



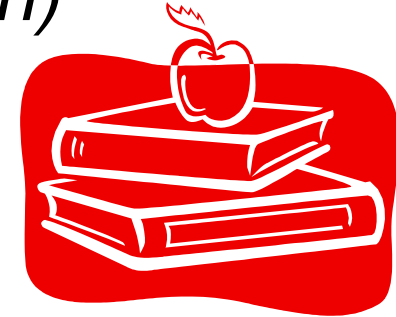
Project EASE:

The effect of a family literacy project on kindergarten students' early literacy skills

Project EASE

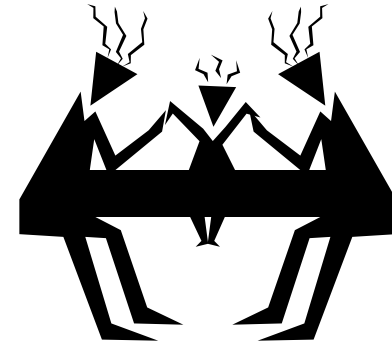
(Early Access to Success in Education)

A study conducted by:



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Research Assumptions for Project EASE:



1. The key to early literacy success is building a base for literacy.
2. Literacy is a complex task requiring the integration of many abilities.
3. Both home and school make unique and critical contributions to literacy attainment.
4. Not all homes have the same language traditions. Some support literacy instruction more than others.
5. Parents are willing to participate meaningfully in their child's education if they are given support.
6. All parents share in the same hopes and dreams for success for their children.
7. Assessment of early literacy ability is a challenging task.

Participants:



248 kindergarten students and their families from four schools in the White Bear Lake School District in Minnesota, USA.

Of these, 177 students in eight classes received the intervention.

71 in three classes constituted the control group.

Setting:



White Bear Lake is a suburban district serving a k-5 population with a median family income of \$41,731. The typical population in these schools is English speaking, with a minority representation of less than 5%.

Intervention procedure:



- **Intervention went for one school year.**
- **Parent training sessions were organized in five 1-month units**
- **For each training session, parents came to the school for a coaching session on helping their child with literacy at home.**
- **Parents received structured activities for engaging children in extended discussions surrounding a book.**
- **Each book to be used in the at-home activities was specifically selected to foster the types of high-quality language interactions that research has shown to be effective in promoting language development.**

Measures

The measures taken into consideration and analyzed for the purposes of this study were:

- Parent survey
- Child outcomes



1. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-revised (PPVT)
2. Comprehensive Assessment Program (CAP)

Results



- All children (both control and experimental groups) experienced statistically significant improvements over time on the PPVT and the 12 CAP measures, as would be expected after a year of kindergarten instruction.
- Project EASE participants, however, made statistically significantly greater gains than the control group in **Language skills**.



Mean pretest scores (*SD*)

Mean posttest scores (*SD*)

	Control (n=71)	Experimental (n=177)	Control (n=71)	Experimental (n=177)
Language composite	31.53 (6.18)	30.02 (7.65)	33.83 (6.42)	37.27 (4.30)
Sound composite	7.40 (4.44)	8.05 (4.65)	14.96 (5.09)	16.46 (4.33)
Print composite	49.70 (18.43)	49.13 (18.17)	72.21 (12.84)	73.05 (11.81)

Discussion



The impact of participation in Project EASE on children's language scores is striking.

First, language was the primary focus of EASE activities, so it is gratifying that language skills show the largest effect;

Second, amount of participation relates to the size of effect observed.

Third, receiving this intervention had a particularly powerful impact on the children who scored low at the pretest.

In conclusion...



The size of the intervention effect is particularly surprising given that the families involved in this study were not on average extremely limited in their literacy support, and that the children were attending schools with generally good achievement results.

In other words, even in this moderate-to-low risk sample of English-speaking families, with median family incomes above the poverty level and access to good schools for their children, there is room for parental involvement to improve children's school performance.