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# A Pediatric Intervention to Support Early Literacy

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A PEDIATRIC INTERVENTION TO SUPPORT EARLY LITERACY

by

Christina R. Graziano

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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## ABSTRACT

### A Pediatric Intervention to Support Early Literacy

The purpose of this research project was to provide caregivers of children from age birth to four with facts and strategies about the promotion of early childhood literacy. In Chapter Four a pamphlet was developed that focuses on these specific areas: (a) literacy development, (b) emergent literacy, (c) creating a literate environment, (d) reading aloud to one's child, (e) talking with one's child, (f) choosing developmentally appropriate books, and (g) the reading stages. The pediatrician's support in literacy intervention is vital. The pamphlet should be presented to caregivers during well child visits to (a) develop children's literacy skills, (b) promote successful readers, and (c) encourage life long learners.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

According to the staff of the International Reading Association (IRA;1998) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, as cited in IRA), learning to read and write is critical to a child's success in school and his or her ability to participate in a literate society. A child's ability to read and write will continue to expand throughout the course of his or her life. From birth to age 8 is thought to be the critical period for children's literacy development. The IRA and NAEYC staff developed a position statement on the vital need to promote reading and writing in early childhood. It is essential that children learn to become competent readers and writers to achieve success in the current highly literate society. Today, the standards for basic proficiency require a high standard of reading comprehension and analysis because of the increased use of the Internet and technology. Although the United States has the highest literacy rate in its history, the social expectation is that all of the U.S. population must be highly literate.

#### Statement of the Problem

According to Olson et al. (2004), early literacy intervention has many positive effects on a child's cognitive ability including: (a) word knowledge, (b) vocabulary, and (c) reading skills. During well child visits to the pediatrician, parents reported that they wanted to discuss topics such as reading. According to Perri (2002), routinely, pediatricians did not take the time to promote the importance of reading to young

children or give advice to parents on how to do so. There are many missed opportunities during well child visits for pediatricians to support the development of literacy skills in children. Pediatricians need to have the knowledge and resources available to support and encourage parents to begin reading to their child from birth.

### Background of the Problem

According to High et al. (2000), reading skills are critical to a child's success. These authors showed that there is a link between a pediatrician's support of literacy and an increase in a child's language development. Perri (2002) examined the program, Reach Out and Read, which promotes literacy intervention by pediatricians. In this program: (a) books are given to children in the waiting rooms, and (b) volunteers are present to read to children in low socioeconomic pediatric offices. Perri noted that it is particularly important for pediatricians to address literacy concerns because, frequently, that is the only place that parents receive such information. This researcher concluded that pediatricians can make a difference in a child's literacy development, since early reading aloud to children is linked to a child's reading ability throughout school.

Kou, Franke, Regalado, and Halfon (2004) found that only 6 of the 10 parents surveyed were provided with information on reading from their pediatrician. It is apparent that, often, physicians missed opportunities to discuss the importance of reading during well child visits. The finding implies that pediatricians may not have the time or proper resources to counsel parents about reading.

According to Kou et al. (2004), their findings demonstrated the importance of providing information to parents about how and why they should read aloud to their children. Also, it was suggested that parents want more information about reading and its

importance in brain development in order to optimize their child's learning opportunities and school readiness.

### The Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project will be to develop a booklet for pediatricians to hand out to parents during well child visits to promote the importance of literacy in early childhood. The booklet will include: (a) literacy development in early childhood, (b) emergent literacy, (c) creating a literate environment, (d) techniques for reading, (e) reading aloud, (f) talking with one's child, (g) the choice of developmentally appropriate books, and (h) the reading stages. The booklet will be designed to: (a) develop children's literacy skills, (b) promote successful readers, and (c) encourage life long learners.

### Chapter Summary

In this chapter, this author cited the staff of the IRA (1998) and the NAEYC (as cited in IRA) who promoted the importance of literacy in early childhood in order to attain success in an increasingly literate society. The problem that will be addressed is that pediatricians miss opportunities and lack knowledge to promote literacy skills to parents of young children. The purpose of this project will be to develop a booklet for pediatricians to use to promote literacy development to parents. In Chapter 2, the author will provide the background to support the eight main topics: (a) literacy development in early childhood, (b) emergent literacy, (c) creating a literate environment, (d) techniques for reading, (e) reading aloud, (f) talking with one's child, (g) choice of developmentally appropriate books, and (h) the reading stages as well as other literacy information that



pertain to these areas. In Chapter 3, Method, the author will describe the target audience (i.e., early childhood parents and their pediatricians) and the development of the literature booklet.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This author will provide information on the importance of pediatricians' support in regard to literacy development in early childhood. The author will then support each of the following areas: (a) literacy development in early childhood, (b) emergent literacy, (c) creating a literate environment, (d) techniques for reading, (e) reading aloud, (f) talking with your child, (g) choosing developmentally appropriate books, and (h) the reading stages. Each of these areas will be supported with research and will provide information for the pamphlet to be developed for in Chapter 4.

Perri (2002) took a closer look at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) research and reported that literacy promotion by pediatricians has been a topic that many pediatricians have not addressed. According to the AAP, physicians may be hesitant to discuss topics for which they do not have a practical solution. Klass and Perri looked at the Reach Out and Read program and reported that, when pediatricians used literacy interventions to promote reading and provided age appropriate books to parents, there was a positive literacy effect on child and parental behavior. According to Olson et al. (2004), pediatricians are among the only professionals who see almost all preschool age children, with nearly 35 visits a week; however, topics such as reading are rarely addressed. Bus, Ijzendoorn, and Pellegrini (1995, as cited in the International Reading Association (IRA), 1998) members noted that the single most important skill for reading success is reading aloud to children. The IRA members explained that children need one

on one attention with caring adults who support their literacy development. Also, there is a great deal of information on how children learn to read and write during early childhood.

### Literacy Development

The staff of the University of Michigan Health System (2006) defined literacy as being able to read and write. Fadiman stated (1979, as cited in Trelease, 1995) that,

Writing begins long before the marriage of pencil and paper. It begins with sounds, that is to say with words and simple clusters of words that are taken in by small children until they find themselves living in a world of vocables. If that world is rich and exciting, the transition to handling it in a new medium-writing-is made smoother. The first and conceivably the most important instructor in composition is the teacher, parent, or older sibling who reads aloud to a small child. (p. 106)

According to the staff of the National Research Council (NRC; 2001), there is increasing evidence that young children are capable learners and that educational experiences during early childhood can have a positive impact on later school learning. A child can learn a great deal when his or her environment is conducive to learning, and when relationships are positive and promote learning. Piaget (1967, as cited in NRC) supported the idea that children need emotional and cognitive development, “There is a constant parallel between the affective and intellectual life throughout childhood and adolescence” (p. 47). Tronick (1998, as cited in NRC) believes there must be a connection between a child and his or her caregiver. This connection must be positive and take place during the child’s earliest years which will lead to the child’s well being later in life. The NRC authors found that, when a child has emotionally positive learning experiences in early childhood, it can lead to productive behaviors.

The NRC (2001) authors explored research on the development of the brain and how children learn. They reported that one is born with a particular set of genes but, based on influence in the environment, nature, and nurture, it can change the physiology of the brain both cognitively and socially. The environment can influence a child's development in early childhood. Also, it was found that emotionally secure relationships must be established in order for a child to have later school achievement. Bloom (1964, as quoted in Anbar, 2004) stated that "About 50 percent of a person's mental capacity is developed between conception and age four and about 80 percent by the age of eight" (p. 23). This finding demonstrates the basis for the importance of early childhood literacy intervention.

Deloache and DeMendoza (1987, as cited in NRC, 2001) explained that sharing a book with a child provides an environment that increases educational goals and advancement and helps a child to learn language in a safe environment. "Wells (1985) found that approximately 5 percent of the daily speech of 24-month-old children occurred in the context of story time" (p. 190). Ninio and Bruner (1978, as cited in NRC) explained that book reading and shared reading during early childhood can help children learn language and give them information which they can develop. Shared reading can lead to vocabulary development and can have a positive effect on the development of literacy skills in children. Senchal et al. (1996, as cited in NRC) encouraged activities like reading aloud and shared book reading to increase vocabulary and emergent literacy skills. Dicksons and Tabors (1991, as cited in NRC) found that adult and child interactions led to the development of language skills. When a child reaches age 4 and 5, they: (a) begin to understand how to handle a book, (b) can pretend to read, and (c) can

recognize what print is in relationship to reading. Print recognition is important so children can understand its meaning in their daily lives and can understand the difference between drawing and writing.

Bloom (1964, as cited in Anbar, 2004) explained that the first years in a child's life are the most important in the development of intelligence. The reading specialist, Chall (1977, as cited in Anbar) at Harvard University, declared that the earlier a child begins to read the better. Suzuki (1970, as cited in Anbar) stated, "Setting a child aside until elementary school age and then saying that now education begins is like taking a withered or withering sprout and suddenly giving it large amounts of fertilizer, putting it in the sunlight and flooding it with water. It is too late for withered to sprout" (p. 17).

#### Emergent Literacy Skills

Anbar (2004) cited Clay (1966) who first introduced emergent literacy skills, and this concept of early literacy was widely used during the 1980s. Although now, many researchers do not have a unified perspective of emergent literacy, many recognize the key tenets. Yaden, Rowe, and MacGillivray (2000, as cited in Anbar) summarized emergent literacy as: (a) concerned with children from birth to kindergarten age, (b) child moves from prereading and writing to actual reading and writing, (c) children are put in charge of their literacy knowledge, and (d) the emergent literacy occurs in an informal setting.

Anbar (2004) noted that reading and writing is learned through a child's interaction with: (a) picture books, (b) shared reading, and (c) reading aloud. The child receives support from family and other capable readers which encourages his or her literacy development. The more encouragement and support a child receives, the more

reading and writing development that will take place. Emergent literacy theorists do not believe that a child has a predetermined age of maturation before learning can take place. Children are accepted at whatever level they can function. Also, the NRC (2001) staff explained that, emergent literacy includes skills, knowledge, and attitudes in the development of reading and writing that are acquired before children enter a formal school setting. This can include: (a) book knowledge, (b) telling a story, (c) understanding how a book is used, (d) early writing or scribbling, (e) creating letters, or (f) copying text. Children's differences in emergent literacy are linked to later differences in reading achievement.

#### Literacy Acquisition

According to the NRC (1998), a child from age birth to 3 years old should have the following developmental accomplishments of literacy acquisition;

- Recognizes specific books by cover.
- Pretends to read books
- Understands that books are handled in particular ways.
- Enters into a book-sharing routine with primary caregivers.
- Vocalization play in crib gives way to enjoyment of rhyming language, nonsense word play, etc.
- Labels objects in books.
- Comments on characters in books.
- Looks at a picture in a book and realizes it is a symbol for a real object.
- Listens to stories.
- Requests/commands adult to read or write.
- May begin attending to specific print such as letters in names.
- Uses increasingly purposive scribbling.
- Occasionally seems to distinguish between drawing and writing.
- Produces some letter-like forms and scribbles with some features of English writing. (p. 61)

These are the suggested developmental stages for children ages birth to 3 years in order for successful literacy acquisition. These stages can develop in any order and can develop independently of one another.

### Creating a Literate Environment

Cullinan (1992) suggested ideas for the establishment of a literate environment which will instill good reading habits and develop successful readers.

1. Keep books readily available: next to a child's bed, near your favorite chair, in the car, and take trips to library.
2. Parents should choose books the child is interested in.
3. Set up a predictable time for reading to a child, for instance before bed or before dinner for reading.
4. Reading at bedtime can calm children down and get them ready for bed. Try and read 15 to 30 minutes daily.
4. Discuss what you have read with the child. (p. 39)

The author recommended that following these habits will promote literacy development and encourage a literate environment in the home.

### Reading Aloud

Trelease (1995) cited the experts of Commission on Reading (1985) also reported that reading aloud to one's child for 15 minutes is both inexpensive and pleasurable. It is more effective than any other method of reading instruction and is identified to be the single most important factor in raising a reader. Fox (2001) defined reading aloud as an emotional experience between an adult and a child in which ideas, viewpoints, and connections are made. Fox believes that reading a minimum of three books a day to a child could be the start to eliminate illiteracy. Reading aloud and talking about what is being read increases brain activity that helps children to concentrate and express themselves. Fox reported that the "experts tell us that children need to hear a thousand

stories read aloud before they begin to learn to read for themselves” (p. 17). This can be achieved in 1 year by reading three books a day. Fox suggested that these books should be one new, one familiar, and one favorite. The time that is spent reading together is a chance for a child to connect with a parent and receive individual attention. Bettelheim (1976, as cited in Trelease), a child psychologist, emphasized that children need to know they are loved. He suggests that reading aloud to a child for 15 minutes daily, in order to bond, will ensure that the child knows he or she is loved. Trelease maintained that reading aloud stimulates a child’s: (a) interest, (b) emotional development, (c) imagination, and (d) language.

Kou et al. (2004) cited a random telephone survey, which was conducted by the National Survey of Early Childhood Health (NSECH; 2000) with 2,068 parents who had children between the ages of 4-35 months. The survey was a 30 minute questionnaire that was related to early childhood healthcare. Kuo et al. reported that, based on the data collected in the survey, it was apparent that “Only 52% of children ages 4-35 months are being read to daily” (p. 1948). The findings showed that African and Hispanic American children were read to less. Also, it was found that 44% of the children who were not read to daily were Anglo American. In addition, their findings showed that the majority of the children, who were not being read to were Anglo American and not poor. It can be concluded that daily reading to children at an early age must be promoted equally across culture and ethnicity. Kou et al. found that the parents of Anglo American children were more likely to read to their children than the parents of African American children, English speaking Hispanic American children, and Spanish speaking Hispanic American children. Parents, who worked fulltime, were less likely to read to their children than



those who worked part-time or not at all. In addition, children in one child households were more likely to be read to than children in households with two or more children.

Sharif, Ozuah, Dinkevich, and Mulvihill (2003) conducted a series of four 1 hour workshops. The workshops were offered weekly but limited to 15 parents per workshop. The focus of each workshop was on one of the following topics: “(a) the importance of reading to children, (b) selection of developmentally appropriate books, (c) strategies for reading aloud to young children, and (d) child development parenting issues as related to reading” (p. 178). The findings suggested that parents with a college education should be targeted for instruction about reading aloud to young children at home. Also, it was apparent that, regardless of education, parents should participate in brief literacy interventions. The increases reported in the intervention were greater than the increases throughout a kindergarten school year.

Trelease (1995) explained that, since nearly all elementary school educators are female and, if boys are not exposed to a male influence at home, they may rarely see a male read. Trelease cited the Carnegie Commission, Ready to Learn Report (1991), of 57 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students, in which it was found that boys, who were read to by their fathers, scored higher in reading achievement. Boys, who saw their fathers read frequently, were reported as reading more.

#### Read Aloud Strategies

According to the University of Michigan Health System (2006) staff, in order to make reading aloud successful for babies, one should follow these strategies: (a) use small chunky books, (b) talk about the pictures, (c) sing the words to get the baby’s

attention, (d) play games like peek a boo with the story book, and (e) use texture books and help the baby feel them.

Reading aloud can start at birth and should continue throughout early childhood. Green and Green (2003) explained that, if parents demonstrate good reading habits, children will copy the actions they see. Hill (as cited in Fox, 2001) explained that reading any print will do, including ordinary things like cereal boxes or magazines.

Fox (2001) noted that there is no right way of reading aloud. She explained that it helps to: (a) be as expressive as possible, (b) use eye contact, and (c) use vocal animation. Also, one must avoid reading in patronizing or cutesy voices that talk down to children. According to Fox, there are seven different ways to read to keep the listener engaged: (a) loud, (b) soft, (c) fast, (d) slow, (e) high, (f) low, and (d) by pausing. Fox explained that “If we read a story without allowing its emotional value to show through our eyes, we’re wasting a prime asset” (p. 41). Reading must be fun, and it is vital that one does not try to teach children formally before they go to school. Parents should be parents, and reading aloud should be relaxed and comfortable so children learn to love reading.

Trelease (1995) provided specific read aloud strategies to follow: (a) read aloud every day or as often as possible, (b) start with picture books and build up to novels, (d) read a variety of material, (e) read books that both the child and parent enjoy, (d) show the pictures to the child, (f) the reader must adjust his or her speech to create expression, (g) skip long descriptive passages until the child is developmentally capable to listen to them, (h) read slowly, and (i) make sure there is time for discussion after reading. Also, Trelease identified things that should be avoided while reading aloud: (a) do not continue

reading a book if it is a poor choice, (b) do not start reading if there is not adequate amount of time to give it justice, (c) do not get angry or frustrated if the child interrupts to ask questions, and (d) let the child come up with his or her own understanding of the story without the reader telling the child his or her interpretation.

Staff of the U.S. Department of Education (2003) stated, “Reading well is at the heart of all learning. Children who can't read well, can't learn” (p. 1). Some of the reading strategies they provided are: (a) read a child’s favorite book over and over again, (b) discuss any new words a child might not understand, (c) point to the words, (d) read stories that have rhyming words or can be sung, (e) turn the television off and spend more time reading, and (f) go to libraries to find age appropriate books for children.

According to Bush’s No Child Left Behind Act (2001, as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2003):

Without doubt, reading with children spells success for early literacy. Putting a few simple strategies into action will make a significant difference in helping children develop into good readers and writers. Through reading aloud, providing print materials, and promoting positive attitudes about reading and writing, you can have a powerful impact on children’s literacy and learning. (p. 5)

### Talking With Your Child

According to the members of Child Care Aware (2006), talking, singing, and playing games like peek a boo with babies will enable them to make connections with the sound and the activity. Parents and caregivers should talk about everything, for example, what is being seen and what is being felt while the child eats, bathes, and plays. Imitation of the baby’s sounds will let him or her know that his or her sounds have meaning. Talking to one’s child about the world around them by pointing to objects and naming what they are will help to build a baby’s vocabulary. When a child begins to talk on his

or her own, one should talk back and engage in conversations with simple short words and repeat oneself when necessary. Also the members suggested that a child should be taken to new places like the zoo or the library, and one should talk about what is happening.

Epstein, Hohmann, and Hohmann (2005) of High Scope Educational Foundation pointed out that,

Infants are social beings from birth, connecting with other human beings to create a context of meaning and belonging. They communicate their feelings, discoveries, and desires through an increasingly complex system of cries, motions, gestures, sounds and words. Acutely attuned to the touch and voices of parents and caregivers, infants listen and respond to adults who talk directly to them. (p. 1)

These researchers at High Scope Educational Foundation found that language develops more quickly when adults include infants and toddlers in conversation. Also they noted an increase in cognitive development. “A longitudinal follow up study found that verbal behavior of both mothers and infants was a good predictor of children’s performance five years later on standardized aptitude and achievement tests” (Epstein & Weikart, 1979, as cited in Epstein, et al., p. 4).

Clay (1991) explained that, during early childhood, a child’s speech is a direct correlation of how much is said to him or her, how often he or she was spoken to, and what was discussed. Talking with an adult is the best way to increase a child’s language development.

According to the staff of the NRC (2001), “Tronick (1989) clearly indicates the centrality of the role of emotional communication from the earliest moments in a child’s development” (p. 48). When a caregiver uses effective communication with an infant, it

contributes to the child's eventual well being. Green and Green (2003) suggested the use of questions that encourage the child: (a) to think, (b) to predict the ending of a story, or (c) ask what the characters might do. There are several ways to involve the child and help the child to comprehend what is being read and to grow as a reader. Making connections can be used in many different ways from book to book or from books to the child's world. Making connections from book to book will help with comprehension. Characters, settings and plots may be similar from book to book and, as one points these out to the child, he or she will begin to make connections. When a book is connected to the child's world, he or she can relate personally to the story, and learning about the world is promoted.

Trelease (1995) explained that one must invite children to think deeply and make comparisons; however, younger children are less likely to make connections because they have fewer experiences. The goal is to select a book that is developmentally appropriate. "For example, with three-year-olds you could read two bedtime stories, both using similar patterns: *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown and *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann, and then discuss the similarities and differences" (p. 80).

#### Choosing Developmentally Appropriate Books

The members of the Children's Book Council (2006) recognized that the choice of a child's book is special and rewarding. It is never too early to introduce children to books, and there are several specifics about how to choose age appropriate books. Babies and toddlers: (a) like brightly colored pictures, (b) like simple objects, (c) like simple text and rhythm, and (d) enjoy books that have texture such as board books or cloth books.

Fox (2001) explained that owning a few wonderfully written books is preferable to owning numerous books in which the child has no interest. Any books that a child loves are good books to have. When deciding whether to buy a book, Fox suggested reading it aloud and ask, does it flow, and is it interesting. If the book is good, the parent or caregiver will not be able to leave without it.

Bialostok (1992) provided guidelines about the choice of a book; when reading to a young reader, who is still learning what print is, it is important to choose books with large print as well as books that have repetition, rhythm, and predictable patterns in language. This helps the child to memorize the book and retain the vocabulary. One should look for books that have interesting content. Even easy books can have content upon which the reader and listener can reflect. Children can recognize quality illustrations before they understand print. Quality illustrations introduce the child to art and help to make a successful picture book. Also, one should make sure that the child is interested in the book. It is essential to recognize the age of the reader or listener, but it is acceptable to read stories that are above or below the age of the child. It is most important that the book is appealing to both the reader and the listener.

The members of Reading Is Fundamental (2006) compiled a list of how to choose developmentally appropriate books for babies and toddlers. Babies enjoy being read anything, they just like to hear a loving voice, but especially, they enjoy nursery rhymes and stories that rhyme. Babies should be given light weight vinyl or washable books that that they can grab and pick up. Also, they enjoy books that have bright pictures of animals and familiar objects. Toddlers need books that address feelings and teach them how to deal with emotions. Books with predictable words let toddlers join in on the

reading experience, and they should be short and easy so they do not lose interest. A toddler's vocabulary can be increased by reading books that are just above his or her comprehension level. This will introduce the child to new words and ideas. As toddlers become more independent and enjoy doing things themselves, caregivers should read books to encourage this behavior.

Reading with more than one child can be difficult, and the members of PBS Parents (2006) understand that the choice of books that interest both children can be a challenge. The members proposed the choice of books that appeal to the older child and can stretch the younger child's thinking. These books should have: (a) strong characters, (b) action, (c) interesting dialogue, and (d) a clear story line. One should read a variety of books so that both children stay interested while their knowledge of the world is broadened.

The members of the Children's Book Council (2006) noted that many books will indicate the level or age that the book is suggested for on the cover or book jacket. Also, librarians, bookstore employees, and teachers are good resources to help find good books. Many authors have published books to aid parents to choose developmentally appropriate books; a few of them are *Children's Fiction Sourcebook* by Hobson (1995) and *Choosing Books for Children: A Commonsense Guide* by Hearne (1990, both cited in Children's Book Council).

A fine book is not necessarily the most lavish or most expensive book on the shelf. It is a book that is written and designed well. Take more than a few minutes to look at the books, and to read them, or a passage from them. A book is an unlimited investment in the human mind and spirit. Its selection deserves thoughtful attention. (p. 3)

## Books for Ages Birth to 4

Butler and Clay (1995) compiled an extensive list of read aloud books for children based on their age and developmental abilities. Babies from birth to 18 months should be exposed to “naming books” (p. 41); these are simple stories with one or two word sentences that coincide with the picture. Some of these books are;

1. *Ten, Nine, Eight* by Molly Bang (Greenwillow)
2. *Story to Tell*, by Dick Bruna (Price Stern)
3. *Goodnight Moon*, by Margaret Wise Brown (Harper & Row). (p. 41)

Also the authors explained that nursery rhymes and “jingles” (p. 42) should be presented during this development age. The books suggested are;

1. *Tomie de Paola’s Mother Goose* (Putnam)
2. *Mother Goose*, by Brian Wildsmith (Merrimack Publishers Circle)
3. *The Random House Book of Mother Goose*, by Arnold Lobel ( Random House)
4. *Finger Ryhmes*, collected and lustrated by Marc Brown (Dutton)
5. *Fathers Fox’s Penny Ryhmes*, by Clyde Watson (Scholastic Book Service). (p 42)

Butler and Clay (1995) stated that the next developmental stage is 18 months to 2.5 years. During this time, the focus should be on reading a child’s favorite nursery rhymes, and now caregivers should begin to read easy stories such as;

1. *Rosie’s Walk*, by Pat Hutchins (Macmillan)
2. *But Where Is the Green Parrot?* by Thomas and Wanda Zacharies (Delacorte)
3. *Who Took the Farmer’s Hat?* by Joan Noret and Fritz Siebel (Scholastic Book Service)
4. *The Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking). (p. 42)

For ages 2.5 to 4, Butler and Clay (1995) explained that this is an age when books can become increasingly harder, based on the individual child’s development.



One should start first with easy books that become harder progressively. The authors recommended the following books first.

1. *The Runaway Bunny*, by Margaret Wise Brown (Harper & Row)
2. *Harry the Dirty Dog*, by Gene Zion (Harper & Row)
3. *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*, by John Burningham (Holt, Rinehart & Winston)
4. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle (Philomel)
5. *Angus and the Ducks*, by Marjorie Flack (Doubleday)
6. *The Box with Red Wheels*, by Maud Petersham and Miska Petersham (MacMillan)
7. *Oh Lewis*, by Eve Rice (Penguin). (p. 42)

The authors noted that after reading these books, one could move on to harder stories, like;

1. *The Three Bears*, illus. by Paul Galdone (Scholastic Book Service)
2. *The Three Little Pigs*, illus. by Paul Galdone (Houghton Mifflin)
3. *The Gingerbread Boy*, illus. by Paul Galdone (Houghton Mifflin)
4. *Three Billy Goat's Gruff*, illus. by Paul Galdone (Houghton Mifflin)
5. *The Elves and Shoemaker*, by Paul Galdone (Houghton Mifflin)
6. *The Three Bears and 15 Other Stories*, by Anne Rockwell (Harper & Row). (p. 42)

The author suggested "Richard Scarry" and "big books about things" (p. 43) which present stories about the interaction of people and animals.

1. *Richard Scarry's Best Word Book Ever* (Western Publishing Co.)
2. *Richard's Scarry's Busy Busy World* (Western Publishing Co.)
3. *Fast-slow, High-Low*, by Peter Spier (Doubleday)
4. *Truck*, by Donald Crews (Greenwillow). (p. 43)

Bialostok (1992) compiled a list of books that are related to specific areas.

For a child, who is around 3 years old and cannot sit still, the author suggested movable books such as, "Eric Hill's the Spot books (*Where's Spot?*, *Spot's First Walk* and others)" (p. 145). Other moveable books are David Carter's *How Many Bugs in a Box?* and its sequel, *More Bugs In a Box*. Also, the author suggested reading books that have flaps or have texture such as: "The Very Hungry Caterpillar; The Grouchy Lady Bug;

The Very Busy Spider; Papa Please Get the Moon for Me; The very Quiet Cricket” (p. 145). Bialostick suggested the next set of books as read aloud for bedtime stories; “The universal bedtime story is *Goodnight, Moon*” (p. 145) “*Ten, Nine, Eight* is a counting book, just perfect for the parent who wants a warm story to read that will last no longer than a minute. *Go to Sleep, Nicholas Joe* tells about a boy who flies through the night putting children and adults to bed” (p. 146). In addition the author mentioned, “*Wynken, Blyken, and Nod*” (p. 146) which is a bedtime poem by Eugene Field and “*Winnifred’s New Bed*” (p 146). The author suggested wordless books like “*Deep in the Forest; The Bear and the Fly; Changes, Changes, Changes and The Snowman*” (pp. 146-147). Trelease (2001) noted that wordless books can be good for beginning readers and illiterate or semi-illiterate adults. Classic books that Bialostick included for read alouds are: “*Where the Wild Things Are, Charlotte’s Web, The Wizard of OZ, Alice in Wonderland, and Through the Looking Glass*” (p. 149). Another area is poetry, and the author suggested: “*New Kids on the Block, Something Big has Been Here, and Honey, I Love,*” (p. 149).

Since there are an infinite number of story books, it was suggested by Bialostick (1992) to contact these resources for a complete listing of children’s books: “*The New York Times Parent’s Guide to the Best Books for Children, Jim Trelease’s Read Aloud Handbook, The Horn Book Magazine, The Horn Book Guide to Children’s and Young Adult Books, and For the Love of Reading*” (p. 153). Bialostick explained that these lists can be quite lengthy and may be hard to for parents to decipher on their own. The author suggests using resources like teachers and librarians to make suggestions from the lists.

## The Reading Stages

Bialostick (1995) reported that there are nine stages in the reading process that are present in successful readers. However, “These stages are not necessarily sequential and independent of each other” (p. 48). Often they overlap, mix, work in reverse, or occur at the same time.

1. Child must associate book reading with love. A parent or caregiver, who allows a child to spend time “lap reading” (p. 48) provides a loving experience. Reading aloud to a child at bedtime and supplying the child with books lets him or her know she is loved.
2. Children will begin to understand that books have meaning. Stories that rhyme and have characters the child identifies with will enable the child to respond to the meaning of the book. Children will begin to respond to their fears, hopes, and fantasies as a result of the meaning of the story.
3. During the first two stages, children will begin to learn how to manipulate a book. In the third stage, children will learn: (a) how a book works, (b) how to hold a book properly, (c) how to turn pages, and (d) the difference between the front and back covers.
4. Next, children will start to understand that print has meaning. Children begin to distinguish between letters and asking what words say such as; signs on the street or print on their toys.
5. In the fifth stage, children will begin to memorize books and will want to hear the same story read to them over and over.

6. After hearing and memorizing books, children will begin to rehearse books. Children will look at the pictures and begin to tell a story based on what they remember or infer until, eventually the child rehearses the story word for word.
7. After rehearsing the book so many times, children begin to pay more attention to the print. At this stage, children naturally begin to recognize words on their own.
8. Children will begin to develop fluency by study of the pictures and then read the text. Children will begin to pay attention to the print more than ever.
9. Children will begin to read independently by use of prediction and sight word identification.

Bialostick encouraged parents and caregivers to remember that children develop differently. Bialostick stated: “The single most important factor influencing children’s literacy is the amount of time they are read to” (p. 48).

#### Chapter Summary

This author used literature to support why a literacy intervention is beneficial in early childhood. The literature presents a foundation for a booklet to promote the importance of pediatricians’ support to educate parents on how to promote literacy in early childhood. The information provided gives the reader a sense of the importance of reading aloud from birth to age 4. The author provided the reader multiple strategies and sources for a successful literacy intervention. In Chapter 3, the author will detail information that will be employed in this project.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD

The purpose of this project was to develop a booklet for pediatricians to use to promote the importance of early childhood literacy to parents of children ages birth to 4. This author focused on reading aloud and strategies that support literacy in early childhood. “Literacy development, and the role of the pediatrician in the promotion of early literacy skills, should form part of the pediatric residency curriculum everywhere, so that all new pediatricians understand this as part of their job, and go into practice well equipped and well supported to help their patients grow up and reach school ready to learn to read” (Perri, 2002, p. 8).

#### Target Audience

Specifically, this project was designed for pediatricians’ use with parents and caregivers of children age birth to 4 years. A pamphlet was developed to provide parents with information on early literacy and the importance of reading aloud in early childhood. The pamphlet was provided to parents of children ages birth to 4 by their pediatrician during well child visits.

#### Goals and Procedures

The goal of this project was to provide pediatricians with information to educate parents and caregivers on the importance of early childhood literacy. The author provided support and strategies for parents and caregivers on the importance of early childhood literacy from birth to age 4. The specific strategies included are: (a) literacy

development in early childhood, (b) emergent literacy, (c) creating a literate environment, (d) techniques for reading, (e) reading aloud, (f) talking with one's child, (g) the choice of developmentally appropriate books, and (h) the reading stages.

#### Peer Assessment

To understand the effectiveness of this project, the author met with professionals in early childhood education for informal feedback, suggestions, and ideas for further research. The focus was on the design of the booklet, and the author's ability to support early literacy with the information provided.

#### Chapter Summary

Explained in this chapter are details about the development of this research project. The author used the background information provided in the extensive review of literature to support the development of a booklet for a pediatric literacy intervention. In Chapter 4, the booklet was based on user friendly strategies for early childhood literacy specifically related to reading aloud to support parents and caregivers in the home. Professionals' feedback was provided in Chapter 5 on the effectiveness of this project.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this project was to create a booklet for caregivers on the importance of the development of literacy in children ages birth to 4 years old. Literacy is the ability to read, write, communicate, and comprehend. The booklet includes research and specific strategies about reading to children. It identifies the stages of literacy development, provides a list of developmentally appropriate books to read aloud and offers suggestions for choosing and buying books. Caregivers who read to their children from birth, help build a strong literacy foundation which will support them in becoming readers. The booklet was designed to provide pediatricians with a literacy intervention tool to give to caregivers of children in early childhood during well child visits.



# One Step Closer to Early Childhood Literacy

*Christina Graziano M.Ed.*



# Table of Contents



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# Introduction



- This booklet is designed to help caregivers promote literacy in young children, ages birth to four. Literacy is the ability to read, write, communicate, and comprehend. This booklet draws on scientifically based research about how children develop literacy in early childhood. Included are strategies and research supported by the International Reading Association (IRA), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the National Research Council (NRC).
- As a caregiver you can start encouraging literacy behaviors today. Research shows that when children have support at home they are more likely to learn. When children learn to read they have been given a gift that they can use for the rest of their lives.
- The techniques and strategies found in this booklet are designed to help children long before they reach the classroom. The foundation for learning comes from talking, listening and reading to your child every day and showing them that you value reading and learning. These activities are simple and can be incorporated throughout the child's daily routine. The activities are sure to bring a smile to your child's face, curiosity to his or her mind, and love into his or her heart.

# Literacy Development



*We all have the duty to call attention to the science and seriousness of early childhood cognitive development-because the ages between birth and age five are the foundation upon which successful lives are built.*

*~Laura Bush~*

## The Facts Supporting Literacy Development



- About 50 percent of a person's mental capacity is developed between conception and age four.
- There is increasing evidence that young children are capable learners.
- Educational experiences during early childhood can have a positive impact on later school learning.
- A language rich environment positively impacts a child's early development.
- Emotionally secure relationships are beneficial to a child's school success.
- Reading specialists at Harvard University, declared that the earlier a child begins to read the better (1977).

## What Caregivers Can Do

- Establish a positive connection during the child's earliest years. This will lead to the child's well being later in life.
- Provide a safe and nurturing environment where learning can take place.
- Talk extensively with your child; this will let him or her become familiar with your voice, hear language, and learn vocabulary.
- Engage in activities such as reading aloud and shared book reading. Children will learn to love books and begin to read on their own.

**“Setting a child aside until elementary school age and then saying that now education begins is like taking a withered or withering sprout and suddenly giving it large amounts of fertilizer, putting it in the sunlight and flooding it with water. It is too late for the withered to sprout.”**

**~Suzuki~**

## Emergent Literacy Skills



*If we could get our parents to read to their preschool children fifteen minutes a day, we could revolutionize the schools.*

*~Dr. Ruth Love Superintendent,  
Chicago Public Schools 1981 ~*

## What is Emergent Literacy?

- Emergent literacy theorists believe that learning begins at birth. Before children enter a formal school setting they acquire the literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening through their everyday experiences.
- When people talk and interact with them
  - Children acquire new knowledge
  - Children develop listening comprehension skills
  - Children learn new vocabulary
  - Children learn grammatical structures
- When people read to children
  - Children develop a love of books and reading
  - Children learn how books work (e.g. how pages turn, how to read from the top to bottom of a page, etc.)
- When people write with/to children
  - Children develop an understanding of the purposes writing
  - Children develop letter knowledge



## On the Road to Emergent Literacy

- Take time to tell children stories, read books and let them see you reading. It may seem too easy to be true, but these simple acts can start your child on the road to literary success long before they can read and write on their own.
- Caregivers who provide daily literacy experiences will begin to notice the following emergent literacy behaviors in their child: familiarity with books and their purpose, understanding of how to hold a book and turn the pages, and recognition of words and pictures. These skills will lead to the development of early writing, scribbling, creating letters, and copying text.
- It is important to understand that a child's emergent literacy development is linked to later reading achievement.

*\*The following section will list additional accomplishments of literacy acquisition.*





# Literacy Acquisition



*Literacy is not a luxury, it is a right and a responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens.*

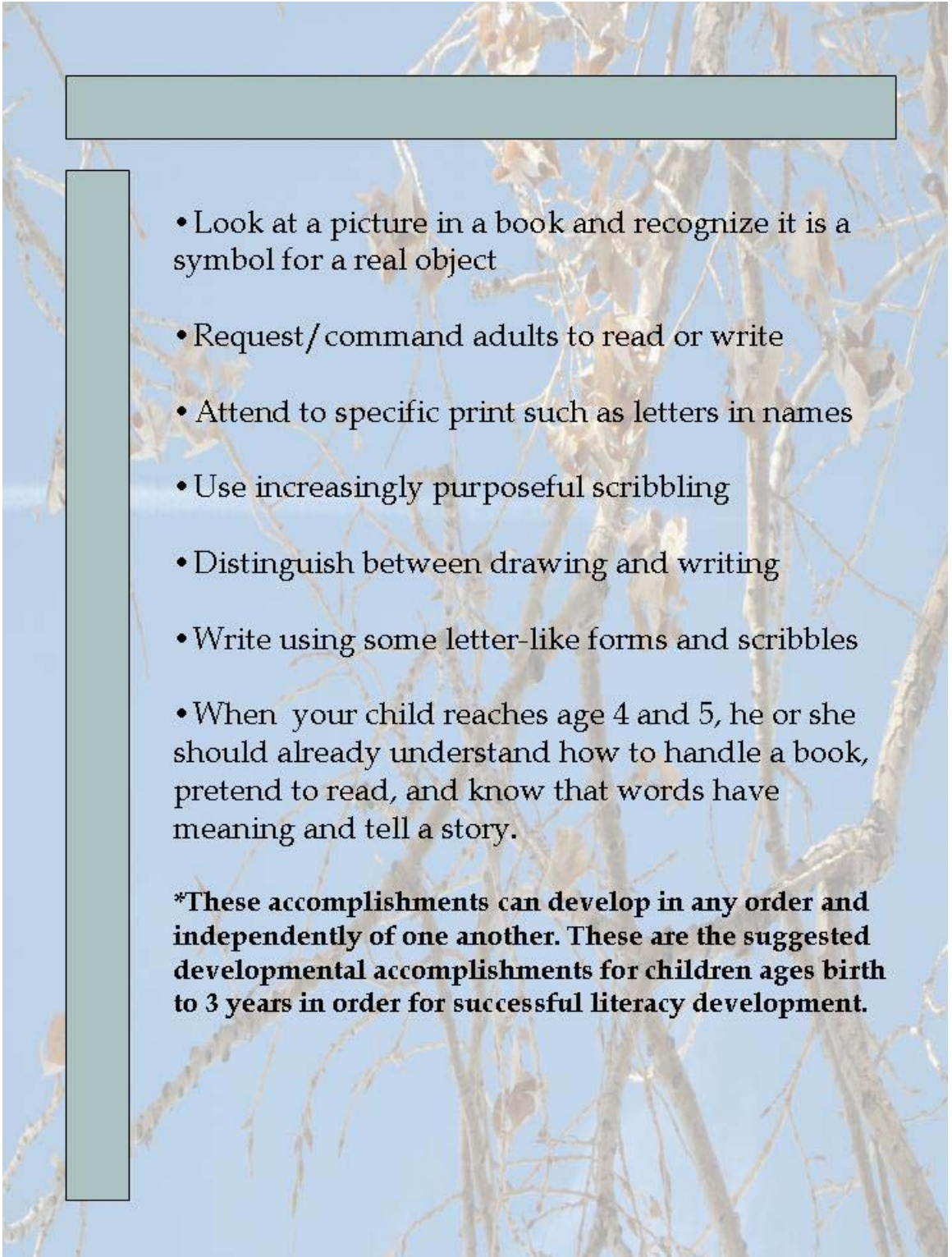
*~President Clinton~*

## A Child's Literacy Development from birth to age 4

Children who are surrounded by laughing talking, singing, reading and writing in a nurturing environment should display the following behaviors:

- Imitate and experiment with sounds
- Enjoy rhyming language, (nursery rhymes, songs, peek-a-boo)
- Listen to stories
- Recognize specific books by cover
- Pretend to read books
- Demonstrate appropriate book handling behaviors
- Label objects in books
- Comment on characters or situations in books





• Look at a picture in a book and recognize it is a symbol for a real object

• Request/command adults to read or write

• Attend to specific print such as letters in names

• Use increasingly purposeful scribbling

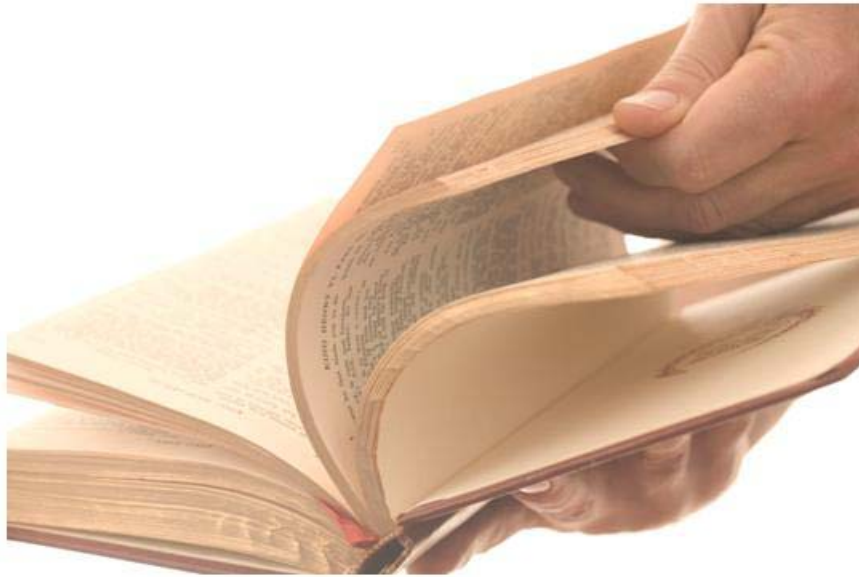
• Distinguish between drawing and writing

• Write using some letter-like forms and scribbles

• When your child reaches age 4 and 5, he or she should already understand how to handle a book, pretend to read, and know that words have meaning and tell a story.

**\*These accomplishments can develop in any order and independently of one another. These are the suggested developmental accomplishments for children ages birth to 3 years in order for successful literacy development.**

# Creating a Literate Environment



*A house without books is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up children without surrounding them with books.... Children learn to read being in the presence of books.*

*~ Horace Mann~*

## **Suggested Ideas for Creating a Literate Environment**

A literate environment will instill good reading habits and develop successful readers:

- Keep books readily available: next to a child's bed, near your favorite chair, and in the car.
- Have a variety of printed materials in your home, such as magazines, books, newspapers, and posters.
- Start a home library for your child. You can start collecting books from garage sales, flea markets, used bookstores, and the library.



•Take trips to the library. Libraries offer more than books; there are tapes, and CD's of books, movies, and computers that you can use. There are also books available in different languages.

•Try to read to your child 15 to 30 minutes daily.

•Set up a regular time for reading to a child, for instance before bed or before dinnertime. Reading at bedtime can calm children down and get them ready for bed.



*\*These habits will promote literacy development and establish a literate environment in the home.*

# Reading Aloud



*Children are made readers on the laps of  
their parents.*

*~Emilie Buchwald~*

## What the Research Reports about Reading Aloud



- Reading aloud can start at birth and should continue throughout early childhood.
- Reading aloud is the most effective way to raise a reader.
- Reading aloud is an emotional experience between an adult and a child in which ideas, beliefs and emotions are exchanged.
- Reading aloud to a child for 15 minutes daily provides individual attention, and time to bond with a caregiver which will ensure the child knows he or she is loved.
- Reading aloud stimulates a child's interest, emotional development, imagination, and language.
- Reading aloud and talking about what is being read increases brain activity that helps children to concentrate and express themselves.
- Reading aloud is both inexpensive and enjoyable.



*“Experts tell us that children need to hear a thousand stories read aloud before they begin to learn to read for themselves.”*

*~ Mem Fox~*

- This goal can be achieved in 1 year by reading three books a day.
- These books should be one new, one familiar, and one favorite.
- Reading at least three books a day to a child could be the start to eliminating illiteracy (Fox).



# Read Aloud Strategies



*Few children learn to love books by themselves.  
Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world  
of the written word; someone has to  
show them the way.*

*~Orville Prescott, A Father Reads to His Children~*

## Reading to Your Child

### • Read Aloud Birth-2

-read for short periods of time several times a day

-use small chunky books

-talk about the pictures

-sing the words to get the baby's attention

-play games like peek-a-boo with the story book

-use texture books and help the baby feel them

-point out objects in the picture and name them as you point to them.



*\*Build on what you used with your infant and toddler by adding new and challenging strategies.*

**• Read aloud strategies for you to use with your growing child (age 2-4)**

-read all types of print, including ordinary things like cereal boxes, magazines, signs, and newspapers

-read aloud every day for 15 to 30 minutes or as often as possible

-read books that both you and your child enjoy

-show the pictures to the child

-point to the words

-talk with your child about what you are reading

-start with picture books and build up to more challenging books



## Does and Don'ts of Reading Aloud



- Make reading time relaxed, comfortable, and fun, so children learn to love reading
- Read with expression
- Use eye contact
- Talk in the voices of the characters
- Discuss any new words a child might not understand
- Skip long descriptive passages until the child is developmentally ready to listen to them
- Turn the television off and spend more time reading
- Let the child express his or her own understanding of the story even if it is different from your own

## •Don't

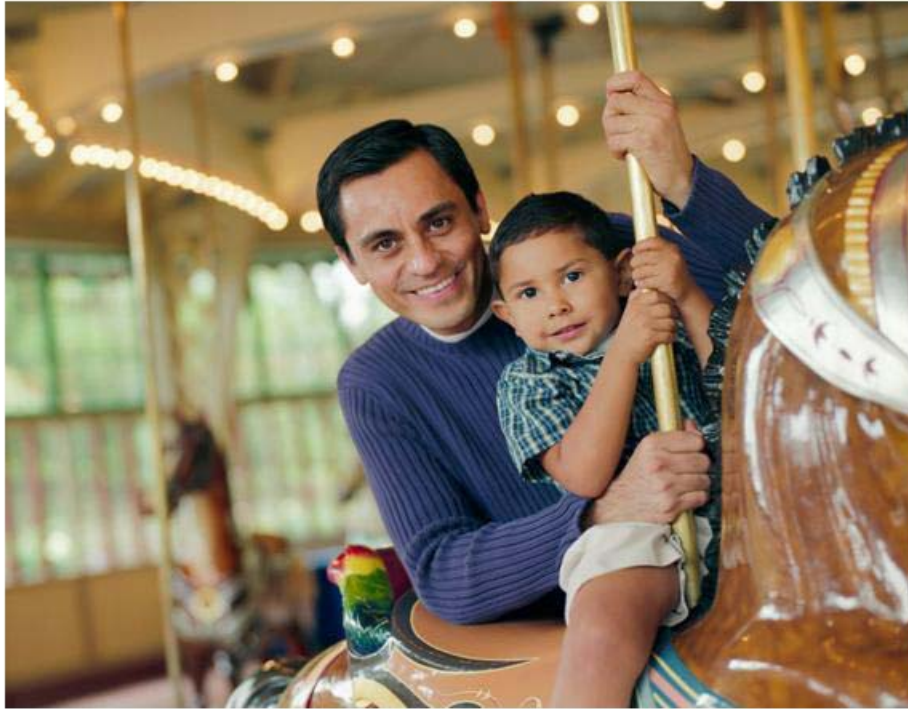
- Start reading if there is not enough time to enjoy the story
- Get angry or frustrated if the child interrupts to ask questions or make comments
- Worry about formally teaching your child to read before he or she goes to school
- Continue reading a book if it is a poor choice



*"Without a doubt, reading with children spells success for early literacy. Putting a few simple strategies into action will make a significant difference in helping children develop into good readers and writers."*

*~Bush's No Child Left Behind Act~*

## Talking With Your Child



*Use the big thinker's vocabulary. Use big, bright, cheerful words. Use words that promise victory, hope, happiness, pleasure. Avoid words that create unpleasant images of failure, defeat, grief.*

*~ David. J. Schwartz, American professor, expert on motivation, from The Magic of Thinking Big*

## What Research Says

- To become skilled and confident readers young children need many opportunities to build spoken language by talking and listening.
- Spoken language is the basis of effective literacy development.
  - 
  - When a caregiver communicates with an infant, it contributes to the child's eventual well-being.
- Infants listen and respond to adults who talk directly to them.
- Language develops more quickly when adults include infants and toddlers in their conversations.





## **Listening and Talking with Your Child**

- Talk, sing, and play games like peek-a-boo with your baby to help him or her make connections with sound and the activity.
- Talk about everything with your child while eating, bathing, and playing, etc.
- Imitate your baby's sounds; this will let him or her know that the sounds have meaning.



- Talk to your child about the world around him or her by pointing to objects and naming them. This will help build your child's vocabulary.
- When your child begins to speak on his or her own, respond back and engage in conversations with simple short words. Repeat yourself when necessary.
- Take your child to new interesting places like the zoo or the library, and talk about what is happening.



# Choosing Developmentally Appropriate Books



*In the case of good books, the point is not how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through to you.*

*~Mortimer Adler (1902-2001)  
U.S. Philosopher~*

## Which Books Should You Choose?

It is never too early to introduce children to books, and there are several specifics about how to choose age appropriate books.

- Babies enjoy being read anything, they just like to hear a loving voice.
- Babies should be given lightweight vinyl or washable books that that they can grab and pick up.
- Babies and toddlers like books that have:
  - brightly colored pictures
  - pictures of animals and simple objects
  - simple text
  - rhythm and rhyme
  - texture (board books or cloth books)



- Toddlers need books that address feelings and teach them how to deal with emotions.
- Books with repetitive language let toddlers join in on the reading experience. They should be short and easy so children do not lose interest.
- A toddler's vocabulary can be increased by reading books that are just above his or her comprehension level. This will introduce the child to new words and ideas.
- As toddlers become more independent caregivers should read books to encourage independent behaviors.



- You should look for books that have interesting content. Even easy books can have content which you and child can reflect on.
- Children can recognize quality illustrations before they understand print. Quality illustrations introduce the child to art and help to make a successful picture book.
- You should keep in mind the age of your child when choosing books but it is acceptable to read stories that are above or below the child's age.
- It is most important that the book is appealing to both the reader and the listener.



## Reading With More Than One Child

- Reading with more than one child can be difficult. Finding books that interest two or more children can be a challenge.

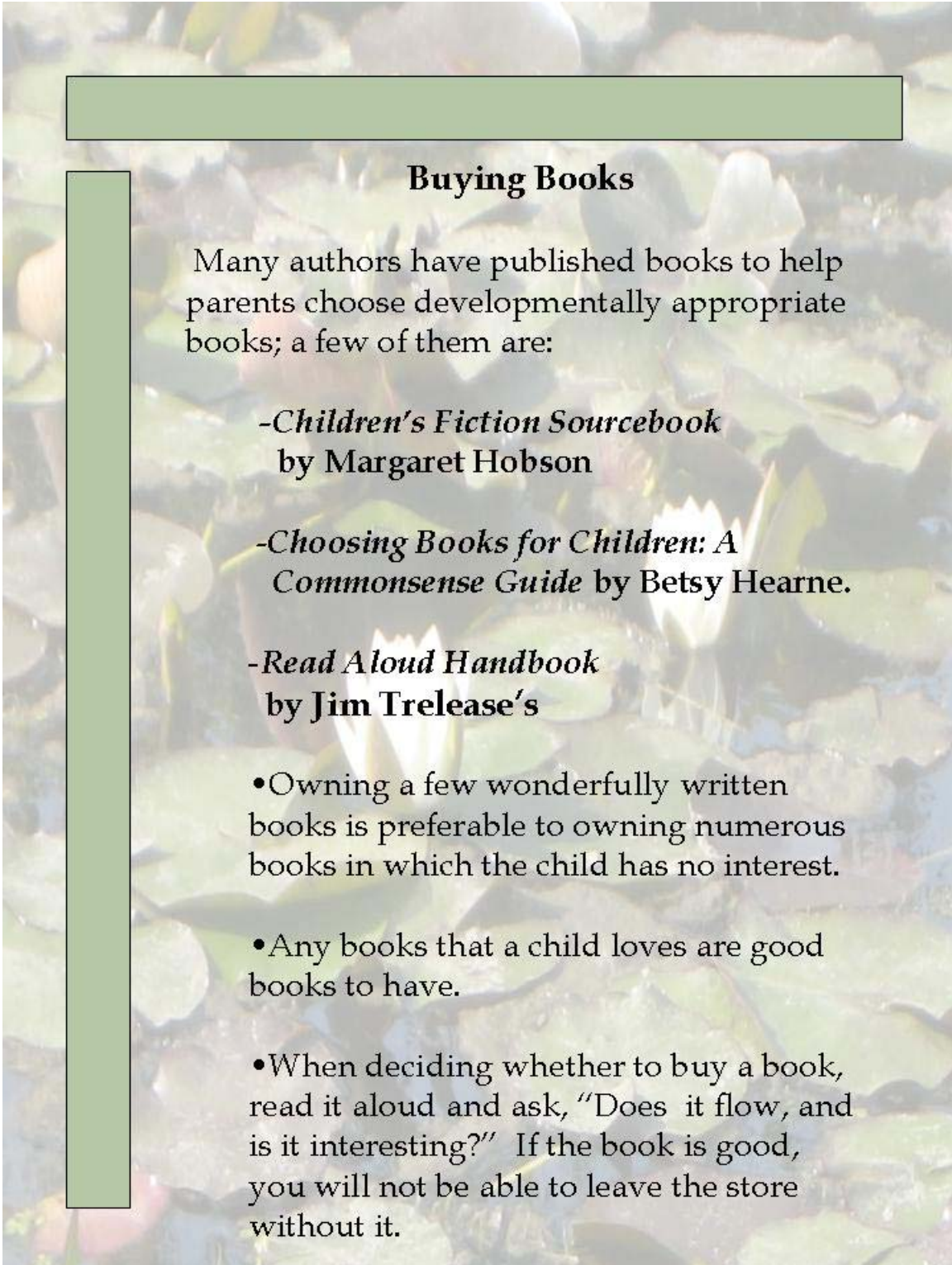
- Books that appeal to the older child, can stretch the younger child's thinking. These books should have:

- strong characters
- action
- interesting dialogue
- a clear story line



- Read a variety of books so that both children stay interested while their knowledge of the world is expanded.

- Many books will indicate the level or age that the book is suggested for on the cover or book jacket. Also, librarians, bookstore employees, and teachers are good resources to help you find books.



## Buying Books

Many authors have published books to help parents choose developmentally appropriate books; a few of them are:

*-Children's Fiction Sourcebook*  
by Margaret Hobson

*-Choosing Books for Children: A Commonsense Guide* by Betsy Hearne.

*-Read Aloud Handbook*  
by Jim Trelease's

- Owning a few wonderfully written books is preferable to owning numerous books in which the child has no interest.
- Any books that a child loves are good books to have.
- When deciding whether to buy a book, read it aloud and ask, "Does it flow, and is it interesting?" If the book is good, you will not be able to leave the store without it.





*“A fine book is not necessarily the most lavish or most expensive book on the shelf. It is a book that is written and designed well. Take more than a few minutes to look at the books, and to read them, or a passage from them. A book is an unlimited investment in the human mind and spirit. Its selection deserves thoughtful attention.”*

*~ The Children’s Book Council, 2006~*

## Books for Ages Birth to 4



*A book is the most effective weapon against intolerance and ignorance.*

*~Lyndon Baines Johnson~*

## Books for Ages Birth to 18 Months

- Babies from birth to 18 months should be exposed to *naming books*; these are simple stories with one or two word sentences that coincide with the picture.  
Some of these books are:

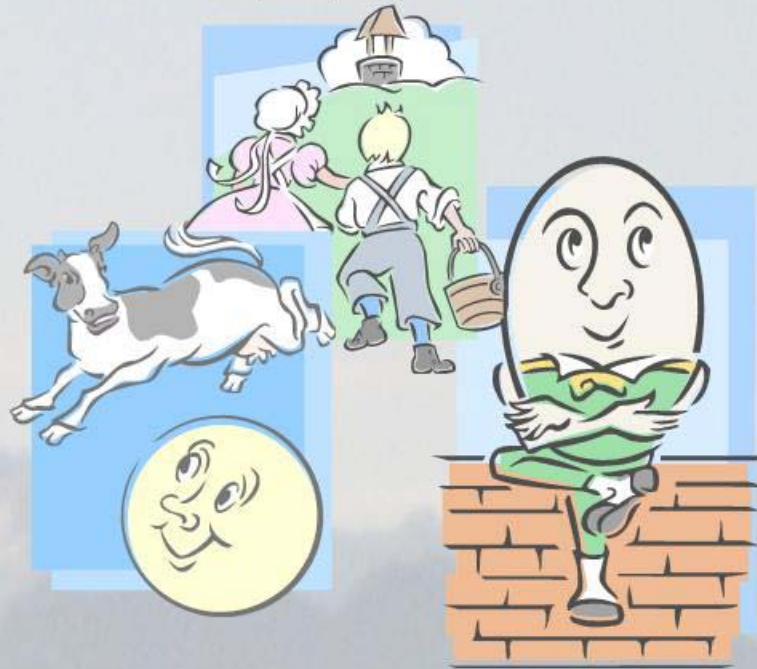
- Ten, Nine, Eight* by Molly Bang
- Story to Tell* by Dick Bruna
- Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise

- Nursery rhymes and jingles should be presented during this development age.  
Suggested books are:

- Tomie de Paola's Mother Goose*
- Mother Goose*, by Brian Wildsmith
- The Random House Book of Mother Goose*, by Arnold Lobel
- Finger Rhymes*, collected and illustrated by Marc Brown
- Father Fox's Penny Rhymes*, by Clyde Watson

## Books for Ages 18 months to 2.5 years

- During this time, the focus should be on reading a child's favorite nursery rhymes, and now you can begin to read easy stories such as:
  - Rosie's Walk*, by Pat Hutchins
  - But Where Is the Green Parrot?*  
by Thomas and Wanda Zacharies
  - Who Took the Farmer's Hat?*  
by Joan Noret and Fritz Siebel
  - The Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats



## Books for Ages 2.5 to 4

This is an age when books can become increasingly harder, based on the individual child's development. You should start first with easy books then progress to harder ones.

Some books to begin with are:

- The Runaway Bunny*,  
by Margaret Wise Brown
- Harry the Dirty Dog*, by Gene Zion
- Mr. Gumpy's Outing*, by John Burningham
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar*,  
by Eric Carle
- Angus and the Ducks*,  
by Marjorie Flack
- The Box with Red Wheels*,  
by Maud Petersham and  
Miska Petersham
- Oh Lewis*, by Eve Rice



Then you can move on to harder stories, such as:

- The Three Bears*, illus. by Paul Galdone
- The Three Little Pigs*, illus. by Paul Galdone
- The Gingerbread Boy*, illus. by Paul Galdone
- Three Billy Goat's Gruff*, illus. by Paul Galdone
- The Elves and Shoemaker*, by Paul Galdone
- The Three Bears and 15 Other Stories*, by Anne Rockwell

•“Richard Scarry” books and other big books about “things” present stories with people and animals involved in a variety of activities.

- Richard Scarry's Best Word Book Ever*
- Richard's Scarry's Busy Busy World*
- Fast-slow, High-Low*, by Peter Spier
- Truck*, by Donald Crews

## Specific Areas

- Movable books may be helpful for a child, around 3 years old who cannot sit still. Some suggested books are:

- Eric Hill's the Spot books (*Where's Spot?*, *Spot's First Walk* and others)
- David Carter's *How Many Bugs in a Box?* and its sequel, *More Bugs In a Box*.

- Books that have flaps or have texture might help keep a squirmy child interested such as these books by Eric Carle:

- The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
- The Grouchy Lady Bug*
- The Very Busy Spider*
- Papa Please Get the Moon for Me*
- The Very Quiet Cricket*.



## Bedtime Stories

- *Goodnight, Moon* is a great bedtime story for all children.
- *Ten, Nine, Eight* is a counting book, just perfect for the parent who wants a warm story to read that will last no longer than a minute.
- *Go to Sleep, Nicholas Joe* tells about a boy who flies through the night putting children and adults to bed.
- Some additional books are, *Winnifred's New Bed*, and *Wynken, Blyken, and Nod* which are bedtime poems by Eugene Field.





## Wordless Books

Wordless books can help develop beginning reading skills such as holding the book, turning the pages and reading from left to right. Some suggested books are:

- *Deep in the Forest*
- *The Bear and the Fly*
- *Changes, Changes, Changes*
- *The Snowman.*

Wordless books also help develop your child's oral language skills when he or she tells the story using the pictures.

## Classic Books

The following classic books are good for reading aloud and are entertaining for you and your child:

- *Where the Wild Things Are*
- *Charlotte's Web*
- *The Wizard of OZ*
- *Alice in Wonderland*
- *Through the Looking Glass.*

## Resources

• Since there are an infinite number of story books, you can contact these resources for a complete listing of children's books:

- *The New York Times Parent's Guide to the Best Books for Children*
- Jim Trelease's *Read Aloud Handbook*,
- *The Horn Book Magazine*
- *The Horn Book Guide to Children's and Young Adult Books*, and *For the Love of Reading*.

*\* These lists can be quite lengthy and it may be difficult to choose between all of the books. Teachers and librarians can help make suggestions from the lists.*



# The Reading Stages



*The more you read, the more things you  
will know. The more that you learn, the  
more places you'll go.*

*~Dr. Seuss~*

## Becoming A Reader

- Bialostick (1995) reported Children who are read to regularly will go through a variety of stages that will eventually lead to independent reading. However, these stages are not necessarily in order and independent of each other. Often they overlap, mix, work in reverse, or occur at the same time.


- **Stage One**

A child must associate book reading with love. A parent or caregiver, who spends time reading with his or her child provides a loving experience. Reading aloud to the child and supplying the child with books allows the child to associate books with love.

- **Stage Two**

Children will begin to understand that books have meaning. They will respond to the rhythm, plot, and characters in the stories.





• **Stage Three**

In the third stage, children will learn:

- how a book works
- how to hold a book properly
- how to turn pages
- the difference between the front and back covers.

• **Stage Four**

Children will start to understand that print has meaning. They will begin to recognize letters and notice words in their environment such as signs on the street or print on their toys.

• **Stage Five**

In the fifth stage, children will begin to memorize books and will want to hear the same story read to them over and over.

• **Stage Six**

Children will begin to rehearse books. They will look at the pictures and begin to tell a story based on what they remember or infer. Eventually the child will repeat the story word for word.

• **Stage Seven**

Children begin to pay more attention to the print. At this stage, they will naturally begin to recognize words on their own. They will begin to pay close attention to the print.

• **Stage Eight**

Children will begin to read independently by predicting and using familiar words.

• **Stage Nine**

Children will begin to develop fluency by studying the pictures and then reading the text.



*"The single most important factor influencing children's literacy is the amount of time they are read to."*

*~Bialostok~*

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## Chapter Summary

This booklet was designed for pediatricians to support caregivers of children ages birth to 4 years old in the development of literacy. The research and strategies included in the booklet encourage caregivers to establish good literacy habits. This booklet includes user friendly strategies and resources specifically related to reading aloud and the development of oral language to support parents and caregivers in the home.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this project was to develop a pamphlet to support caregivers of children age birth to 4 years old in the development of literacy skills. The author designed the pamphlet specifically to aid pediatricians in the promotion of literacy. Pediatricians can distribute the pamphlet to caregivers of early childhood children during well child visits. This author included extensive facts in the pamphlet including research published by the (a) National Research Council, (b) The U.S. Department of Education, and (c) the International Reading Association, to promote the importance of early childhood literacy.

The Pamphlet was presented to five experts: (a) two elementary school teachers, (b) an elementary school principal, (c) a parent of two early childhood children and (d) a pediatric nurse. The experts provided the author with informal feedback about the pamphlet. The feedback informed the author of the limitations and is the foundation for the review.

#### Objectives Achieved

There are many caregivers of children age birth to 4 who are not aware of the importance of literacy in early childhood. The pamphlet is designed to present caregivers with facts about early childhood literacy and strategies that support the development of literacy in young children. Also included in the pamphlet are resources which caregivers can use with their children age birth to 4. The author researched the primary source of

contact with these caregivers and found that they could most easily be reached during visits to their pediatrician. The project outlines the importance of having the pediatrician present the pamphlet to caregivers during well child visits. This is an opportune time for the pediatrician to offer a successful literacy intervention.

All of the experts came to a consensus that the pamphlet should be given to caregivers when their child is born or as early as possible. It was stated that the pamphlet is easy to read and suggests literature and activities that all caregivers and children can partake in. One expert commented, “Wonderful quotes relevant, inspirational, easy to read with tons of useful information, and should be given to all parents at the birth of their child.”

The goal of the author is to provide pediatricians with the pamphlet so they can begin the literacy intervention at well child visits. The author will research grant writing and use the money to publish the pamphlet for non profit medical institutions. The author’s second goal is to educate pediatricians on the importance of the intervention and the role they have in developing healthy children both physically and mentally.

#### Limitations of the Project

One limitation of this project is that the author did not include much research on early childhood writing because of the length of the project. Another limitation of the project was that the pamphlet was only produced in the English Language and it would be useful to reproduce it in multiple languages. The main challenge the author had with the project was using reader friendly vocabulary when restating the facts and research. This was necessary so that caregivers of all persuasions could comprehend the importance of early childhood literacy. Another challenge of the project will be finding

ways to market and fund the publishing of the pamphlet. The length and colors involved in the pamphlet could make it costly to reproduce.

### Suggestions for Future Research

Although there is an abundance of research supporting the caregiver's role in the development of literacy in early childhood, there are many areas for future study about the pediatrician's role in the promotion of early literacy. One could study the effects of the booklet developed by the author and the impact it will have on the literacy development of children. Related research topics could include the following: Would the distribution of one booklet make a significant difference or would follow up discussions or classes for caregivers be necessary? Would it be helpful if the caregiver was given a book to read aloud to his or her child at each well child visit for the first year of a child's life?

As previously stated, many pediatricians are not comfortable discussing literacy because they do not have expertise in this area. Research could evaluate pediatricians' knowledge of early literacy. Follow up studies could measure the effect of the author's booklet in increasing the pediatrician's understanding of early literacy and also his or her willingness to approach the subject with caregivers.

The pediatrician must care for the child physically, socially, emotionally and mentally. As noted, pediatricians are one of the only outside resources many parents have. It is vital that they take the opportunity to educate parents on the importance of early childhood literacy. Many pediatricians miss opportunities to discuss literacy when children come in for well child visits. Other areas for future research include: (1) Which literacy interventions are currently being used by pediatricians? (2) Which interventions

are the most effective? (3) Has there been an increase in the number of pediatricians using literacy interventions in the past five years? (4) How are current educational standards for pediatricians being implemented in order to keep them up to date in literacy?

### Project Summary

Presented in this project is a review of literature on literacy in early childhood and the role of the pediatrician and caregiver in the promotion of literacy in children age birth to 4. This information was reproduced in a pamphlet outlining these specific areas: (a) literacy development in early childhood, (b) emergent literacy, (c) creating a literate environment, (d) techniques for reading to young children, (e) reading aloud, (f) talking with one's child, (g) choosing developmentally appropriate books, and (h) the reading stages. The Pamphlet was reviewed by five experts who reported the limitations of the pamphlet and ideas for future research.



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