



# 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 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 Strategy

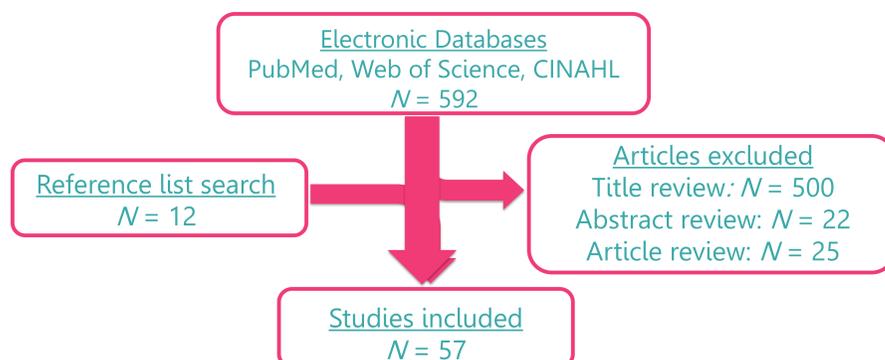
#### Search Terms

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

#### Inclusion criteria

- Intervention implemented by at least one parent of a child < 4 years old
- Purpose of intervention to improve language or literacy outcomes
- Published in a peer reviewed journal between 1990-2014

Figure 1. Study Selection Process



## PURPOSE

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 increase 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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### Effect of Interventions

#### Parent behavior change

- Increased frequency of reading and interactions
- Greater attention to children's focus and signals
- Encouragement of child's participation in conversations and book reading

#### Child outcomes

- Increased expressive and receptive language skills
- Increased literacy and academic outcomes