much more time with them. That being said, primary caregivers are an essential part of the therapy process and need to be in close partnership with clinicians and teachers. If given the necessary and appropriate education and instruction, primary caregivers can be empowered continue therapy in the home, such as with the dialogic reading method.

Studies with greater power and longer periods of intervention implementation need to be conducted in order to properly interpret the effects of dialogic reading when used by caregivers in the home as compared to when used by teachers or clinicians in small-group or classroom settings.