

# The Power of Language: Nourishing Development of the Whole Child

Ohio Striving Readers Literacy Academy 2019



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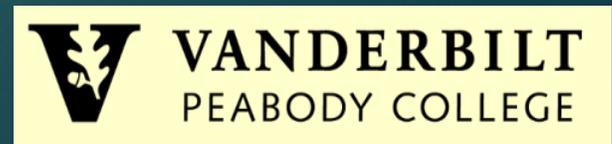
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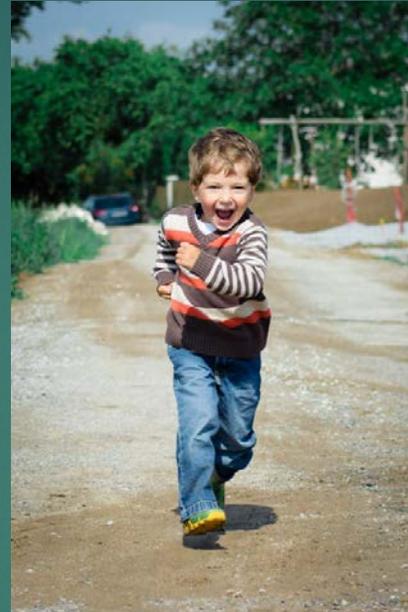
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What does  
the future  
Hold?



The seeds of these future outcomes are sewn in infancy.

Language plays a central role in all of them.

Parents and early childhood teachers play a critical role.



Attachment



Friends



Self-regulation



Reading Success



Academic Success

# LANGUAGE-RICH CONVERSATIONS



Responsive conversations



Skillful Teaching



Book Reading

# Attachment

- ▶ A secure relationship reduces anxiety and enables the child to explore the world.
- ▶ Anxiety shuts down exploratory activities.
- ▶ Children who lack a secure attachment:
  - ❖ Engage in little exploration
  - ❖ Show minimal emotional response to their mother upon her return in the strange situation
  - ❖ May have ambivalent response to mother upon her return
  - ❖ May avoid or be resistant to the mother



# Lasting Effect's of Secure Attachment

- ▶ A history of warm, predictable, responsive and sensitive interactions.
- ▶ Tanya with 18 month old Eliza.
  - ❖ Watch, discuss briefly how Tanya is demonstrating behaviors that foster strong attachment relationships with those near you.
- ▶ Hundreds of studies, summarized in meta-analyses, make clear that secure early attachment has long-term effects:
  - ❖ Less likely to be depressed, fearful and withdrawn (Groh et al., 2012)
  - ❖ More likely to have good relationships with peers:
    - ❖ In the childhood years (Groh et al., 2014)
    - ❖ At age 22 (Groh et al, 2012)

# Language-Attachment Relationships

- ▶ Language development is related to attachment. Securely attached children at 15 months have stronger language at 36 months regardless of risk factors (Belksy & Feron, 2002).
- ▶ Attachment and book reading in the home are related. Across SES backgrounds securely attached children (Bus & Van Ijzendoorn (1988, 1995.)
  - ❖ Are more likely to be to frequently.
  - ❖ Require less discipline when being read to.
  - ❖ More often try to read on their own and show faster early literacy development.
- ▶ These are correlational results. There might be bidirectional relationships between book reading and attachment.

# Implications for the Early Childhood Education Community

- ▶ Provide parents guidance related to responsive parenting.
- ▶ Build relationships with programs that delivery services to families who may need special support. Proven programs that use video-based coaching with education.
  - ❖ In the home:
    - Play and Learning Strategies (Landry et al., 2008, 2012)  
<https://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/programs/play-and-learning-strategies-pals>
  - ❖ In pediatric clinics:
    - Video Interaction Project: (Mendelson et al., 2005, 2007)  
<https://www.videointeractionproject.org/>
    - Thirty Million Word Project: (Suskind et al., 2016, 2017)  
<https://tmwcenter.uchicago.edu/>

# Self-Regulation/Executive Function (EF)

- ▶ Behavior regulation: avoiding impulsive emotion-driven actions
  - ▶ Example: Marsh mellow task
  - ▶ Wrapped present task
- ▶ Cognitive regulation: maintaining a focus, tuning out distractions, holding verbal directions in mind
  - ▶ Example: Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders
- ▶ Language ability contributes to its emergence



# Long-term Effects of EF

- ▶ A study that included data from 36,000 kindergarten children found that EF at school entry helped predict later reading and math in fifth grade (Duncan et al., 2007).
- ▶ Cool EF is especially predictive of growth (Brock et al., 2009).
- ▶ Bi-directional effects: Between preschool and the end of kindergarten:
  - ❖ Early EF resulted in improved language and academic skills in during pre-k.
  - ❖ The improvement in language and academic skills contributed to later growth in EF (Fuhs et al., 2014).



# Language and Executive Function

- ▶ Gesturing and pointing by infants and toddlers:
  - ❖ Is associated with faster language development (Rowe & Goldin-Meadow, 2009).
  - ❖ Relates to EF at age 4, with the association being mediated by preschool language ability (Kuhn et al., 2015).
- ▶ Among children who attended Early Head Start, age 24 month vocabulary predicted EF at 3, 4 and 5 years (Ayoub et al., 2011).
- ▶ Improvement in vocabulary between 15 and 36 months is an especially strong predictor of EF at age 5 (Kuhn et al., 2016).
- ▶ Use of language as part of parenting is predictive of EF development and strong EF predicts vocabulary growth (Matte-Gagne & Bernier, 2011; Landry et al., 2002).

# EF, Language and Parents

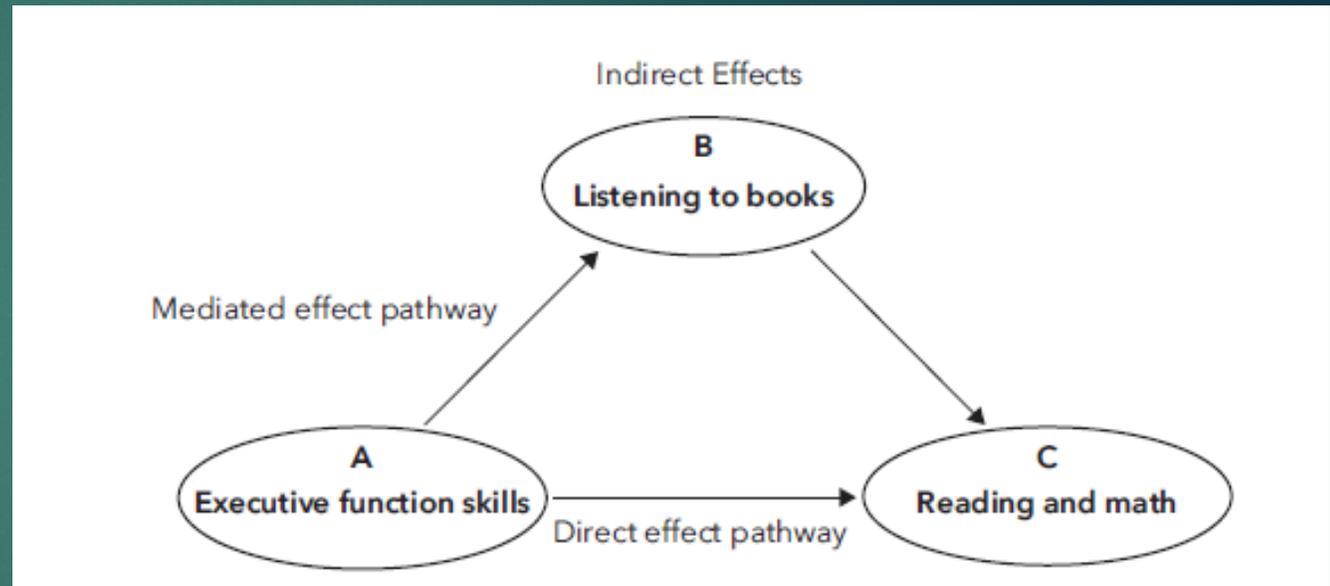
- ▶ Watch Tanya noting varied ways she supports Eliza's language and EF and how Eliza's abilities make this possible.
- ▶ What makes this event on that fosters Eliza's executive function capacities?
- ▶ Eliza was 18 months old and being raised to be bilingual. She used between 20 – 30 words.
- ▶ <..\..\..\Desktop\C-PIN\Eliza bk rdg short.mov>

# EF, Language and Parents

- ▶ Activity setting: predictable time, location material, activity
- ▶ Eliza leads, Tanya supports and directs on occasion in a sensitive, warm manner.
- ▶ Tanya uses language while she makes suggestions.
- ▶ Tanya's uses many novel words and complex syntax
- ▶ Tanya uses language for many purposes: labeling objects, describing actions, talking about feelings, talking about past events, directing actions
- ▶ Eliza is fully engaged is having fun and uses language freely

# Strong EF Helps Children Gain More from ECE Learning Opportunities

- ▶ In preschool, 4 year olds' EF helped predict fall-spring growth in academic skills among children who were more fully engaged in learning-related behaviors (such as listening to books, engaging in sustained play) (Nesbitt et al., 2015).
- ▶ Children with strong EF are more likely to learn new words when taught through book reading or playful activities (Dickinson et al., in press).



# Implications for Classrooms

- ▶ Provide children engaging activities that involve multiple steps and require sustained attention:
  - ❖ Blocks, puzzles, art
  - ❖ Dramatic play
  - ❖ Book reading
- ▶ Help children stay engaged with predictable routines and systems.
- ▶ Minimize (boring) time in large groups.
- ▶ Help children stay on task during groups with interesting activities, clear rules and quick reminders.
- ▶ Provide many activities that build language.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## The Magic Eight

- ▶ Reducing Transitions
- ▶ Improving the level of instruction
- ▶ Creating a positive climate
- ▶ Listening to children
- ▶ Planning sequential activities
- ▶ Promoting cooperative and associative activities
- ▶ Fostering high levels of engagement
- ▶ Providing math activities

<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/mnpspartnership/magic8/professional-development-materials/>

## The Atlanta Speech School

### The Rollins Center

Free online PD courses through their Cox Campus.

- ▶ Infant-toddler: 3 sessions
- ▶ Pre-k: 7 sessions

<https://app.coxcampus.org/#!/courses?track=550c77f53637011100ce3cd4>

Additional resource library:

<https://app.coxcampus.org/#!/resourcelibrary/?f=&r=>

# Theory of Mind



- ▶ Understanding that other people
  - ❖ That you may know things that other do not know and they may know things that you do not know.
  - ❖ That people have different ways of understanding the world.
  - ❖ That people's actions are motivated by desires and goals that may not be directly expressed.
- ▶ Important capacity for understanding stories.

# Theory of Mind

- ▶ Important capacity for understanding stories.
- ▶ Watch and discuss: (1:00)
  - ▶ What role does theory of mind play in understanding this story?
  - ▶ How does Jana support her daughter's understanding?.



▶ [..\..\..\Desktop\C-PIN\Minerva Louise.MOV](#)

# Theory of Mind and Development

- ▶ Children begin developing a theory of mind (TOM) in the preschool years.
- ▶ TOM development in the preschool years is related to:
  - ❖ Social competence (Razza & Blair, 2009)
  - ❖ Language (Muller, 2012)
  - ❖ Executive function (Korucu et al., 2017)
- ▶ All three emerging capacities are mutually reinforcing.

# What Experiences Support TOM Development?

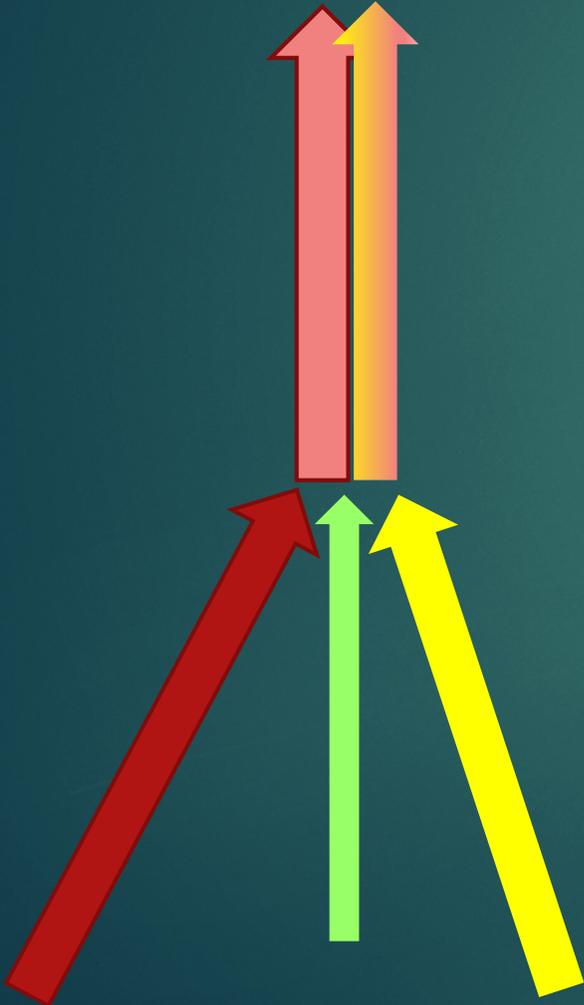


- ▶ Talk about mental states
  - ❖ Mothers' and children's use of mental state words when they were 3 and 4 years old was predictive of TOM (Ruffman, et al., 2002).
- ▶ Syntactic development:
  - ❖ Mental state words are used in syntactic structures called complements using phrases such as "she thinks," "I wonder/believe/recall ...."
  - ❖ Acquisition of skill using this syntactic form is related to TOM skill (Schick et al., 2007).
- ▶ Book reading
  - ❖ Talking about states of mind during book reading may support TOM development (Tompkins, 2015).

# Language, EF and ToM



- ▶ Language and EF are related beginning at 14 months and their effects continue through the school years. (Ayoub et al., 2011; Landry et al., 2002; Matte-Gange & Bernier, 2011)
- ▶ These capacities foster the development of the other.
  - ▶ Better EF helps with language learning.
- ▶ Theory of mind develops later and draws on language and contributes to literacy development.



# The Intertwined Nature of Development

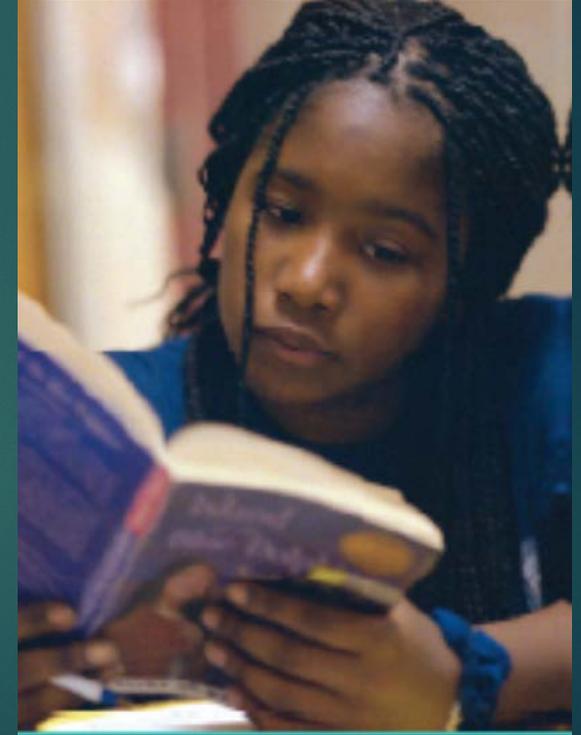
Language-rich interactions help foster attachment, executive function, and theory of mind.

These capacities are intertwined and mutually supportive.

Development of all begins very early and continues through the preschool years.



# Language and Reading Comprehension



# The Simple View of Reading



By grade 4 language comprehension is the strongest predictor of reading comprehension (Cain et al., 2016; Vellutino et al., 2006).

Beginning readers' primary challenge

Decoding: turning print into words

Self-Regulation

Improves learning from instruction

Language Comprehension

Helps with initial reading. Critical for comprehension.