

# Key Characteristics of Evidence-Based Early Childhood Intervention Practices

Carl J. Dunst, Ph.D.

Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute

Asheville and Morganton, North Carolina, USA

[www.puckett.org](http://www.puckett.org)

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## Purpose

- Describe a practice-based approach to conducting research syntheses
- Illustrate the approach using several syntheses of different kinds of intervention practices
- Describe the implications of the approach for informing the identification of evidence-based practices
- Describe the characteristics of a number of evidence-based and evidence-informed early childhood intervention practices

# A Typical Framework for Categorizing Research Studies<sup>a</sup>

- Efficacy Studies
- Effectiveness Studies
- Efficiency Studies

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<sup>a</sup> Marley, J. (2000). Editorial. Efficacy, effectiveness, efficiency. *Australian Prescriber*, 23, 114-115.

## Definition of Terms

***Efficacy*** is the extent to which an (intervention) has the ability to bring about its intended effect under ideal conditions such as a randomized clinical trial (Marley, 2000, p. 114).

***Effectiveness*** is the extent to which a treatment is effective if it works in real-life, non-ideal circumstances (Marley, 2000, p. 114).

***Efficiency*** is the extent to which an intervention is worth its cost to individuals or society (Marley, 2000, p. 115).

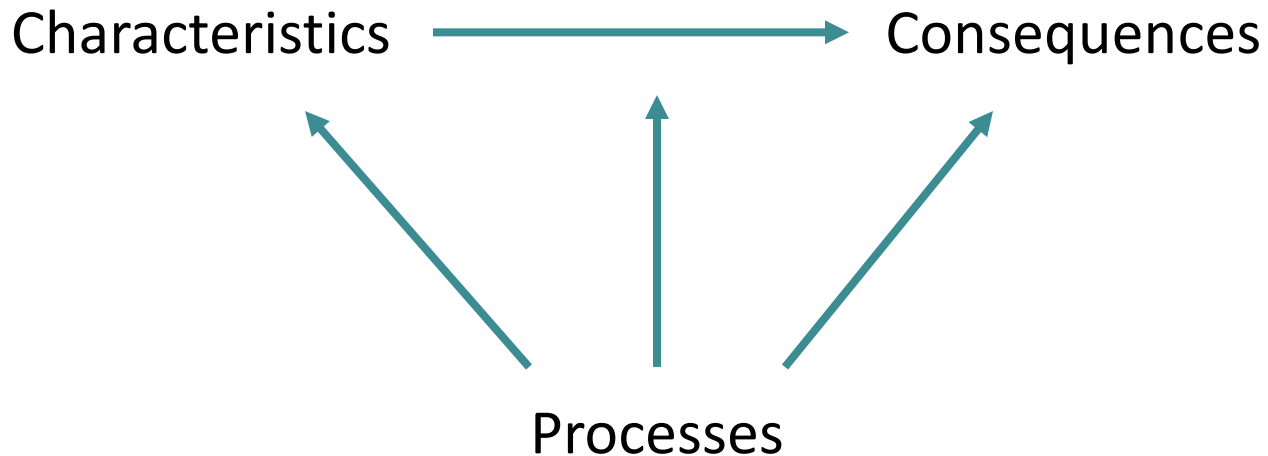
## A Practice-Based Approach to Conducting Research Syntheses

Practice-based syntheses focus on *unpacking*, *disentangling*, and *unbundling* an intervention to isolate the practice characteristics that “matter most” in terms of explaining the results found in different studies of the same or similar interventions.

## Definition of Evidence-Based Practices

Evidence-based practices are defined as practices informed by research findings demonstrating a (statistical or functional) relationship between the characteristics and consequences of a planned or naturally occurring experience or opportunity where the nature of the relationship directly informs what a practitioner or parent can do to produce a desired outcome.

# Framework for Evaluating the Relationship Between the Characteristics and Consequences of an Intervention Practice



# Types of Characteristics-Consequences Relationships

- The consequences of a practice are measured to establish the presence of desired or expected behaviour or outcomes
- The characteristics of a practice are measured to establish that the practice was implemented as intended
- The characteristics and consequences of a practice are measured but not related to each other
- The characteristics and consequences of a practice are measured and related to one another to establish a functional or statistical dependency
- The characteristics and consequences of a practice are measured and related to one another (functionally or statistically) and alternative explanations are explicitly ruled out
- The relationship between the characteristics and consequences of a practice are replicated across studies and alternative explanations are explicitly ruled out



## Two Types of Early Childhood Practices

- ***Intervention practices*** include methods and strategies used by intervention agents (teachers, therapists, clinicians, parents, etc.) to effect changes or produce outcomes in a targeted population or group of recipients (e.g., infants and toddlers with disabilities)
- ***Implementation practices*** include methods and procedures used by implementation agents (trainers, coaches, instructors, supervisors, etc.) to promote interventionists' use of evidence-based intervention practices

# Relationship Between the Two Types of Practices

## Implementation Practices

- Participatory adult learning
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Just-in-time training
- Guided design
- Accelerated learning

## Intervention Practices

- Early child contingency learning
- Interest-based child learning
- Natural environment practices
- Preschool classroom practices
- Communication and language learning
- Early literacy learning
- Family systems intervention practices



# Examples of Practice-Based Research Syntheses

# Effects of Adult Verbal and Vocal Contingent Responsiveness on Increases in Infant Vocalizations<sup>a</sup>

Carl J. Dunst

Ellen Gorman

Deborah W. Hamby

*Number of Studies:* 22 studies including 214 infants and toddlers (15 studies of typically developing infants and 6 studies of infants and toddlers with disabilities)

*Research Designs:* Baseline (A) and experimental (B), ABA, and ABAB single participant or group design studies

*Adult Reinforcement:* Imitation of child vocalizations, verbal comments (e.g., “good girl”) or pre-determined vocal sounds (“tsk, tsk, tsk”)

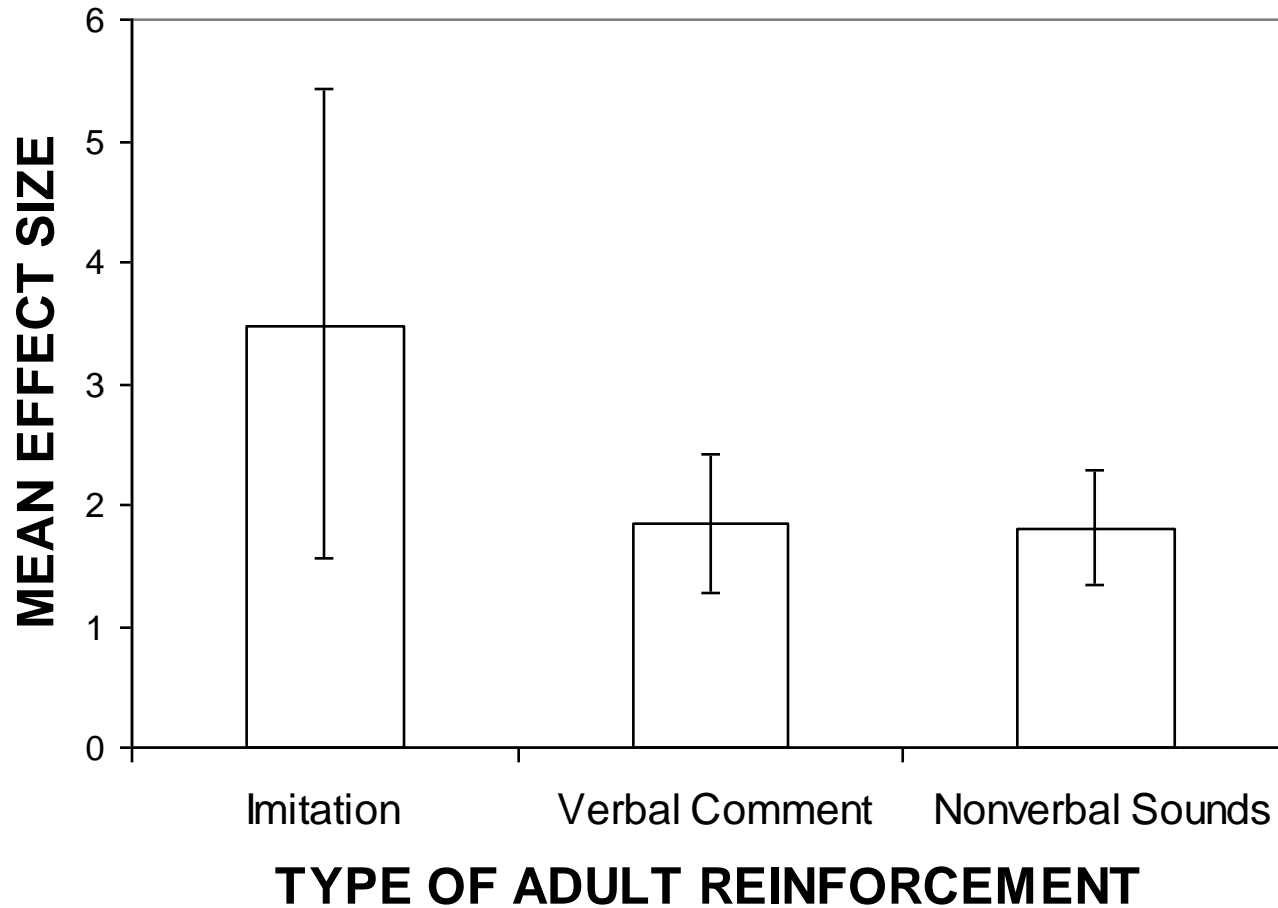
*Social Concomitants:* Influences of visual, social, and tactile adult concomitant behaviour on infant vocalizations

*Size of Effect:* Cohen’s *d* effect size for the difference between the baseline vs. experimental study conditions

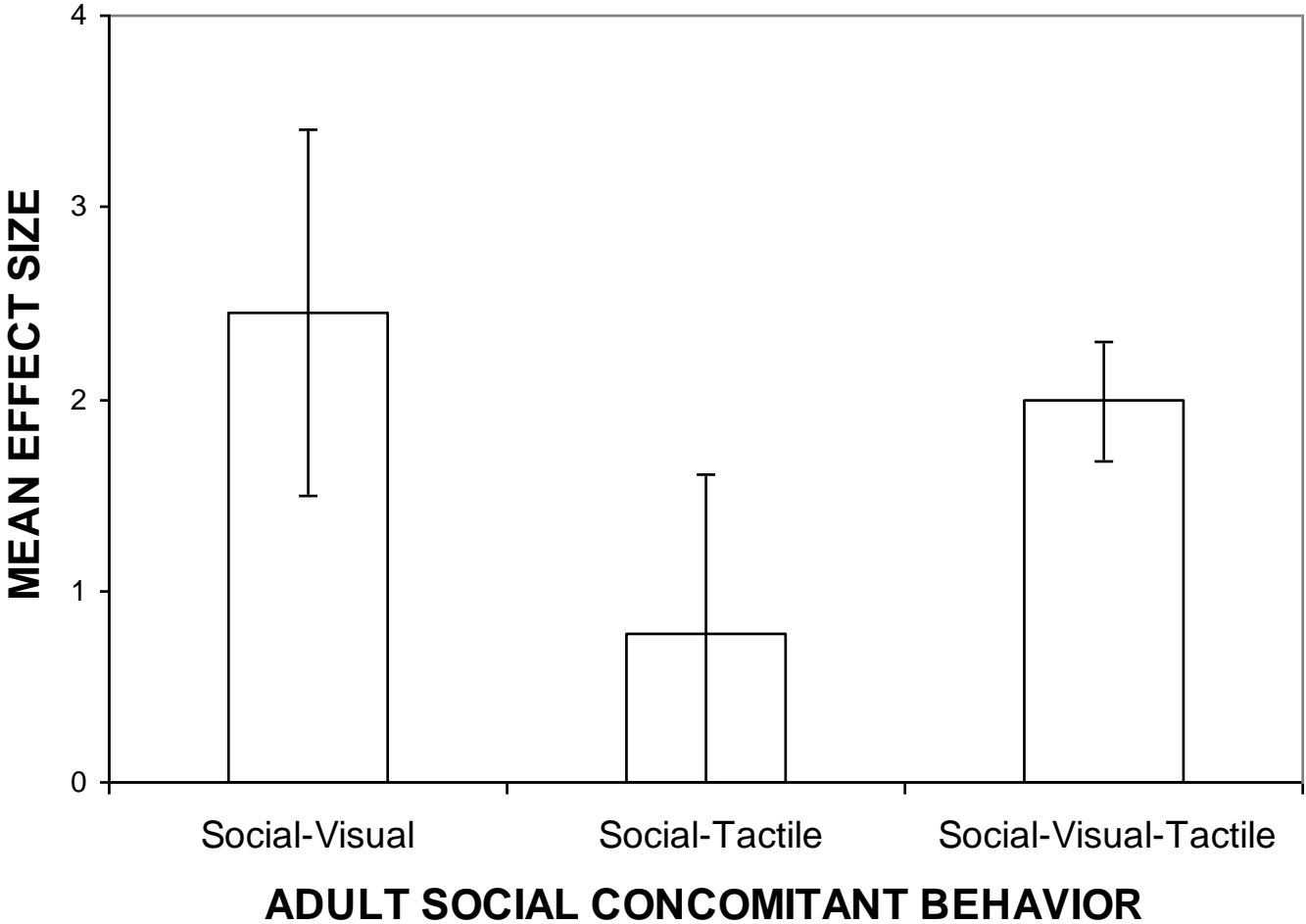
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<sup>a</sup> *CELLreviews*, 2010, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Available at [www.earlyliteracylearning.org](http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org))

## Relative Effectiveness of Three Types of Adult Reinforcement on Infant Vocalizations



# Effects of Adult Social Concomitant Behaviour on Infant Vocalizations



# Caregiver Sensitivity, Contingent Social Responsiveness, and Secure Infant Attachment<sup>a</sup>

Carl J. Dunst

Danielle Kassow

*Number of Studies:* 75 studies including more than 4500 parent-child dyads

*Research Design:* Observational studies of parent-child interactions that included measures of child attachment (mostly the Stranger Situation)

*Caregiver Sensitivity:* Explicit and implicit measures of caregiver contingent social responsiveness and sensitivity

*Size of Effect:* Cohen's *d* effect size for the relationship between caregiver behaviour and secure infant attachment

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<sup>a</sup> *Journal of Early and Intensive Behaviour Intervention*, 2008, 5(1), 40-56.

# Explicit Measures of Caregiver Sensitivity Behaviour

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Caregiver Sensitivity Behaviour	Definition
Caregiver/Child Synchrony	Synchrony is characterized by caregiver-child interactions that are reciprocal and rewarding to both the caregiver and child (Isabella, Belsky, & von Eye, 1989).
Caregiver/Child Mutuality	Mutuality is characterized by positive caregiver-infant interactions where both the caregiver and child are attending to the same thing simultaneously.
Response Quality	Caregiver response quality is characterized by a caregiver's ability to perceive infant signals accurately, interpret signals accurately, and respond to signals promptly and appropriately (Ainsworth, Bell, & Strayton, 1974; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978).
Responsiveness	Caregiver responsiveness is characterized by a caregiver's response to the infant's behaviour where the response functions as a reinforcement maintaining or sustaining infant behaviour directed toward the adult (Gewirtz, 1991).
Response Contiguity	Caregiver response contiguity is characterized by a caregiver's promptness and frequency or rate of response to the infant's signals (DeWolf & van Ijzendoorn, 1997).

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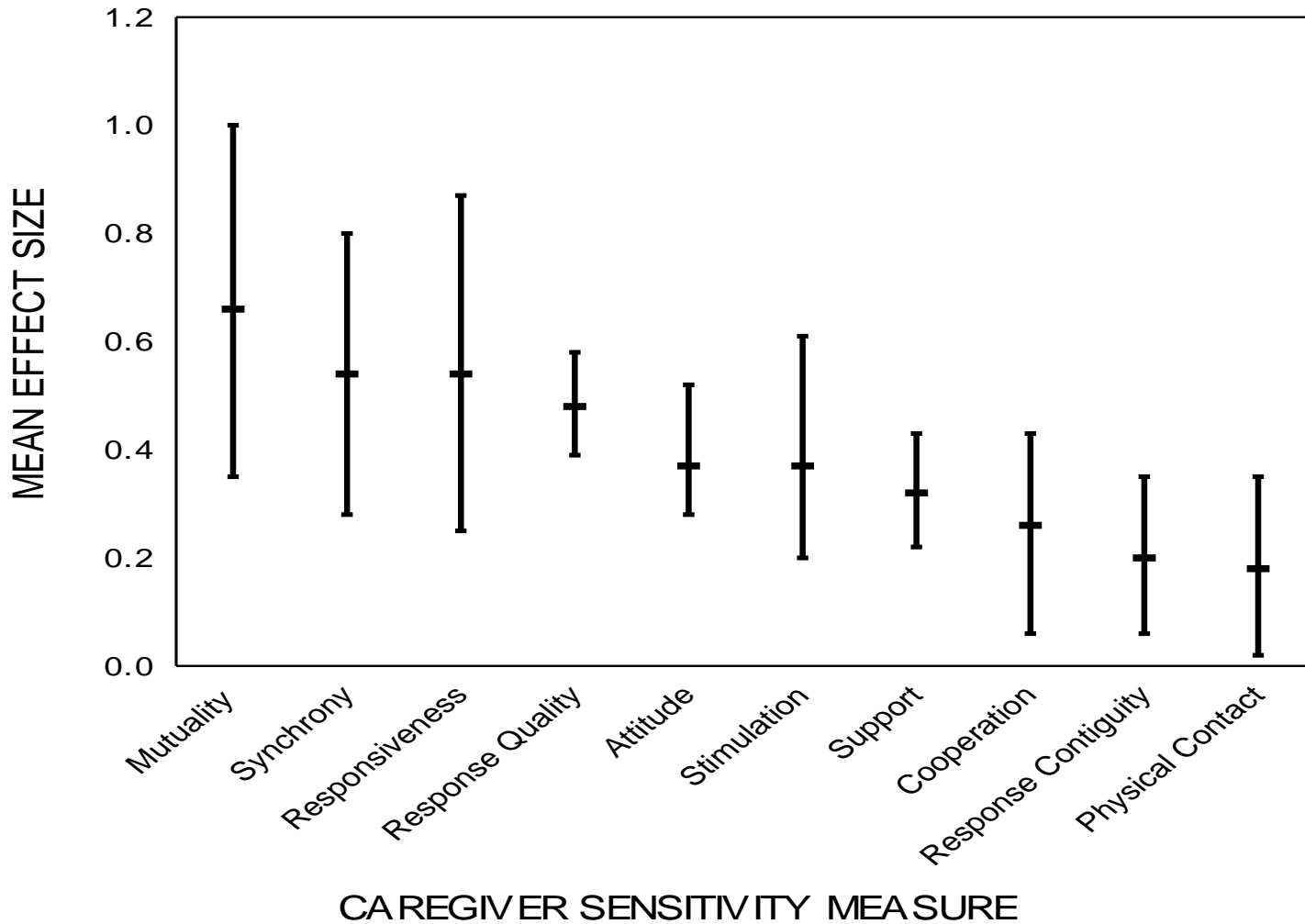
# Implicit Measures of Caregiver Sensitivity Behaviour

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Caregiver Sensitivity Behaviour	Definition
Physical Contact	Caregiver physical contact is characterized by a caregiver's quality and quantity of physical contact with the infant (DeWolf & van Ijzendoorn, 1997).
Cooperation	Caregiver cooperation is characterized by a caregiver's presence or absence of intrusive or interfering behaviours toward the infant whether the caregiver respects the infant's autonomy, if the caregiver avoids interrupting the infant's activities or demonstrates skill when interruption is necessary, and/or does not exert direct control over the infant (Ainsworth et al., 1974).
Support	Caregiver support is characterized by caregiver attentiveness and availability, supportiveness of the infant's efforts, providing a secure base for the infant, and being involved with the infant by attending to both the infant and the task at which both parties are engaged (Matas et al., 1978).
Positive Attitude	Caregiver positive attitude is characterized by the caregiver's expression of positive affect, warmth, empathy, and affection toward the infant (Zaslow, Rabinovich, Suwalsky, & Klein, 1988).
Stimulation	Caregiver stimulation is characterized by any caregiver action toward the infant (Miyake, Chen, & Campos, 1985). Stimulation typically includes caregiver encouragement, affective-stimulation, and stimulation/arousal of the infant.

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## Mean Cohen's *d* Effect Sizes and 95% Confidence Intervals for the Relationship Between the 10 Caregiver Sensitivity Measures and Secure Infant Attachment



# Effects of Interest-Based Interventions on the Social-Communication Behaviour of Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders<sup>a</sup>

Carl J. Dunst

Carol M. Trivette

Deborah W. Hamby

*Number of Studies:* 14 single participant design studies including 30 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with autism

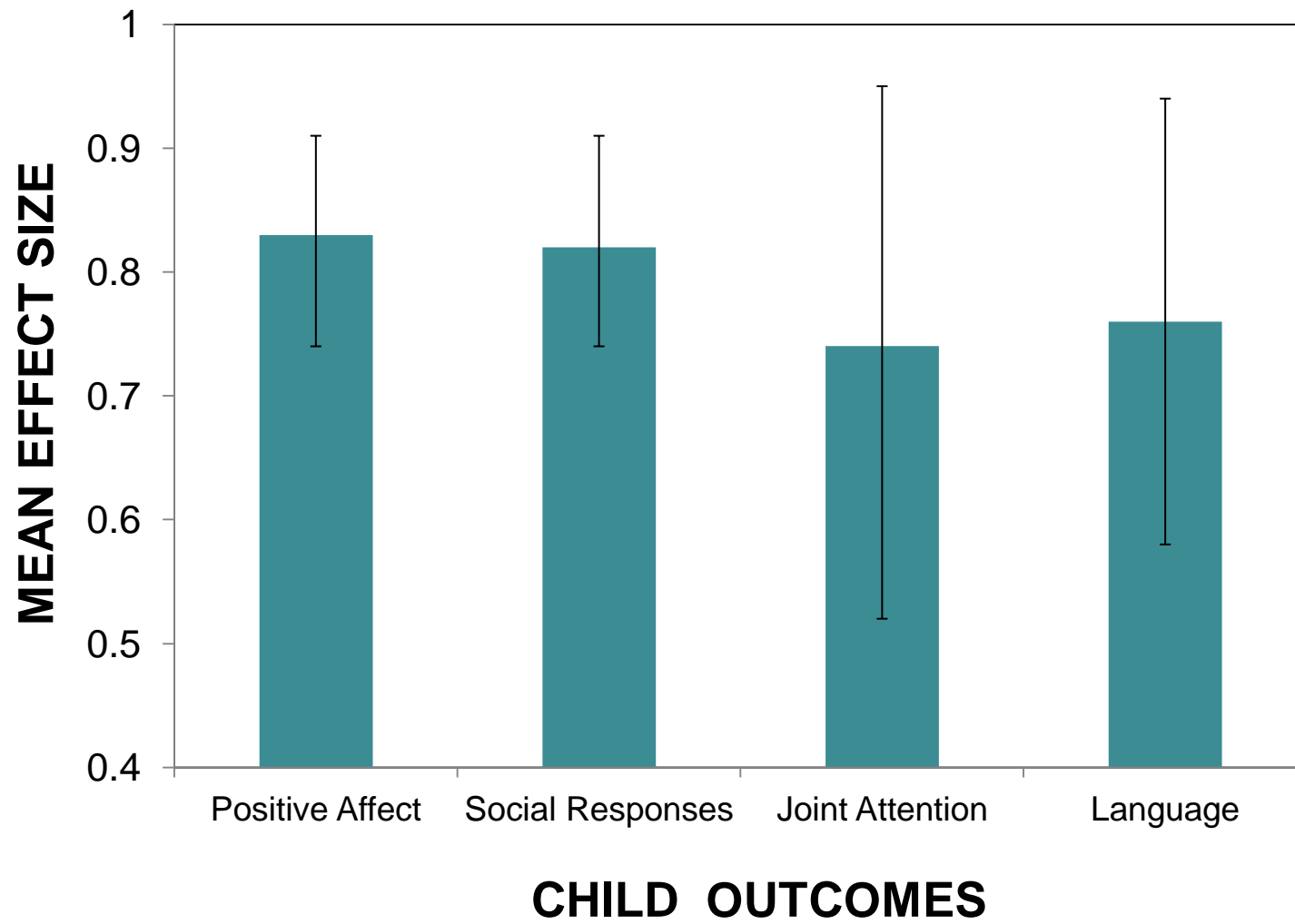
*Interventions:* Incorporating either personal or situational interests into early childhood intervention activities

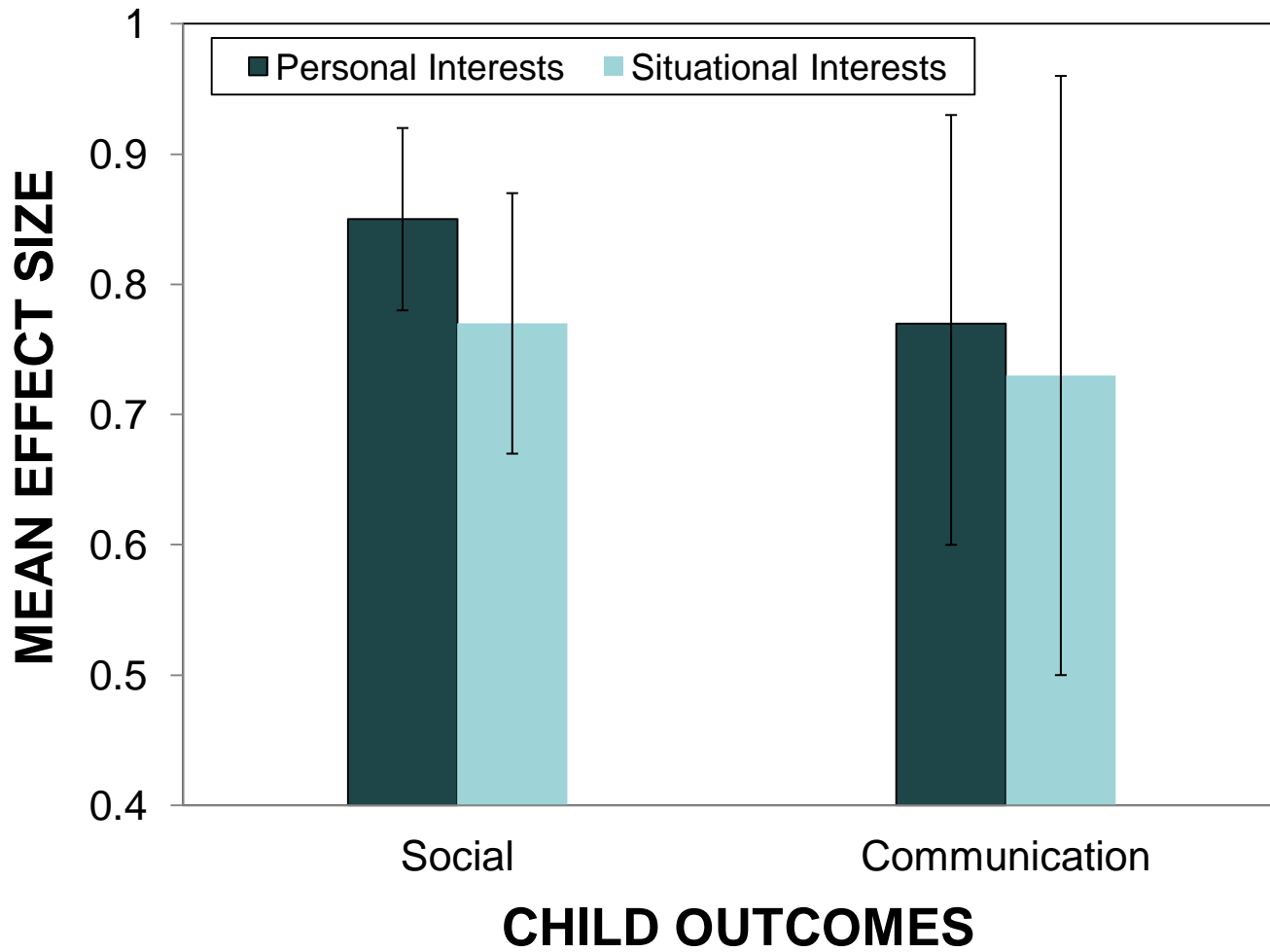
*Child Outcomes:* Child positive affect, social responsiveness, joint attention, and language development

*Size of Effect:* The correlations between the baseline vs. intervention phases of the studies and the child outcomes were used as the sizes of effect for the interventions

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<sup>a</sup> *CELLreviews*, 2012, Vol. 5, No. 6 (Available at [http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/cellreviews/cellreviews\\_v5\\_n6.pdf](http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/cellreviews/cellreviews_v5_n6.pdf))





# Research Synthesis of Adult Learning Studies<sup>a</sup>

Carl J. Dunst

Carol M. Trivette

Deborah W. Hamby

- Research synthesis of studies of accelerated learning, coaching, guided design, and just-in-time training
- 58 randomized control design studies
- 2,095 experimental group participants and 2,213 control or comparison group participants
- Combination of studies in university and non-university settings
- Learner outcomes included learner knowledge, skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy beliefs
- The influence of the adult learning methods on the learner outcomes was estimated by weighted Cohen's *d* effect sizes for the differences on the post test scores for the intervention vs. Non-intervention group participants

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<sup>a</sup> Meta-analysis of the effectiveness of four adult learning methods and strategies. *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning*, 3(1), 91-112.

# Characteristics Used to Code and Evaluate the Implementation Studies<sup>a</sup>

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## ***Planning***

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**Introduce** Engage the learner in a preview of the material, knowledge, or practice that is the focus of instruction or training

**Illustrate** Demonstrate or illustrate the use or applicability of the material, knowledge, or practice for the learner

## ***Application***

**Practice** Engage the learner in the use of the material, knowledge, or practice

**Evaluate** Engage the learner in a process of evaluating the consequence or outcome of the application of the material, knowledge, or practice

## ***Deep Understanding***

**Reflection** Engage the learner in self-assessment of his or her acquisition of knowledge and skills as a basis for identifying “next steps” in the learning process

**Mastery** Engage the learner in a process of assessing his or her experience in the context of some conceptual or practical model or framework, or some external set of performance standards or criteria

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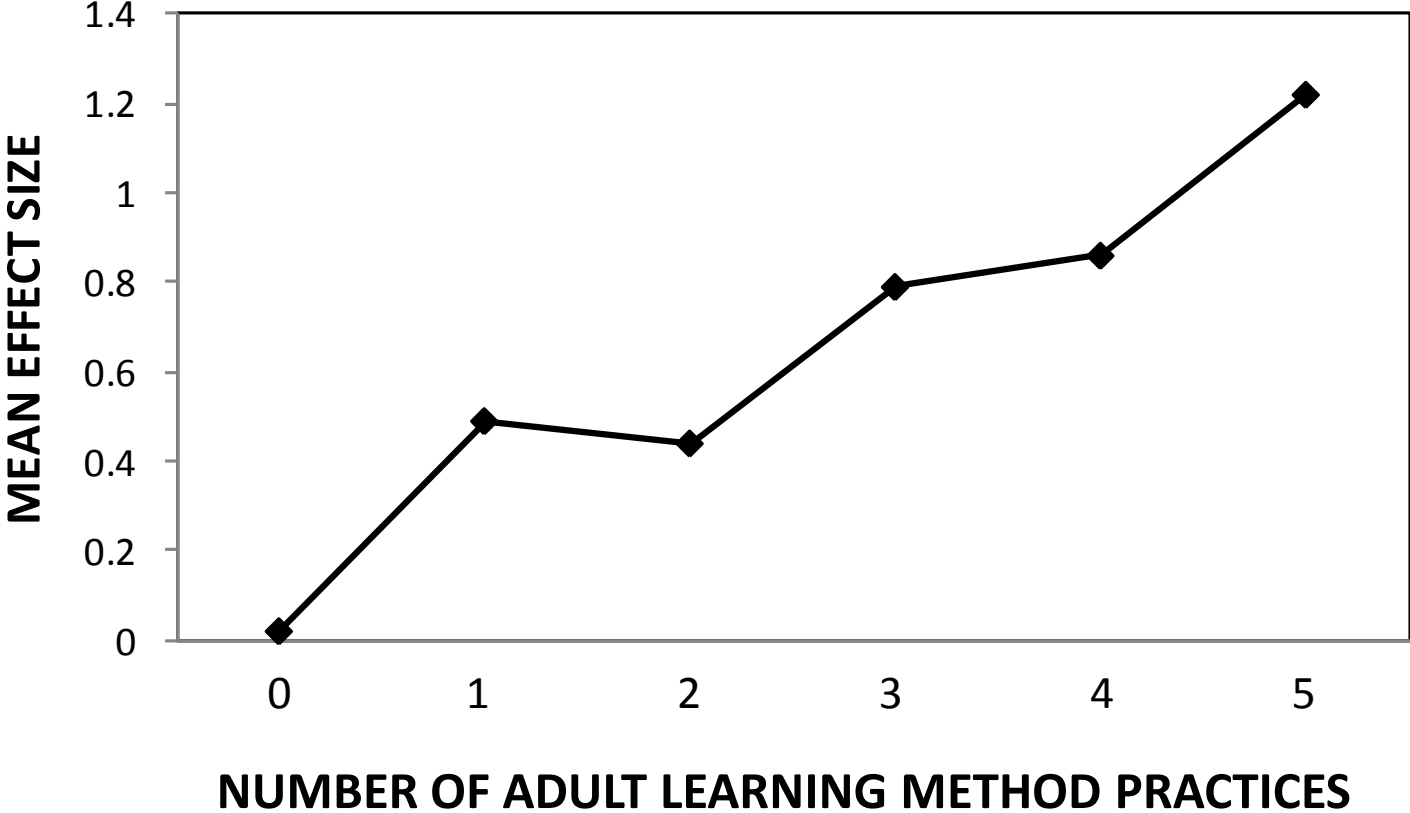
<sup>a</sup> Donovan, M. et al. (Eds.) (1999). *How people learn*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

# Most Effective Adult Learning Method Practices

Characteristic	Practice	Mean Effect Size
<i>Introduction</i>	Out-of-class learner activities/self-instruction	0.64
	Classroom/workshop presentations	0.63
	Pre-class learner exercises	0.54
<i>Illustration</i>	Trainer role playing/simulations	0.55
	Learner informed input	0.53
<i>Practicing</i>	Real-life learner application	0.94
	Real-life learner application/role playing	0.86
<i>Evaluation</i>	Self assessment of strengths/weaknesses	0.94
<i>Reflection</i>	Identify performance-improvement goals	1.27
	Journaling/behaviour suggestions	0.82
<i>Mastery</i>	Standards-based assessment	0.86



# Cumulative Effects of Different Combinations of the Most Effective Adult Learning Method Practices



## Other Important Findings from the Meta-Analysis

- Training provided to a small number of learners (< 10) was much more effective than training provided to a larger number of learners.
- Training provided on multiple occasions over a period of time (> 10 weeks) for more than 10 hours was more effective than one-time training.
- Training provided in the context of real-life application in learners' work settings was more effective than “outside” training.

## Some Examples of Evidence-Based Practice Guides

Centre for Early Literacy Learning ([www.earlyliteracylearning.org](http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org))

Centre for Everyday Child Language Learning ([www.cecll.org](http://www.cecll.org))

Power of the Ordinary ([www.poweroftheordinary.org](http://www.poweroftheordinary.org))

Possibilities ([www.experiencethepossibilities.org](http://www.experiencethepossibilities.org))<sup>a</sup>

Research and Training Centre ([www.researchtopractice.info](http://www.researchtopractice.info))<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Available from Winterberry Press ([www.wbpress.org](http://www.wbpress.org))

Especially for parents of infants!

## Sure Winner Lap Games

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Parent-infant lap games are a joy to babies. The lap games in this practice guide are often the first ones a baby plays. They will help your child vocalize and "talk" to you more and more.

### What is the practice?

Lap games like *Peek-a-Boo*, *So Big*, and *I'm Gonna Get You* help infants learn about give-and-take during parent/child play. They are also a lot of fun! The more times your child plays the games, the more she will try to be part of the activity. The more she tries, the more likely she will squeal and make gleeful sounds.



### What does the practice look like?

Lap games are a fun way to encourage a child to watch, listen, and learn to play with others. Lap games are your-turn/my-turn activities. At first, you will do most of the work. When your child becomes more familiar with a game, she will try to begin or do part of a game. Encourage your child to start or continue a game. This will help her learn she can get someone to play with her.

### How do you do the practice?

Here are several simple but powerful lap games. They will give you an idea about how to make your baby a "star player." You can find many other lap games by searching the Web using *infant lap games*.

- Wait until your child is alert and well-rested. This will make the games more fun. Most infants like to lie on their backs or face-up on their parent's lap while playing these games.
- Three lap games most infants enjoy are *Peek-a-Boo*, *So Big*, and *I'm Gonna Get You*. There are no right or wrong ways to play such games. The important thing about lap games is the give-and-take and back-and-forth play between you and your child.
- **Peek-a-Boo.** Cover your infant's eyes with a cloth. Remove it, and say "Peek-a-boo, I see you." Repeat the game when your child seems to enjoy it.
- **So Big.** Gently stretch your child's arms above her head while saying "so big." Kiss or blow raspberries on your child's tummy after her arms are stretched out.
- **I'm Gonna Get You.** Say "I'm gonna get you." Repeat the phrase three or four times. Move closer to your infant's face and finally kiss or tickle her neck.
- Play lap games as often as your child seems to enjoy them. This will help your child learn how a game is played. Encourage her to do part of the movements of the game. This can be something like lifting her hands above her head while playing *So Big*. Any time your child vocalizes or makes any sounds, repeat them and make them part of the game.

### How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to start or do some part of the game?
- Does your child squeal, make sounds, or laugh as each game ends?
- Does your child seem to recognize how the game is played?

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## Take a look at more infant lap games

### Let's Play "So Big!"

Three-month-old Madison and her father have developed a unique way of playing *So Big*. She starts the game by raising her arms above her head and "hollering" to get her dad's attention. Dad then says, "Daddy sees Madison who is so, so big!" He tickles her under her arms. Madison squeals with delight and starts the game again. She and her dad repeat the game many times. Dad changes what he does by raising Madison's arms above her head and blowing raspberries on her tummy.



### Hey, This Is Fun!

Daniel, 10 months old, loves it when his mother plays *I'm Gonna Get You*. Mom starts the game by holding her hands out in front of her and closing and opening them. She says, "I'm gonna get Danny, I'm gonna get Danny." She moves her hands closer and closer to her son's stomach. She finishes by gently grabbing Daniel around his tummy and rocking him back and forth. Daniel gets her to "do it again" by looking at his mother and babbling happily.



### What a Kick!

Eli, 9 months old, isn't able to use his arms and hands very well. But his mother has found a fun way to play *Peek-a-Boo* with him. Eli loves to kick and does so often! His mother attaches a ribbon to a small towel. She ties the other end to Eli's ankle with a Velcro band. Mom gently bends Eli's legs while placing the cloth over his face. She asks "Where is Eli? Where is Eli?" Eli kicks off the towel. His mother exclaims, "Peek-a-boo! I see you!" Eli now bends his knees on his own to tell his mom he wants to play the game again.



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## Oohs and Aahs

Vocalizing and Listening

Language development moves along at full speed when babies have fun-filled babbling and cooing "talks" with their parents.

### What is the practice?

This practice guide includes ways to get your infant to make more sounds. Infants who use cooing sounds to "talk" are able to start and continue interaction and play with people. Cooing includes vowel sounds such as *ah*, *ooh*, *eee*, *uh*, *ah-ee*, and the like.



### What does the practice look like?

Face-to-face interactions between you and your baby are the best times to work on increasing infant vocalizations. Any play activity is likely to encourage cooing and babbling. Repeat or imitate the sounds your infant makes. It won't take long for him to learn that anytime he makes sounds, you will repeat the sounds he says.

### How do you do the practice?

Follow these simple steps to get your infant to use his voice more and more.

- Start by placing your child in a comfortable position. Very young infants often like lying on their backs or being held in your lap while looking up at you.
- Talk to your infant while gently tickling his tummy or neck. Touching your infant's mouth with light pats sometimes will get him to make sounds.
- Any time your infant makes a sound, imitate what he says. At first the sound you say should match or be about the same as the sound he makes. It is best to wait until your child is finished "talking" before imitating his sounds.
- Try changing the sounds you use to imitate or repeat what your infant has said. If he says "ah," you might say "ah goo." Changing the sounds is likely to capture his interest.
- Be sure to show your infant that sound play is fun. Smile, laugh, and show him that you're excited by the sounds he makes. If you are enjoying the interaction, he will likely get excited.

### How do you know the practice worked?

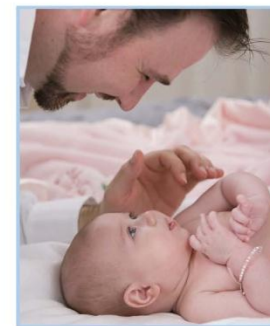
- Does your child repeat the sounds you imitate?
- Is your infant using different kinds of cooing sounds?
- Does your infant get more and more excited while playing sound games?

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## Take a look at more fun with baby "talk"

### Imitation

Alexis is 7 months old. She knows that it is time to play whenever her father places her on her back on a favorite blanket. Dad talks to Alexis and tries to get her to talk to him. Her father starts by asking, "Is my little girl going to talk to her daddy?" At the sound of his voice, Alexis begins to coo. Every time she makes a cooing sound, her dad waits for her to finish. He repeats the sounds to Alexis's delight. Dad has learned that copying his daughter's sounds gets her to "talk" more and more to him.



### Repetition



Seven-month-old Tyler lies in his crib after waking up. He likes to just lie there and make different sounds. He also tries to make new sounds. His routine now includes *ah*, *ah-ha*, *eee*, *ooh*, and *ohh-goo*. Tyler is also trying to make sounds like blowing raspberries. Mom waits until he is "talking away" before going in to pick him up. Before Tyler can see her, she repeats whatever sounds he happens to be making. This is a game that Tyler and his mother have been playing for some time. He smiles and laughs whenever he hears her voice. Mom moves into Tyler's line of vision and says, "You hear Mommy,

don't you?" This gets him to make even more sounds. Mom tries saying something just a little different to get him to try the new sound. He does not always get it just right, but he loves this tit-for-tat between himself and his mom.

### Amp It Up!

It is sometimes hard for 6-month-old Cindy to make sounds loud enough for her parents to hear. Her dad has found a simple way for Cindy to be heard. He uses a child's microphone and audio player/amplifier to "turn up the volume." The first time Cindy heard her own cooing sounds "loud and clear" she was startled. But now she starts cooing whenever Dad brings out the microphone. He imitates Cindy and sometimes makes other sounds as they go back and forth "talking" to each other. Cindy is now able to make louder sounds since she has started her own version of karaoke!



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## Places To Go and People To See

Literacy Learning Experiences

Babies' homes are rich in moments that set the stage for later reading and writing. Things that happen outside the home also help infants learn early language and literacy skills.

### What is the practice?

Routine family and community outings provide a child lots of early learning opportunities. They introduce infants to people and places that are sources of rich learning experiences. This practice guide includes activities for learning communication, language, and the beginnings of reading and writing.



### What does the practice look like?

Things that happen day in and day out provide a child chances to hear sounds and words. See pictures and symbols. And introduce a child to reading and writing. These things happen all the time. This can be something as simple as seeing labels on boxes or cans at a store. It also can be something like infant story times at a public library.

### How do you do the practice?

The ideas in this practice guide are things your child might already do. Getting your child more involved in these and other activities is what the practice is about.

- Start by thinking about things your child will most likely enjoy. The more interesting an activity, the more likely your child will try to communicate and talk.
- Take part in your child's play. What is your child most likely to do? Look for your child to make sounds, point, reach, get excited, and more.
- Talk about what your child is doing. Describe what your child is looking at, touching, and playing with. Use short sentences and questions. "You see the kitty, don't you?"
- Respond to your child's use of gestures or sounds. Repeat what your child does or says. This tells your child that he got you to play.
- Urge your child to show you what he is doing or looking at. Tune in to what your child is doing. The more you do this, the better the chance that he will want to "tell you" what he is doing.

### How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child use gestures or sounds to get you to play?
- Does your child get excited when you use words to describe what he is doing?
- Does your child show more interest in starting or playing an activity?

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## More learning during baby's everyday routines

### Rhymes & Songs

Tim is 4 months old. He likes to play games that involve rhymes and singing. He gets all worked up playing **Peek-a-Boo**, hearing **Baby's Eyes**, and hearing his parents say **Rock-a-Bye Baby**. Tim's mother and father try to include these kinds of rhymes in their son's everyday routines. Dad plays **Peek-a-Boo** while changing Tim's diaper. He plays **I'm Gonna Get You** while feeding Tim. Mom plays **This Little Piggy** while putting on and taking off Tim's clothes. She recites **These Are Tim's Fingers** while they play on the floor. Tim's day is full of these fun-filled language and early literacy activities.



### On the Town

Bryan and his mother spend lots of time seeing friends, running errands, shopping for food, and going to community events. One of 9-month-old Bryan's most liked things is having mom or dad read him stories. Bryan's mother uses his love of reading as part of what they do when out and about. Mom has a list of places they go to provide Bryan reading and storytelling experiences. Her list includes their local library, a bookstore, recreation center, grocery store, a neighbor's house, and a local theatre. Bryan so much looks forward to what he will get to do next!

### Everyday Literacy Activities

Scribbling with crayons or magic markers  
Playing with alphabet blocks or letter magnets  
Listening to music  
Playing **Peek-a-Boo** or **So-Big**  
Playing finger games and clapping games  
Playing rhyming games

Playing with puppets and stuffed toys  
Going to the library  
Talking on the phone  
Having pretend phone calls  
Going food shopping  
Taking car or bus rides



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## Give Me, Give Me!

Gestures and Signing

Before infants learn to talk, they often use gestures to let others know what they want. This handout includes ideas for helping your child use gestures to ask for what she wants.

### What is the practice?

Play games where your child uses gestures to ask for something or to continue playing a game. It won't take long for your child to figure things out. She will start using different movements and gestures to get you to do something she wants.



### What does the practice look like?

A one-year-old is sitting on the floor dropping toys and other objects into a container. The child dumps everything out and starts over. Mom starts handing the toys and other objects to her child. Sometimes Mom waits until her child "asks" for another thing by reaching or looking at the object. Any time the child extends her hand toward a toy, Mom gives her child another object. The child starts "asking" for more objects by holding her hand out. Before long, the baby is using a palms-up gesture to have her mom hand things to her.

### How do you do the practice?

This practice involves you and your child playing together with some toys or other objects. The main idea is to add "pauses" into the parent-child play. Pauses will help your child "ask" for a toy or object so you will continue playing with her.

- Start by identifying toys and other materials that your child likes. Small objects that your child can hold in one hand work best.
- Your child should be in a comfortable position where her hands are free to play with the toys or objects. This can be in a highchair or walker. Sitting on the floor or in your lap. Anywhere or anyplace will do.
- Start the game by handing something to your child. Follow your child's lead. Hand her another toy or object anytime she seems interested in playing with something new. Talk about what your child is doing.
- Wait until your child shows some sign that she wants another object. Anytime your child tries to get you to give her another object hand him the toy. Sometimes wait a bit longer to encourage her to use a palms-up request gesture.
- Games that involve your child "giving" an object in exchange for another work best. Stacking rings. Dropping toys in a bucket. Rolling a ball back-and-forth. Any of these will get your child to "ask for more."

### How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child reach more often for another object?
- Does your child look at you when asking for something?
- Does your child use a "give me" gesture to get you to hand her an object?

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## Take a look at more "Give Me, Give Me" play

### Asking for "More"

Matthew's snack times are full of asking for "more." The 8-month-old boy loves to eat dry cereal. His mom uses this interest as part of a game of "Tell Me What You Want." Mom starts snack time by placing four or five cereal bits on Matthew's highchair tray. Next she hands pieces of cereal to Matthew. Finally, Mom waits for Matthew to ask for more by looking at her or gesturing toward the cereal. Mom hands another bite of cereal to Matthew by holding her hand out palm up. Her son takes the cereal from her hand. Matthew is catching on. He now asks for things by holding out his hand to have someone give him something he wants.



### Take a Boat Ride

One of 9-month-old Ava's favorite things is bath time. She loves to play with a boat that has space for putting things inside so they can "take a ride." She delights in putting things in and taking them out of the boat. Her father plays a special kind of give-and-take game with her. Ava will ask her dad for toys by holding her hand out to her father. After all the toys are in the boat, she hands them back to her father. He drops them into the tub while saying "boom" each time one makes a splash. Ava loves to see her dad drop the toys in the water. Each time she splashes with her hands and tries saying something that sounds like "boom."

### First Signs

Will is 10 months old and has a hearing impairment. He becomes a bit irritated when he is trying to "tell" someone that he wants something or wants to play. Mom and Dad have started using sign language with Will. They are using signs like *more*, *eat*, *drink*, *again*, *yes*, and *no*. They use the sign for *more* to help Will ask for more food or drink. The sign for *eat* is used to communicate hunger. They use the sign for *drink* to have Will ask for water or milk when he is thirsty. Will uses the sign for *again* to have Mom or Dad play a game over and over. He also signs *again* to look at a book one more time.



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Especially for parents of toddlers!

## My Turn, Your Turn

Talking and Listening

Most toddlers are starting to develop the ability to take part in real interactions with the people around them. They are beginning to learn how to talk and play with parents, teachers, and peers. But before children can take part in meaningful interactions, they need to learn skills like how to take turns.

### What is the practice?

Involve your child in taking turns with games, conversations, finger plays, and sharing toys. These activities will help develop the skills he needs to interact well with others. Turn-taking is one of the most basic parts of being able to communicate with others. Toddlers who get lots of practice taking turns will have an easier time talking and playing with others.



### What does the practice look like?

Play with your toddler by taking turns with a toy. Talk about what you are doing and encouraging her to do the same. Look at a book together and take turns describing what you see. Toss a ball back and forth as each of you says "Mine!" or "My turn!" when it's your turn. These are just a few of the kinds of activities that prepare your toddler for successful communication.

### How do you do the practice?

Your daily routine includes many opportunities for turn taking. In fact, almost anything you do with your toddler can be a chance to practice turn taking. Simply be sure to alternate which one of you is doing the activity. Keep talking about what you're each doing during the activity.

- Follow your child's interest. Use whatever toy your toddler is interested in playing with to start a conversation. Start by commenting on what she is doing with the toy. When it's your turn, you can ask her to talk about what you are doing. Or, you could choose to each talk during your turn.
- Many toddlers will naturally hand you a favorite toy. You can encourage this handing you a toy by using words like *my turn* and *your turn*. Start out by keeping the turns short. Younger toddlers don't have a long attention span yet. It also helps to maintain toddlers' interest by imitating the way they are playing with toys.
- Reading books is a great opportunity for turn taking. You can switch who turns the pages, who comments on the pictures, or who says the words. Favorite songs and nursery rhymes can also be used that way, with alternating lines for each of you.
- For toddlers who enjoy physical activity, try tossing or kicking a ball between you as a way of taking turns. Taking turns dancing, or imitating each others' movements can be very fun. Your toddler will still learn about waiting his turn and watching to see what you are doing. His language skills can be developed by using words to describe what each of you does during your turns.

### How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your toddler offer you a toy and use words like 'my turn'?
- Does he understand that only one person can talk at a time in a conversation?
- Is he excited about talking with you, his peers, and others?

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## Take a look at more toddlers taking turns

### Hooptastic Way To Share

Tina, who is almost 3 years old, is an energetic, active little girl who doesn't always like to share toys. Her dad helps her with this by playing one of Tina's favorite games with her at their neighborhood court: shooting a basketball. "Your shot, Tina," her dad calls, as he hands the ball to Tina and lifts her toward the basket. She laughs with glee as she rises through the air, touches the rim, and pushes the ball through the hoop. "My turn now!" Dad yells. Then he does some fancy dribbling and makes a shot. "Now me," squeals Tina, waving her arms, "Oh, is it your turn? Okay," Dad says, and hands off the ball and lifts Tina through the air. They play the game back and forth while talking about their basketball skills and laughing when they miss. Each time Tina passes her dad the ball, he waits for her to ask for it back. This allows her to practice both her language and turn-taking skills.



### "Turning" Pages

Gray, age 26 months, and his mom enjoy reading together by the fireplace after lunch, just before Gray's nap. Gray likes to hold the book on his own. Sometimes he likes to talk about what's happening on the page. "Let's take turns," his mom suggests. "You tell me what's on this page." Gray describes the dog and the boy on the first page, then flips it over. "My turn now?" his mom asks, and Gray nods. His mom reads the text, then Gray says "My turn," and "reads" the next page. Together, they listen to each other's versions of the story and actions through to the end of the book.

### Time for a Countdown

Two-year-old Emilee, who has language delays, loves playing in the sand with her brother Matt at the beach. But Matt has the green plastic pail she wants to fill with wet sand. "No, Emilee," Matt tells her. "I'm using it." Emilee starts to get upset, but their dad says, "Matt is going to have it for ten more seconds, then you get a turn, Emilee. Watch and count with me." Emilee watches her dad as he counts slowly to ten, then Matt hands her the green pail. She looks at it in amazement, then grins and begins filling it with sand. After a couple of minutes, Dad says, "It's almost time for Matt's turn again." Emilee listens to her dad and brother count to ten again. "Now give it back to me, Emilee," Matt says. She does give it back, eager to use this magic formula to get the toys she wants without a fight.



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Especially for parents of toddlers!

## Movin' and Groovin' Nursery Rhymes

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Exploring the world of language while getting to move their bodies is exciting for most toddlers. Action rhymes—rhymes paired with body movements—are fun. They give toddlers opportunities to learn new words and phrases while matching them with physical movements.

### What is the practice?

The chants and body movements of action rhymes promote the development of speech and listening skills. Young toddlers often engage in action rhymes with a parent or other children.



### What does the practice look like?

Action rhymes are short rhymes—either sung or spoken—that are matched with body movement to tell a story. An example of an action rhyme is *Ring Around the Rosies*. Walking in a circle with big brother and sister and falling down at “We all fall down” is great fun. You can find action rhymes that help toddlers build word skills by searching the Web. A good term to search is **action rhymes**. To help you make up your own action rhymes, search with the term **rhyming words** for fun ideas.

### How do you do the practice?

The practice guide *Fingerplays All the Way* offers some suggestions about how to introduce action rhymes to your toddler. Using action rhymes about topics of interest to your child is an important starting point. The following are a few examples of action rhymes your toddler might enjoy:

#### Little, Bigger, Biggest

A little ball. (Make a ball with finger and thumb.)  
A bigger ball. (Make a ball with two hands.)  
And a great big ball. (Make a ball with arms.)  
Now help me count them.  
One, Two, Three! (Repeat gestures for each size.)

#### Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat  
Gently down the stream.  
Merrily, Merrily, Merrily, Merrily,  
Life is but a dream.  
(Sitting on the floor with your child, hold his or her hands and rock backward and forward.)

#### Stretching

When I stretch up, I feel so tall. (Reach high.)  
When I bend down, I feel so small. (Bend over.)  
Taller, Taller, Taller, Taller. (Reach up high.)  
Smaller, Smaller, Smaller, Smaller.  
(Get low on the floor.)  
Into a tiny ball.

#### Ring Around the Rosies

Ring around the rosies.  
A pocket full of posies. (Hold hands and go around in a circle for the first two lines.)  
Ashes, ashes, we all fall down! (Fall to the ground.)

### How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your toddler participate more in action rhymes?
- Is your toddler smiling and laughing while doing the action rhyme?
- Does your toddler try to change or make up new action rhymes?

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## Take a look at more action rhymes for toddlers

### Fun with Rhyming

Two-year-old Sadie always enjoys jumping and running around, so action rhymes are fun for her. She and her dad do the motions together and take turns being the leader. Dad starts with “Stand up tall” and they both stretch up high. “Get down small” and they drop to the floor in a ball. Then Sadie takes a turn and calls, “Run to the hall!” They both take off running to the hall. The back-and-forth directions continue with words rhyming with *ball*, like *call*, *hall*, *small*, *tall*, *fall*, *crawl*, and *wall*. Sadie loves playing the game and begins to make up nonsense words that rhyme.



### Calming Action Rhymes

Sometimes going to bed isn't easy. Peter's dad has found that calming action rhymes help his 30-month-old toddler settle down. Dad makes up a rhyme for bed time. Dad says, “Time for bed, time for bed,” and Peter crawls onto the bed. “Fluff up your pillow,” and he pushes on his pillow. “Lay down your head,” and down goes the head. “Pull up the blanket,” he pulls up the cover. “Tuck in tight,” Dad makes sure the covers are up. “Close your eyes and sleep all night!” Dad knows Peter enjoys the rhymes, actions, and settling effect of the routine because he asks for it every night.

### It's a Stretch!

Raza, a toddler with moderate motor impairment, loves to sing and dance to his favorite children's songs. When “Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” starts, Raza loves the rhymes and tries to touch the correct body parts. Big brother Sahil stands behind him and helps move Raza's arms to touch the right parts at the right time. Sometimes they both get lost going too fast, which makes them laugh. Sometimes Sahil tries to get Raza to do the motions wrong, and he cheers when Raza catches the mistake. They both sing the song, and Raza moves more easily as his muscles strengthen and stretch.



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Especially for parents of preschoolers!

## Wacky Word Games

Talking and Listening

A playful attitude makes gaining listening and language skills fun for preschoolers. Your young child will delight in the same wacky word games that have appealed to children for generations. You can also invent new ones together.

### What is the practice?

Word games can take the form of songs, rhymes, and letter games. These games help your preschooler learn new words and listening skills. Children ages 3-5 who are exposed to a rich language and print environment have better language skills.

### What does the practice look like?

Word games help your child describe and think about the world around him. There are many times every day when you can play word games about things that interest and engage your child. Point out things that you see while you are driving. Have your child describe how his lunch tastes. While waiting in line at the grocery store, ask your child what he sees that's green.



### How do you do the practice?

Playing *I Spy*, *Simon Says*, and naming opposites are examples of word games that you can play with your preschooler. Most preschoolers love to play games. Playing word games is a great way to get your preschooler to talk about the world around him. Most preschoolers love to talk. So it can be easy to follow his interests and play word games with him.

- Play a game of *I Spy* in the car, a doctor's waiting room, or the check-out line at a store. Interest your child by "spying" things you know he likes. For example, "I spy something red and blue." "My new T-shirt!!" "Yes, you guessed it! Now, it's your turn."
- Play games such as *Mother, May I?* or *Simon Says* to help your child develop listening-comprehension skills. Give simple commands that can be done at home or anywhere. For example, "Stand on one foot," "Skip to the door," or "Clap your hands."
- Play an opposites game: Give your preschooler an easy word and ask him to name the opposite of that word.
- Play the *Hot and Cold* game. Choose a favorite toy of your child's to hide while he is in another room. Ask your child to come and try to find his toy. When he goes in the wrong direction, cross your arms, shiver, and say, "Brr, you're getting cold." When he goes in the right direction, fan your face and say, "You're getting warmer." Continue until your child finds the toy. Repeat, or try reversing the roles and having your child hide a toy for you to find.

### How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your preschooler using new words?
- Does your child show more interest in playing word games?
- Does your child ask you to play listening comprehension games such as *Simon Says*?

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## Take a look at more wacky word games

### On the Lookout

Three-year old Cody likes to play *I Spy* in the car with his mother. They play on the way to preschool every morning. Cody looks out the window and yells, "I spy something green, Mama!" Cody's mother asks "Is it that exit sign?" "No," says Cody with a pleased smile. "Is it the grass?" guesses his mother. "Yes!" says Cody. Cody's mother says, "I spy something that starts with an M. Can you guess what it is? Remember what sound the M makes? Mmm, mmm." Eagerly, Cody says, "Motorcycle!" "Yes, you guessed it, Cody, good job," replies his mother.



### Listening for Simon

One afternoon, five-year-old Omar plays *Simon Says* with his father in the backyard. At Omar's request, his father is "Simon" and tells Omar, "Simon says jump up and down!" With a smile, Omar hops up and down enthusiastically. "Great!" says Dad. "Simon says, 'Quack like a duck.'" Giggling, Omar makes quacking sounds. "March in a circle fast!" commands his father. Laughing now, Omar stands still. "You aren't marching!" exclaims Dad. "That's 'cause you didn't say 'Simon says!'" yells Omar with glee. "That's right! What a great listener you are," says his father with pride. "Now let's see . . . Simon says, 'Run across the yard!'"

### "You're Getting Warmer!"

Four-year-old Lakeisha has developmental delays. One day, as she gets ready to nap, her father picks up the stuffed bear that she sleeps with. He places it on a low shelf in her room within her sight and reach. "Lakeisha," he says, getting her attention, "it's time for your nap, but your bear is hiding! Let's see if you can find her." Lakeisha looks on her bed. "Oh, that's far from her. You're so far away that it's cold!" he says, pretending to shiver. Lakeisha smiles as she realizes the game. She takes a couple of steps and looks expectantly at her father. "Oh, I think you're a little warmer, now." Happily, she takes a few more steps. "Uh oh, now you're getting colder again!" Lakeisha turns around and goes the other direction. "Wow, now it's getting hot!" he says. Lakeisha keeps going toward the shelf. Suddenly, she sees the bear and with a happy cry takes it from the shelf. "You found her, Lakeisha! Great job!" says her father as he tucks her and her bear into bed.



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Especially for parents of preschoolers!

## Read It Again!

Reading and Storytelling

Young children love to hear their favorite books read aloud again and again. Repeated readings help preschoolers master the story lines, ideas, and language of well-loved stories.

### What is the practice?

Repeated reading lets children learn the words, story structure, and use of language in a story. Parents can read a story many times so their preschool child can talk about and be part of the story. Many young children, especially those with speech and language delays, are not able to grasp an entire story on the first reading. So hearing books read several times helps them learn and notice new things.



### What does the practice look like?

When hearing a story several times, a child can figure out what a new word means by the rest of the words he hears. Sharing a book again and again lets your child notice repeated sound patterns. If you point out some letters and words each time you read a book, he can begin to match letters to sounds.

### How do you do the practice?

Here are some ideas that will help you make repeated readings interesting and fun for your young child.

- Encourage your child to be part of the fun as you share favorite books. Welcome her comments and questions. Ask her what happens next.
- Preschool children are most likely to enjoy repeated reading when the books are about things they find familiar and interesting. A great place to start is by reading the child's favorite book.
- Let the child choose the story. Preschool children will often choose the same book again and again on their own.
- Be excited about the story, even when you're reading it for the umpteenth time. Read-aloud sessions are much more than saying words and turning pages. When you express your own excitement about the pictures, story, setting, and characters, the child will be excited too.
- Let your child "read" the story to you. Children get to know the words and plots of stories that have been read to them many times. They enjoy saying the words and turning the pages, just as if they were reading the book.
- Involve your child in repeated reading when you are both relaxed and unhurried. Perfect times? How about when you snuggle together at bedtime or when you're passing time in a waiting room.

### How do you know the practice worked?

- Does the child bring you the same book to be read over and over?
- Does she seem to have "picked up" new vocabulary words or an understanding of the story?
- Does the child make comments about the story or tell what's going to happen next?

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## Take a look at more repeated reading

### One More Time!

Five-year-old Aaron loves pretending to build things with his toy tool kit. In the children's section of a bookstore one afternoon, Aaron finds a book about his favorite television show. Aaron's father sees him paging through the book and goes to sit beside his son. He begins to read the story to Aaron, taking time to let him enjoy each picture. When they reach the end of the story, Aaron takes the book and opens it to the beginning. His father takes the hint and reads the story again, this time pointing out different things in the pictures. When they reach the end of the story, Dad asks if he'd like to buy the book. Aaron's face lights up as he agrees. On the way home in the car, Aaron looks through his new book and "reads" the story aloud. At bedtime that night, Aaron picks the new book for his bedtime story. Dad happily reads it to him for the third time that day. He pauses on each page to let Aaron enjoy the pictures and talk about what's happening in the story.



### Role-Playing While Reading

Four-year-old Janet and her mother wait together at the doctor's office for Janet's yearly check-up. The office is busy and the wait is long. Janet's mother has brought along a few of Janet's favorite books. She pulls the books from her bag and asks Janet to choose one for them to read together. Janet picks the one about a princess that they have been reading almost every night at bedtime. Janet's mother begins to read the book aloud. She makes Janet laugh by talking in funny voices for each of the characters. She offers to let Janet take the princess role. She pauses so that Janet can "read" the princess' lines in the story. Janet knows all the princess' lines by heart and eagerly says each one in her most princess-like voice. Afterward, they read the story yet again, with Janet "reading" a different role while her mother is the princess. Mother and daughter have a great time with the story until Janet's name is called by the nurse.

### Let's Read Again!

Three-year-old Javier has severe language delays and uses hand signs to communicate. Javier was given a book about a baby rabbit by his father. This week it's the only book he is interested in. Javier brings the book to his mom and dad at nap time. "Do you want me to read the bunny book again?" asks his father as he stretches out next to Javier. Javier snuggles in between his parents and Dad begins to read. Dad points to the pictures and engages Javier by asking, "Who is that?" Javier smiles and makes the sign for **rabbit**. "Yes, that's the rabbit," his father answers. He carefully articulates the sounds in the word **rabbit** while making the sign. When they have finished the book, Javier signs, "Again, Dad!" His father starts the story from the beginning. This time he asks Javier different questions he can answer by signing.



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## Getting in Step with Responsive Teaching

Carl J. Dunst  
Melinda Raab  
Carol M. Trivette

The ways in which parents and other persons interact with a young child matters a great deal for the child to learn to communicate and talk. This *Center on Everyday Child Language Learning Tool* includes four simple steps for using a practice called **responsive teaching** that a parent can use while interacting with his or her child during everyday activities like meal times, dressing, and parent-child play (Dunst, Valentine, Raab, & Hamby, 2013). Parental responsiveness to a child's behavior while the child is involved in everyday activities is an easy but powerful way to enhance a child's language development (Dunst, Raab, & Trivette, 2011; Raab, Dunst, Johnson, & Hamby, 2013).

Responsive teaching is a particular way of interacting with a child that starts with a parent following a child's lead while the child is doing something he or she likes to do or is involved in an activity the child finds interesting or entertaining. Responsiveness simply involves a parent making positive comments about what a child is doing, providing feedback, or joining the child's play. Being responsive to what a child is doing or trying to communicate while involved in interesting activities is how a parent gets his or her child to continue to do what the child is already doing. When a child is involved in an activity, there are many more opportunities for a child to interact with and learn to communicate and talk to a parent. Responsive teaching also includes those things a parent can do to support and encourage child language learning like asking questions or describing in

more detail what his or her child is doing. The Appendix includes a one page reminder sheet that highlights some of the most important things a parent can do at each of the four steps of the responsive teaching procedure.

### Four Easy Steps to Responsive Teaching

**1. Involve your child in interesting learning activities.** Start by thinking about all of the things your child likes to do and finds interesting. Or you can use our *Child Interests Activity Checklist Tool* (Number 3) to identify your child's interests. Once you have identified your child's interests, involve your child in as many of these activities as you can as you go about your day, during evenings, and on weekends and as often as you can.

**2. Pay attention to what your child is doing in the activities.** Pay particular attention to what is the focus of your child's attention and how your child is trying to get your attention or is trying to talk or communicate with you during the activities. Follow your child's lead by concentrating on what is the focus of your child's play or activity.

**3. Respond positively to your child's attempts to communicate or talk.** Acknowledge your child's attempts to interact with you by responding to or commenting on what your child is doing (e.g., By giving your child a drum that she is pointing at). Praise your child for talking or even trying to talk by describing what he or she is doing (e.g., "You really like to bang on that drum!"). (Don't overdo it!



# Getting in Step with Responsive Teaching

1. Involve your child in interesting learning activities. Start by thinking about all of the things your child likes to do and finds interesting. Or you can use our *Child Interests Activity Checklist Tool (Number 3)* to identify your child's interests. Once you have identified your child's interests, involve your child in as many of these activities as you can as you go about your day, during evenings, and on weekends and as often as you can.
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3. Respond positively to your child's attempts to communicate or talk. Acknowledge your child's attempts to interact with you by responding to or commenting on what your child is doing (e.g., By giving your child a drum that she is pointing at). Praise your child for talking or even trying to talk by describing what he or she is doing (e.g., "You really like to bang on that drum!"). (Don't overdo it! Too much responsiveness to your child's behavior may distract him or her from what your child is doing.) Join in the activities with your child by taking turns or imitating what your child is doing (e.g., Taking turns banging on a drum). Show your child that you are excited about what he or she is doing by smiling while responding to your child's attempts to talk or communicate.
4. Encourage your child to communicate or talk in new or different ways. Respond in ways that are different from how you have been interacting with your child. Introduce new information about what your child is doing (e.g., by saying "That is a big drum" in response to your child saying or trying to say "drum"). Introduce new words (e.g., "The drum makes a loud noise"). Ask simple questions in response to what your child is trying to do or say (e.g., "What noise does the drum make?"). Arrange things in different ways (e.g., add new materials or place an interesting toy within view but slightly out of reach) so your child tries to say something different.

# Responsive Teaching Reminders

Melinda Raab Carl J. Dunst

- 1. Involve** your child in **everyday activities** that are **interesting** and that **offer many good opportunities for language learning**.
- 2. Pay attention** to how your child tries to communicate or use language during these everyday activities.
  - See your child's behavior as his/her way of saying, "I want to interact with you" or "I want to interact with other people during this activity."
- 3. Respond** positively to your child's communication or attempts to communicate in the activities to get him or her to keep interacting with you:
  - Acknowledge your child's attempts to interact with you.
  - Comment on or praise your child for trying to communicate or use language in the activities.
  - Join in interactions or play with your child.
  - Imitate your child to encourage him or her to keep an interaction going or keep playing.
- 4. Encourage** your child to communicate in **new or different ways**:
  - Respond in ways that are slightly more complex than your child's attempts to communicate.
  - Give new information or use a new word with your child.
  - Ask simple questions in response to your child's attempts to communicate.
  - Arrange things so your child needs to communicate or use language in different ways in order to make things happen.

Everyday Times: Beyond ...

Home RSS Print Page Safety

# Everyday Times

Ordinary Moments Become Extraordinary Learning Opportunities

TABLE OF CONTENTS | POWER OF THE ORDINARY | PUCKETT INSTITUTE


Volume 1, Issue 9

## Beyond Tiles and Towels!

Children's learning opportunities are "fixtures" in your bathroom


Beyond learning simply "to use the facilities," young children find a home's bathroom a great setting for all sorts of learning experiences. The process of running water and fascinating "funnies" guarantees interest and openness to all sorts of activities.

Click a photo to see more ideas!




**Bubba-dub-dub** the tub's at the hub of learning opportunities in the bathroom.


Washing hands can be **good clean fun**




**Science** how bathroom plumbing works.




**Good screaming** starts here.



This is the place to create bright **smiles**.



**Interesting discoveries** abound at laundry time.




Internet 50%

Volume 1, Issue 9

# Beyond Tiles and Towels!

The bathtub's the perfect place to...



- Learn the words "hot" and "cold" on the faucet handles
- Fill and pour water from unbreakable containers
- Splash with hands and feet
- Discover which bath toys sink and which float
- Name the parts of the body as you wash each one
- Disguise yourself with soapsuds beards and hairdos

# Everyday Times

Ordinary Moments Become Extraordinary Learning Opportunities

TABLE OF CONTENTS | POWER OF THE ORDINARY | PUCKETT INSTITUTE

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Someone's in the kitchen

It's a great place to stir up a batch of learning fun

In many households, the kitchen is the principal family gathering place. It's the room where parents and children meet naturally throughout the day to nourish both body and spirit. Often, young children are happiest there - close to and interacting with mom or dad as they go about daily cooking and cleaning chores. Kitchens are both comforting and stimulating - great places for learning to happen.

Click a photo to see more ideas!



**Scrapping a slab** "I made myself" is a young child's delight.



The kitchen sink can be the key to hours of **fun learning**.



**Shared meals** can be the setting for happy, rewarding moments in family life.



**Lending a hand** at meal preparation time builds skills and confidence.



Children combine snack time with **leaky morsels of learning**.

Please take a moment to fill out our [Feedback Form](#)

Volume 1, Issue 6

# Someone's in the kitchen

Baking homemade cookies is great for...

Choosing the kind of cookies you want to bake

Measuring ingredients

Pouring ingredients in a bowl and stirring

Looking at illustrations in cookbooks

Sharing with others

Taking pride in a tasty product





# Possibilities Interests + activities = fun Spotlight on Books

Laurel County  
Preschool Program  
123 North Place  
Ashmont, NC 20000  
201-0101

## Books are Beautiful!

Children and books. It's a happy relationship that can begin at a very early age.

Babies chuckle and squeal while turning and tasting the colorful, hefty pages of their first "board books." Smiling toddlers snuggle close to Daddy and Momma for bedtime sessions with well-thumbed storybooks. Preschoolers form a circle of enthralled listeners at book store and library story hours. Fledgling readers tackle brightly illustrated books all by themselves with growing pleasure and pride. Older children can't wait to be swept away by the latest volume of Harry Potter's magical adventures or by a book on whatever other topic has captured their growing imaginations.

Our community offers an abundance of ways for children and families to



develop and enjoy their love of books and reading. Among them are:

- Libraries
- Bookmobiles
- Book stores
- Used book exchanges
- Library story hours
- Book store story hours
- School media centers
- Reading tutors and mentors
- Book fairs and book sale fundraisers
- Family literacy programs



## More bright ideas: WHERE TO GO and WHAT TO DO for FUN!

**Did you know . . . ?**

Our public libraries offer young book lovers many services besides book borrowing. Children and families enjoy checking out read-along book/cassette sets, video-tape and DVD movie versions of many favorite stories; framed art posters and prints, and, at some branches, home activity/play kits. Weekly story hours for preschoolers and annual summer reading programs are other fun opportunities found at many local libraries. Call your children's librarian for great ideas and a schedule of events.



- LIBRARIES**
- Blair Mountain Branch, 105 North Douglas Street, Blair Mountain
  - East Ashmont Branch, 902 Tunney Rd
  - Edwinton Branch, Fire Station Road, Edwinton
  - Enloe-Carlton Branch, 1404 Sandy Road
  - Eton Branch, Brickfield Road, Eton
  - Fairlawn Branch, 1 Tarry Road, Fairlawn
  - Freedom Branch, Highway 25 South, Freedom
  - Green Gorge Branch, Green Gorge Road, Zebulon
  - Henleyville Main, 301 North Washington Street, Henleyville
  - North Ashmont Branch, 37 East Larchmont Drive
  - Park Memorial, 67 Vance Street
  - South Ashmont Branch, 749 Fairlawn Road
  - Swansdown Branch, 101 Charles Avenue
  - Weaverdale Branch, 41 North Main Street, Weaverdale
  - West Ashmont Branch, 970 Hayes Road
- STORY HOURS**
- The Ashmont-Laurel Library
- System offers preschool story hour, story & crafts times, summer reading programs, and many other book-related activities for children. Call the branch library of your choice for their schedule, or call the system's events phone number, 200-1111.

- BOOKMOBILES**
- The Ashmont-Laurel Library system operates a bookmobile out of its Enloe-Carlton Branch. Call for a schedule of stops: 777-7777.
- TELEPHONE STORY**
- Library Friends sponsors a recorded story-reading service available to children by telephone. A new story is featured each week: 200-3333.
- BOOK STORES**
- Accent Books, 854 Merriton Lane
  - Barnes & Noble, 83-E Tunney Road
  - Books-A-Million, 136 South Tunney Road
  - Mrs. Malaprop, 55 Vance Street
  - Once Upon A Time, 7 Cathedral Circle
  - Talespinner, 108 Maple Street, Blair Mountain
- USED BOOKS**
- My Bookshelf, 485 Henleyville Road
  - Downstream Books & News, 67 North Concord Avenue
- WRITING BOOKS**
- Children who have fun writing and illustrating their own stories and books can take part in courses offered by The Writer's Workroom, 200-2222.

Possibilities, a project of the Center for Innovative and Promising Practices at the Orelena-Hawks Puckett Institute, is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (H128J000084). The Orelena-Hawks Puckett Institute is a not-for-profit organization conducting asset-based activities that promote and enhance the healthy development of children, families, and communities. [www.experiencethepossibilities.info](http://www.experiencethepossibilities.info)



# Bright Ideas

An idea-packed resource for evidence-based learning and fun!

Vol. 1, No. 1 • 2007

## Powerful FUN with Responsive Playthings

### Making a difference with infant learning games

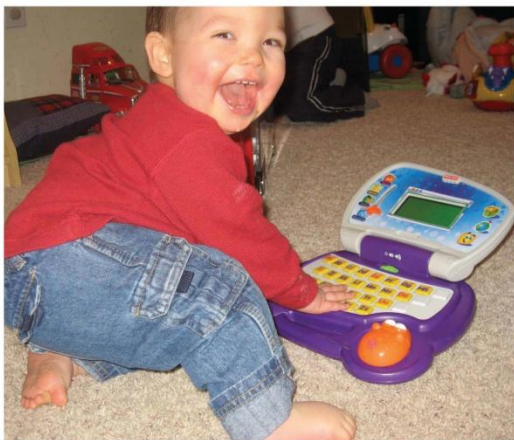
Kaki Roberts

Researchers who study infant learning have found that **active learning games** help children who are developmentally very young grasp the important connection between their own actions and interesting and fun things that happen next. When young children understand that *their behavior can cause* something they encounter in their environment to respond in an interesting way, they've achieved an extremely significant learning milestone. They've become *active learners!*

Everyday interactions with toys and other baby-safe objects found in a child's ordinary surroundings are excellent times for helping the very young child learn the relationship between cause and effect—the powerful understanding that HE or SHE can *make things happen!* Bath times, feedings, taking rides in a stroller or grocery cart, changing clothes ... all are excellent, naturally occurring opportunities for active learning. And when this learning takes place in the context of playful fun—as part of an active, rewarding, cause-and-response “game”—the learning is even more powerful.

In this issue of *Bright Ideas*, we present (on the reverse side of this page) a handful of the active learning games described in *Ready, Set, Play! Learning Games for Promoting Child Competence*, a forthcoming book from Winterberry Press. The games are best used with children whose abilities range

from 2 to about 8 months of age developmentally. Consider these games as starting points for creating other games that appeal to a child's interests, strengths, and sense of fun. The child will be delighted as he or she experiences increasing control over interesting aspects of the things encountered in his or her life. Just remember to allow plenty of time for your child to realize the connection between his or her action and the enjoyable response it prompts. Soon your child will be performing the action again and again!



The little one pictured above reacts gleefully as he realizes that his actions—moving a lever, pushing a button, spinning a dial—cause this “busy box” toy to produce the rewarding sounds and pictures he enjoys.

## BRIGHT IDEAS

Have fun with your own variations on these active learning games

### • Gone Fishin' •

By splashing water with his arms and hands, the child gets to see floating toys bob and spin. To play, you'll need a water table or a dishpan filled with water. Float a variety of toys on the surface—rubber ducks, small boats, ping-pong balls, etc. Stand or seat the child beside the water table or other water container. Place his hands in the water. Gently help him splash the water so he can see how this makes the toys move. Wait for him to move his hands again. If he needs help, tap his arms and hands. The bathtub and the kitchen sink are other locations to try this game.

### • Groovin' •

A musical keyboard, especially one with a light and pleasing “touch,” is a great tool for teaching the connection between an action and what happens next. To play this game, make sure the keys are within easy reach and say: “Let's make some music.” Help the child put her hands on the keys. Wait and see if she presses the keys to make music. If she needs help, gently push her hands on the keys to make them sound. As long as she is pushing the keys to make music, the game continues.

### • Whole Lotta Shakin' •

In this game, the child gets to see pom-pom streamers shake, hear the swishing sound they make when they move back and forth, and feel the gentle brush of the colorful paper or plastic streamers.

Let the child sit on the floor facing you with his hands free to shake back and forth. Place the pom-pom handles in his hands so he's able to hold on to them. If needed, Velcro can be applied to make an adjustable loop to attach to his hands or wrists. Help him move his hands back and forth so he can see, hear, and feel what happens. Wait for him to shake the pom-poms on his own. If he needs help, call his name or touch his hands so he can enjoy the pom-poms' action again.

### • On the Road Again •

In this game, the child's vocalizations result in a fun wagon ride. You'll need a child's wagon and materials (blankets, pillows, seating device, etc.) to securely position the child in it. Place the child in the wagon. Look at the child and pull the wagon a short distance. Stop and wait for her to make a sound with her voice. If she doesn't, gently call her name. Each time the child vocalizes, pull the wagon a short distance and wait for the next vocalization.

### • Play that Funky Music •

In this game, the child enjoys seeing a mobile shake and hearing it make jingling sounds by kicking her leg. You'll need a mobile that makes a jingling sound when it shakes, a Velcro bracelet that fits around the child's ankle, and a ribbon long enough to reach from the child's ankle to the mobile.

To play, lay the child on her back with the mobile suspended above her chest so that she can see and hear it. Attach the Velcro bracelet around one of her ankles. Gently help the child kick her leg to show her what happens. Wait for her to kick her leg. If she doesn't, tap her leg or gently move it again. Each time she kicks her leg, she's rewarded by appealing movement and sounds.

If the child needs support in order to kick her leg, place a rolled-up towel under her knees. You can also try placing the mobile low enough for her to reach with her feet, without use of the ribbon.



## Strengths-Based Child Development and Family Support Practices

Exciting print, Web-based, and multimedia materials of interest to parents and early childhood practitioners are also available from Winterberry Press. Visit us online at [www.wbpress.com](http://www.wbpress.com). To order by telephone, call 800-824-1182.

The research synthesis *Social-Emotional Consequences of Response-Contingent Learning Opportunities* by Carl J. Dunst and *Latency to Learn in Contingency Studies of Young Children with Disabilities or Developmental Delays* by Melanie D. Hutto include more detailed information about the practices described in this activity page. These syntheses are available from Winterberry Press at [www.wbpress.com](http://www.wbpress.com).

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# Bright Ideas

An idea-packed resource for evidence-based learning and fun!

Vol. 1, No. 2 • 2007

## Powerful Social Fun for Little Ones

### Make a Difference with Infant Learning Games

Kaki Roberts

Researchers who study infant learning have found that active learning games help children who are developmentally very young grasp the important connection between their own actions and interesting and fun things that happen next. When young children understand that *their behavior* can cause an interesting consequence, they've achieved a tremendously meaningful learning milestone. They've become *active learners!*

Everyday parent-child interactions are excellent times for helping the very young child learn the relationship between cause and effect — the powerful understanding that he or she can *make things happen!* Diaper changes, mealtimes, reading a story, riding in the stroller or grocery cart ... all are excellent, naturally occurring opportunities for active learning. And when this learning takes place in the context of playful fun with a caregiver—as part of an active, socially rewarding, parent-child “game”—the learning is even more powerful.

In this issue of *Bright Ideas*, we present a handful of the active learning games described in *Ready, Set, Play! Learning Games for Promoting Child Competence*, a forthcoming book to be published by Winterberry Press. The games are best used with children whose abilities range from 2 to about 8 months of age developmentally. Consider these games as starting points for creating other games that appeal to a child's interests, strengths, and sense of fun. The child will be delighted as he or she experiences increasing control over interesting aspects of the people in his or her life. Just remember to allow plenty of time for your child to realize the connection between his or her action and the enjoyable social response it prompts. Soon your child will be performing the action again and again!



*These little ones react gleefully to the rewarding responses, such as tummy tickles and smiling faces, that their actions prompt during active learning games.*

## BRIGHT IDEAS

Have fun with your own variations on these active learning games

### Stand Stand By Me

One of the best possible social rewards—a warm hug—awaits the child when she stands up. For this simple game, you'll need a small bench or chair low enough for the child's feet to rest on the floor when she's seated. Sit facing the child. Help the child rise and stand, then give her a hug so that she can see what happens when she stands. **Wait** for the child to move to stand. If she does not stand, call her name. Each time she stands, give her hugs. The child's standing continues the game.

### Alley-Oop!

In this game, the adult player swings the child in response to the child's moving his body. To play, place the child on his tummy in your arms. Look for any body movements from the child. Once he moves, swing him forward and back, adding a favorite spoken expression such as “Whee!” or “Alley-Oop!” as you swing. Then stop swinging and **wait** for him to move his body once more. Moving his body is the signal he wants to play again. If he doesn't move, help him by swinging him and then asking if he would like to do it again. This time wait for him to move.

### I Feel Good

In this game, each time the child lifts her feet she gets to enjoy having someone rub them. No special materials are needed. Simply relax and kick your shoes off, then place the child on her back so that she can freely move her feet and legs.

To play, gently massage the child's feet or pull her toes in ways she enjoys. After a short while, let go of her feet and watch her reaction. Look at her in anticipation, waiting for her to lift her feet to you. When she moves her feet, tell

her: “Oh, you want me to rub your feet again!” as you begin to rub her feet once more. If she needs help to lift her feet, place your hands under her ankles and lift them slightly as you say, “You're telling me to rub your feet.”

For a child who likes her bath, you can play this game in the tub, soaping up her feet. At bedtime or during diaper changes, play by kissing her toes.

### Reach Out & Touch Someone

For this game, the child gets you to blow on his hands by touching your face. Place the child on his side, propping him with pillows, if needed. Lie down beside him, facing him, and get close enough that he can touch your face with his hands. (This can also be played with the child seated on your lap, facing you.)

Guide his hand to touch your face, then blow on his hands to show him what happens when he touches your face. Wait for him to touch your face again. If he doesn't, call his name or touch his hand. Each time he touches your face, respond by blowing on his hands.

### I'm Gonna Get You

The social interactions of talking and tickling are this game's rewards each time the child smiles. Place the child on her back on a bed or blanket, or reclining in a baby seat. Look at her with a smile and tickle her, saying: “I'm gonna get you!” Wait for her to smile. If she doesn't smile, call her name and touch her face. Each time she smiles, say “I see that smile! I'm gonna get you!” and tickle her gently. Wait for her to smile again to continue the game.

A variation of this game could be using a favorite stuffed animal to do the tickling in response to each smile. It's important to wait for the child to repeat the smile before continuing the game.

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## Conclusions

- To be useful to parents and practitioners, evidence-based practices should inform users about the particular characteristics of a practice that are likely to be beneficial
- Evidence-based practices should easily fit into everyday life and not add to the demands (and stresses) on parents and practitioners
- Regardless of the severity of a child's delay, evidence-based practices should produce observable outcomes within 4 to 6 weeks of intervention

**This PowerPoint presentation is available at  
[www.puckett.org/presentations](http://www.puckett.org/presentations)**