



Utilizing Caregivers To Facilitate Language and AAC Skills During Shared Reading Practices

Charting the Cs
Conference 2025:
*To Literacy and
Beyond*

Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

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Financial and Nonfinancial Disclosures

Financial Disclosure

- I am currently a salaried, full-time employee of Minnesota State University in Moorhead, MN (MSUM)
- As a presenter at Charting the C's my registration fee was waived

Nonfinancial Disclosure

- I am currently an employee of Minnesota State University Moorhead
- I am currently an Ed.D. student at Minnesota State University Moorhead
- I am a member of the American Speech Language Hearing Association

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Who am I?

- Assistant Professor and Clinical Supervisor at MSUM
- ASHA certified SLP licensed in both MN and ND
- 10+ years experience working in pre-K through transition age school-based settings; clinical settings; and private practice
- Areas of professional interest:
 - Language and literacy
 - AAC
 - Transition age

Learning Objectives

- Define and describe Shared Reading or Dialogic Reading
- Identify some techniques or prompts of dialogic reading
- Summarize the findings of current literature on the topic
- Describe the process of planning a lesson that incorporates dialogic reading

TURN AND REFLECT

- What was your favorite childhood book?
- If you have children in your life, do you have reading routines with them?

On the right: Photo from Microsoft Stock Images

Photo includes a black female young adult with a striped shirt and hair in ponytail reading a children's book to a black child approximately 3 years old wearing a white t-shirt.



Background

- Storybook reading has been an important and common practice of the childhood routine
- Extensive research has shown the benefits of reading to children
 - Including language and literacy development
- Shared or “dialogic” reading by its process allows for language and literacy to be supported
- This routine experience can be incorporated within the home and with AAC!
 - Family members can even implement it!

Types of Shared Book Reading

- Dialogic
 - Interactive reading
 - Uses techniques to scaffold conversations between adult and child Shared reading using the book to target specific language skills
 - Vocabulary
 - Phonological awareness

What is Dialogic Reading (DR)?

- Evidence-based intervention developed by Whitehurst et al. (1988)
- Promotes active participation in shared reading
- Encourages child to become the storyteller and the adult the active listener
- Adult provides assistance as required to facilitate and expand the child's language
- Based on three principles:
 - Evocative techniques
 - Informative feedback
 - Progressive change

Techniques and Prompts for DR

PEER

- Prompt
- Evaluate
- Expand
- Repeat

CROWD

- Completion
- Recall
- Open-ended questions
- WH questions
- Distancing

*modifications: allow pointing to illustrations or asking y/no questions (Hudson et al., 2017 as cited by Wilhelm & McGraw, 2023)

RAAP

- Read
- Ask
- Answer
- Prompt

Purpose of Current Literature Review

- Determine what current literature says about the effectiveness of teaching caregivers to implement interactive reading strategies to facilitate language.
- Determine what current literature says regarding the effectiveness of implementing interactive reading strategies with children who utilize AAC.

Methods

- Digital search using online databases
 - Databases used: ComDisDome; EbscoHost; Psychinfo
 - Search Terms used: “early literacy,” “storybook,” “shared reading,” “AAC,” “parent,” “caregiver,” “dialogic reading”
- Additional articles obtained from reference sections of previously obtained articles

Findings: Shared Reading and Language

- Increases in length and complexity of language
(Boyd, 1980; Whitehurst et al., 1988; Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999; Crowe, Norris, and Hoffman, 2004; Pollard-Durodola et al., 2015)
- But why might DR have this impact?
 - Increases child directed speech with higher lexical and syntactic diversity
(Noble et al., 2018)
 - Opportunities for expanding, recasting, and asking open-ended questions
 - Fosters high levels of joint attention and contingent talk and responsiveness

Findings: Shared Reading and Language (continued)

- DR uses print references
 - Which has positive impact on early literacy skills (Piasta et al., 2012)
- DR can positively impact other skills too (children < 5yrs) (Pillinger & Vardy, 2022)
 - Enjoyment of reading
 - reading motivation
 - parent-child attachment
 - parental confidence
 - Reducing stress

Findings: Shared Reading and Language (continued)

- Not all research indicated a strong link:
 - Noble et al. (2019) meta-analysis found relatively small effect
 - Could be due to the low dosage used in studies analyzed (6-8 wks)
 - More longitudinal research indicated positive relationship (Farrant & Zubrick, 2013)
- But all tend to edge on the positive side!

Can parents be taught these skills?

YES!

Findings: Teaching Caregivers

- Parents can be taught these skills!
 - Whitehurst et al. (1988)
 - Justice & Ezell (2000)
- Once trained, increase use of strategies too!
 - Hammer (2016)
 - Justice & Ezell (200)
- Kim & Riley (2021) assigned homework to parents utilizing DR
 - Significant effects of homework on children's language and literacy skills
 - Training parents via staff was effective and time efficient

Findings: Teaching Caregivers

- Caregiver coaching is a strategy used to improve the parents' skills

“Multiple studies have established the positive effects of coaching parents on the uses of language-based strategies during shared storybook reading interactions for children who are typically developing, at risk for language disorders, or have a diagnosed disorder”

(Binger et al., 2008; Ortiz et al., 2001, Feil et al., 2020 as cited by Wence et al., 2024, p. 2)

Previous research has shown that young children who use AAC are given less opportunities to participate in literacy learning and instruction. (McNamara, 2018; Yorke et al., 2021)

Findings: Shared Reading & AAC

- Recently, research explored “expansive literacy” (multimodal)
- More limited research in this area for Complex Communicators (Wence et al., 2024)
- But research shows that positives come from it!
 - Child who used AAC increased word use and expressive vocabulary (Soto & Dukhovny, 2008)
 - Increases vocabulary knowledge for students who use AAC (York et al., 2018)
 - Exposure to target words and provide links to illustrations
 - Increase engagement, listening comprehension, and rate of communication (Quinn et al., 2020)

Findings: Shared Reading & AAC

- Toews et al. (2021) systematic review indicated shared reading has moderate evidence to promote:
 - Comprehension, vocabulary, and emergent literacy skills for children with extensive support needs
- Parents can also be taught these strategies too!
 - Binger et al. (2008) demonstrated that parents taught aided AAC modeling during shared book reading can increase the child's utterance length

Clinical Implications

- Shared book reading is a naturalistic routine—which are recommended for supporting young children with disabilities
(Division for Early Childhood, 2014 as cited by Wence et al., 2024)
- Teachers and caregivers can implement shared reading
- Additional research is needed on the topic!

So How Do We Do It?

- Recommend a high dosage! (6-12 months or more)
- Finding adapted age-appropriate texts!
 - Increased picture support
 - Repetitive text
- Pre-select vocabulary from text and feature during read aloud
 - Prepare displays for participation in lesson (Beukelman & Light, 2020)

So How Do We Do It? (continued)

- Participate in print-referencing!
 - Talking about or pointing to print within text (Justice, Kaderavek, Fan, Sofka, & Hunt, 2009 as cited by Piasta)
- Integrate time delay and prompting systems (most to least or least to most)
- Expand and extend utterances
- Model, model, model!
- Allow for multimodal communication!

So How Do We Do It? (continued 2)

- **Training others:**
 - Observe what they are already doing
 - Identify strategies already used by caregivers to build off!
 - Provide opportunities to practice strategies with feedback

Let's see some examples – video 1

- Simucase. (2025). *Everett-Intervention Session using NovaChat 8*. (Sponsored by Saltillo). <https://videos.simucase.com/video/6075287199001>, accessed January 13, 2025.

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Let's see some examples – video 2

- Simucase. (2025). *Everett-One Duck Stuck Story Read Aloud*. (Sponsored by Saltillo). <https://videos.simucase.com/video/6075285235001>, accessed January 13, 2025.

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Let's see some examples – video 3

- Simucase. (2025). *Mia-Book Reading AAC Activity*.
<https://videos.simucase.com/video/6307514012112>, accessed January 13, 2025.

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Steps and Strategies for Shared Reading Instruction

(Taken and adapted from Wilhelm & McGraw, 2023, p. 6)

Step	Guiding Questions	Expanding Literacy
1. Select Accessible Text	Is my text relevant and accessible to the reader?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital • Audio recordings • Videos • Interest and engagement? • Representative?
2. Identify Target Vocabulary	What are keys terms within the story?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for repetition • Personally relevant terms
3. Used Shared Reading Strategies	How will I engage my readers with the text?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals • DR strategies • Model
4. Create opportunities for discussion	How will we talk about the story after reading?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build connections • Invite options • Visuals, prompts, scripts

Let's Practice Planning a Lesson!

1. Think of a hypothetical kiddo or maybe one that you already work with!
 - Follow client confidentiality when discussing!
2. Grab a children's book that I brought or find an accessible book online
3. Read through the book...is it accessible? Motivating? Relevant?
4. Note target vocabulary---what will need to be on the device?
5. Re-read the story engaging with your group members utilizing DR strategies!
6. Reflect!
 - What was hard?
 - What would you do differently?

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Thank you!