Thank you!

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the many children, parents, teachers, and schools who participated in research this year. Your support makes our work possible. Thank you for helping us advance knowledge about child development!

Growing vocabulary through storybooks

In a study we conducted during the 2009-2010 academic year, we investigated how different reading techniques impacted preschoolers’ ability to learn new words from shared storybook reading.

Did you know?

• There are many good reasons to read to small children – and developing vocabulary is one of them!

• Early vocabulary is an important predictor of later academic achievement.

• Preschoolers whose parents and teachers read to them frequently have larger vocabularies than preschoolers without this experience (even when we account for other factors).

Results from this research were presented over the summer in Boston, at the national meeting of the Association for Psychological Science!
Different ways to teach words in storybooks

Children in our study heard storybooks read in one of four styles:

- Straight reading
- Repetition of new words in the story
- Definitions provided for new words
- Questions asked about new words

Our findings

All of these reading styles led to word learning! (Even in straight reading, children can learn some words from context.) Different children benefited from different styles: for example, children who already had larger vocabularies were often able to learn just from repetition, while children with smaller vocabularies seemed to benefit from the extra support of definitions and questions. Which style - or styles - work best for your children? Be flexible and willing to experiment!

New projects for a new school year

- For 2010-2011, student researchers Morgan Avery and Rachel Nelson have joined the lab, and will be assisting with a study to explore how children’s active engagement during storybook reading affects their word learning.
- Senior Megen Wulf will be conducting an honors project on how preschoolers can learn positive attitudes about children with disabilities by watching and discussing educational videos.

The Augustana Developmental Psychology Lab conducts research on early cognitive development, and how aspects of the learning environment can help foster development.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Olivia K. Lima at devlab@augie.edu or (605) 274-4397.

Thank You for Your Support!

… and all you do for little ones 😊