Efficacy of Literacy Curricula for Improving Preschoolers’ Phonological Awareness

Christine Woods, M.A.T.
Special Education, School Psychology and Early Childhood Studies

Introduction

• Phonological awareness (PA) is the ability to understand manipulation of the sounds in spoken language
• A child’s PA proficiency in kindergarten is predictive of future reading success
• Explicit code-focused instructional strategies have a positive impact on children’s PA
• Preschools frequently follow a child-directed model in which teacher-led direct instruction is uncommon
• This review analyzes whether implementation of an explicit, systematic curriculum increases preschoolers’ phonological awareness proficiency.

Methods

• ERIC ProQuest search
• Terms
  • preschool & “literacy curriculum”
• Limited to
  • peer reviewed
  • scholarly journals
  • after 2002
• 33 articles identified
• Screened for
  • experimental or quasi-experimental design
  • PA outcome measures
• 9 articles met criteria

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Random Assignment</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>PA measure &amp; Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assel et al., 2007</td>
<td>Let’s Begin with the Letter People &amp; Doors to Discovery</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>Rhyming .26 DSC .26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bierman et al., 2008</td>
<td>Head Start REDI</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>Elision .35 Blending .39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidson, 2009</td>
<td>Ready, Set, Leap</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>254</td>
<td>Rhyming .19 ISF .21 Blending .35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeBaryshe &amp; Goreki, 2007</td>
<td>Learning Connections</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Rhyming, Alliteration &amp; ISF .60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonds et al., 2009</td>
<td>Opening the World of Learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Rhyming, Alliteration &amp; ISF .60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldstein et al., 2017</td>
<td>PAth to Literacy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>FS IDGI -.04 WPF .52 ISF 1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice et al., 2010</td>
<td>Read it Again</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Alliteration .30 Rhyming .41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonigan et al., 2011</td>
<td>Literacy Express</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>739</td>
<td>Blending .14 Elision .36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcox et al., 2011</td>
<td>Teaching Early Literacy and Language</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>ISF .53 Rhyming .56 PALS PreK 1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average PA Effect Sizes

Discussion

• Cohen (1977) cautioned relying on these cutoffs because quality of study design, statistical analysis, and previous work in the field should also be considered
• Although efficacy varied, all reviewed curricula demonstrated a positive impact on PA proficiency
• Studies since 2002 show promising results, but additional well-controlled longitudinal randomized trials with adequate sample size are needed to advance our understanding of preschool curriculum efficacy

References