Use of Parent-Based Interventions to Improve Language and Literacy in Young Children: An Integrated Review

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**BACKGROUND**

Early language and Literacy Development
- Early childhood is a critical period for brain development, which is shaped by environmental experiences.
- The single strongest predictor of literacy and future academic success is the quantity and quality of words spoken to the child in the first three years of life.
- Promoting literacy is an education and public health priority at both the national and state level.
- Campaigns to improve children’s language and literacy have focused on educating parents about the importance of talking and reading to babies.
- Parents are key targets for education and skill building around language.

**METHODS**

Search Terms
- Parent, caregiver, mother, or father
- Infant, toddler, or child
- Intervention
- Talk or read
- Language or literacy

**PUPREASE**

To describe and evaluate the effectiveness of previously developed parent-based interventions focused on improving the language and literacy skills of 0-3 year olds.

**RESULTS**

**Description of Studies**
- Twenty-three interventions were identified.
- 60\% (\(N = 34\)) were randomized control trials.
- 67\% (\(N = 38\)) had samples of low-income children.
- 19\% (\(N = 11\)) were conducted outside the United States.

**Description of Interventions**

Categories of Interventions
1) Book distribution program with anticipatory guidance (37\%; \(N = 21\))
2) Training parents to be responsive to their child's focus of attention and communication initiations (33\%; \(N = 19\))
3) Teaching dialogic-reading techniques (23\%; \(N = 13\))
4) Coaching parents to talk with their child (7\%; \(N = 4\))

Common Elements of Interventions
- Didactic teaching on importance of behavior
- Modeling of behavior by coaches
- Feedback to parents on their ability to perform the behavior
- Use of healthcare providers to train parents to implement intervention

**DISCUSSION**

**Key Factors to Consider in Intervention Development**

- Target population
- Goal of intervention
- Personnel to coach parents
- Delivery methods
- Stakeholder identification
- Monitoring and evaluation plan
- Standardization
- Scalability and cost
- Sustainability
- Cost-effectiveness
- Timing
- Frequency and duration

**CONCLUSION**

- Parents can be taught linguistic strategies that can be implemented into daily routines to positively increases children’s language and literacy skills.
- Parent-based language and literacy interventions in early childhood can help parents be their child’s first and best teacher and to positively influence the trajectory of their child’s life.

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