INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR FOSTERING EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Craig K. Van Pay & Lynne Carey

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

• Research
  • Early language environment
  • Early vocabulary development
  • Reading behaviors and routines
  • Word and achievement gaps

• What can libraries do?
  • LENA Start
  • Vroom
  • Starling
  • Others
Young children from at risk backgrounds have reduced exposure to language, accumulating to an estimated gap of 30 million words by age three (Hart & Risley, 1995).

But… it’s not necessarily just income (Rowe, 2008; Rowe, 2012; Suskind, et al., 2015)
Vocabulary mirrors input – differences are apparent as early as 18 months of age (Weisleder & Fernald, 2013; Hart & Risley, 2003)

CONVERSATION CHANGES THE BRAIN

(Romeo and colleagues, 2018)
~60% of American children 0-5 who live in middle and high income families are read to daily; >65% of them hear stories or sing with their parents every day.

compared to

~33% of children who live in low-income families are read to daily and <50% hear stories or sing with their parents every day.

ChildTrends.org Databank

BOOKS PER CHILD – MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD

13 to 1

Neuman & Dickinson, 2006
Children’s books are **better** for vocabulary than just speech (Montag, Jones, & Smith, 2015)!
BY AGE 4, THE AVERAGE LOW-INCOME CHILD FACES SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS AND IS 18 MONTHS BEHIND MORE AFFLUENT PEERS.

Children served by EHS, EI, and HFA: 0.6M Children

Underserved children (0-3) below poverty line: 2.5M Children

Other poor children (0-3)*: 2.8M Children

More than 90% aren’t reached by major early childhood interventions

* 1 to 2x Federal Poverty Level

Source: Zero to Three National Baby Facts Reference List
Daily routines and language (Tamis-LeMonda, Custode, Kuchirko, Escobar, & Lo, 2018).

Supermarket signs can raise interaction and language (Ridge, Weisberg, Ilgaz, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2018).
WHAT CAN LIBRARIES DO?
One-hour parent group sessions
  13 weekly “instructional” sessions
  Childcare provided
  LENA recordings after each session

Packaged for plug-&-play delivery
  Slides with videos (instructional & Talking Tips practice)
  Parent Guide with quizzes, reference material, exercises
  (Talking Tips forms, report interpretation exercises)

Time for practice and group discussion increases along way
Child Care provided by volunteers
TALKING TIPS & MOTIVATION

1. Talk about what you’re doing and thinking.
2. Comment on what they’re doing or looking at.
3. Name things that they’re interested in.
4. Get down to their level face to face.
5. Touch, hug, hold.
6. Tune in and respond to what they look at, do, and say.
7. Wait for their response.
8. Imitate them, and add words.
9. Make faces, use gestures.
10. Take turns – don’t do all the talking.
11. Repeat and add to what they say and do.
12. Follow their lead, do what interests them.
13. Encourage them, be positive.
14. Be silly! Relax and have fun!

ADULT WORD COUNT

Graph showing adult word count over time with different groups: Small Talk and Comparison.
CONVERSATIONAL TURNS

Graphs showing changes over time in conversational turns.
Vroom was created by the Bezos Family Foundation and is currently used in over 50 communities.

www.vroom.org

www.app.vroom.org
Song Traditions
Sing the same songs daily that explain what you are doing with your child (for example, leaving the room, shutting the lights, finishing eating, wiping faces and washing hands, changing diapers, counting fingers and toes).

Ages 1-2

Daily tips

Cute and easy to use

Personalized – name and age

Brainy Background
powered by Mind in the Making

Like adults, children love traditions and singing about their daily activities provides the comfort of a known routine. In addition, it helps your child make connections between his/her experiences and new words in the way he/she learns language best—through your using a sing-song voice.

For more activities like these, check out the free Daily Vroom mobile app!
Backed by science

Take a picture – save to phone

Favorite the tip

Share with a friend or on social media

Tracks the usage

More tips

Revisit favorites

See what you’ve done
· Cheaper than LENA

· Not currently commercially available

· Cannot count conversations or electronic time

· Tips, but not as interactive or didactic
OTHER GREAT CAMPAIGNS

• Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day! - https://www.ed.gov/early-learning/talk-read-sing
• Read Ask Chat! - http://readaskchat.net/
• Talking is Teaching - https://talkingisteaching.org/
• Every Child Reads Birth to 3 : https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/early-childhood/every-child-reads-birth-three
• Every Child Reads 3 – 5 : https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/early-childhood/every-child-reads-3-5
• Thirty Million Words - https://tmwcenter.uchicago.edu/

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

cvanpay@iastate.edu

@CKVanPay

lynnecarey59@gmail.com