

2008

Reading aloud to children who are deaf or hard of hearing

Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/pacs_capstones



Part of the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brankatelli, Eileen Bouldin, "Reading aloud to children who are deaf or hard of hearing" (2008). *Independent Studies and Capstones*. Paper 193. Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences, Washington University School of Medicine. http://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/pacs_capstones/193

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences at Digital Commons@Becker. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Studies and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Becker. For more information, please contact engeszer@wustl.edu.

**READING ALOUD TO CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF
HEARING**

by

Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli

**An Independent Study
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of:**

Master of Science in Deaf Education

**Washington University School of Medicine
Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences**

May 16, 2008

**Approved by:
Barbara Lanfer, M.A. Ed, C.E.D., Independent Study Advisor**

This study examines the benefits and most effective techniques of reading aloud to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, including an instructional video and booklist for parents.

copyright by

Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli

2008

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor Barb Lanfer for her help, support, and proofreading of this study. I would also like to thank Central Institute for the Deaf for the use of their cameras, computers, and editing software. I additionally appreciate the technological assistance and time of DaRel Mays.

Table of Contents

Section	Page Number
Acknowledgements	ii
Epigraph	2
Children who are deaf or hard of hearing, language, and reading	3
Why read aloud and what are the benefits?	5
Why is it important for parents to read aloud?	11
Is frequency a factor?	13
What does a good literate environment look like?	14
How are the greatest benefits from reading aloud achieved?	16
Timing and Seating – Setting the Mood	16
Interactive Reading Styles	18
Asking Questions.	20
In Response to the Questions – Child discussions and parent acknowledgement	22
Background Knowledge	25
Attention to Vocabulary	26
Using Voicing.	27
Focusing on Conventions of Print	27
Retelling	28
Story Props and Activities	28
Specific Strategies for Reading to an Infant and a Toddler	29
How should reading material be selected? What is appropriate?	31
References	35
A Parent’s Guide to Reading Aloud to Your Child Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing	38
Recommended Booklist for Reading Aloud to Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	46
A Parent’s Guide to Reading Aloud to Your Child Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Instructional DVD (Not Included)	56

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.”

(Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23)

“Reading aloud is invaluable in creating the language foundation that many deaf and hard-of-hearing children lack.”

(Stelling, 1997, p. 76)

“Reading aloud to children has been pursued at home and in schools for centuries, and indeed is probably the most highly recommended activity for encouraging language and literacy.”

(Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 10)

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing, language, and reading

Before examining the impact that reading aloud can have on a child, it is important to note the reasons that children who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) are in such need of these benefits. Children who are D/HH begin life with a deficit of missing out on the language and sounds of the world around them due to their hearing loss. Easterbrooks and Baker (2002) state that these children have language delays caused by insufficient and an inability to process auditory input (p. 33). In a lecture on September 19, 2007, to a PACS 4515 class, Professor Berkowitz stated that the four reasons that hearing loss effects language is a late language input, a reduced quantity of input, a reduced quality of input, and fewer interactions with others. These language delays are different but apparent in almost every child who is D/HH.

Having a language delay affects many aspects of reading. Luetke-Stahlman (1999) states that the largest deficit for children who are D/HH in reading is that of vocabulary knowledge (p. 214). Vocabulary is important for understanding figurative English, inferences, and multiple meanings. Many children simply do not know the vocabulary because it is not in their immediate world, they have not been taught it, or picked it up incidentally through listening. Most children who are hearing learn a variety of words from their environment, including from others' discussions, the television, or being able to hear all of a conversation. This lack of vocabulary is also tied to a lack of background knowledge, or understanding and categorization of the surrounding world, for similar reasons. The background knowledge is an important piece to comprehending expository text, a task which is difficult for children who are D/HH and can result in academics deficiencies.

Students who are D/HH also have trouble with story comprehension due to a tendency "to recall disconnected and distorted parts of texts," (Plessow-Wolfson and Epstein, 2005, p.

370). This is in part due to not being able to understand or take notice of the connections between ideas. The text will only have meaning if the appropriate order and relationship between events is defined. In order for them to hold meaning, it is necessary to make links within the story. Children who are D/HH have demonstrated more difficulty in recognizing and holding onto these connections (p. 370).

There are many more, smaller issues that relate to the overall language deficit. The reading difficulties experienced by these children appears throughout many statistics. Proven through past research studies and again now published by Traxler (2000), it is shown that the majority of graduates who are D/HH are not reading above a fourth grade level. The 50th percentile for 18 year old students who are D/HH fell right below the 4.0 grade equivalent for scores on reading comprehension. As compared to hearing peers, both the 50th and 80th percentiles fall in the Performance Standards Level 1: Below Basic (p. 342). Less recent statistics from Marschark indicate that more than 30% of students who are D/HH will end high school as functionally illiterate. This can be compared to only 1% of students who are hearing leaving school illiterate (as cited in Plessow-Wolfson & Epstein, 2005, p. 369). These statistics indicate that there is a significant problem with reading that needs to be addressed. This literature review will examine the ways in which reading aloud can benefit children who are D/HH in an effort to attain success in learning language, reading, and in closing the literacy gap between these children and their hearing peers.

Why read aloud and what are the benefits?

An overview of statistical information concerning the benefits to all children of reading aloud can be useful in understanding the benefits to children who are D/HH. Sènèchal, LeFevre, Hudson, and Lawson found that the most important factor for a preschool child's receptive and expressive vocabulary was their exposure to story books. This was after they had controlled for parents' education, parents own literacy levels, and children's analytic intelligence (as cited in Hargrave & Sènèchal, 2000, p. 76). The earlier children are read to, the better chance of it benefiting their literacy. Reading aloud to children already has visible effects in the preschool years. Through examining multiple studies, Trelease (2001) determined that, "students who read the most, read the best, achieve the most, and stay in school the longest" (p. 7).

Trelease (2001) determined through examining different research that the most important factor in raising a child to be a reader is reading aloud. The time that a child spends out of school compared to that spent in school is tremendous (p. xviii). Using any of this time for reading aloud will be time well spent. By the time children reach the beginning of first grade, a measure of their vocabulary will be a good predictor of their reading ability both at the end of first and third grades (Hargrave & Sènèchal, 2000, p. 75). This means that it is important to help children build up their vocabulary before they enter the first grade. Since children who are D/HH typically have smaller vocabulary than their hearing peers, this statistic becomes more important to take into consideration due to the importance of vocabulary gain.

Students observed in second and third grade by Wood and Salvetti (2001) were originally in a read-aloud program in kindergarten. These were students who were considered at risk, had limited early literacy experiences and could have limited English proficiency or vocabulary. While in a different situation than children who are D/HH, their similar deficits in language,

vocabulary, and reading makes this research more applicable to children who are D/HH. They found that after two years, the participants in the read alouds had an average gain of 114.98 words whereas similar children who were not read aloud to only had a gain of 56.65 words (p. 80). Overall there was a higher fluency and comprehension rates for the participants. They had higher average ratings by teachers for appropriate book choice, motivation to read, engagement in reading activities, and reading competency (p. 80). It was determined that an extensive read aloud program done in kindergarten can have lasting effects into the later elementary grades (p. 82).

Again, Bus and Ijzendoorn (1997) emphasized the importance of early book reading to children and the benefits that come with an early start. Their research determined that parents reading to their children before six years of age corresponds to the children's outcomes in the areas of language growth, emergent literacy, and reading achievement (p. 55). These are areas in which delays or deficits can result from a hearing loss. Through their research with infants, Bus and Ijzendoorn determined that reading development starts before the preverbal stage.

Hargrave and Sènèchal (2000) observed a similar age group of 3 to 5 year olds, who had vocabulary delays. The average age of the study was 4 years 1 month and an average language delay, as determined by the Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised, of 13 months. The children were read aloud to using a system called dialogic reading. The teachers and parents used this interactive and question-filled method each time they read. The children showed a four month gain in expressive vocabulary in a period of only four weeks (p. 86).

Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) found that regardless of whether students were just read aloud to or read to in a more interactive fashion, like dialogic reading, they showed vocabulary gains from a pre-test to post-test. These gains are similar to those of students who

were learning words incidentally through reading them in a meaningful context (p. 471). This is an important finding for reading aloud, demonstrating that students are not just hearing the words, but internalizing them as if had read them on their own.

Beyond the broader spectrum of raising vocabulary and reading abilities there are specific areas which have been found to benefit from reading aloud. One such area is in the acquisition of decontextualized language and vocabulary. Wasik and Bond (2001) define this as “language that is used to convey new information to audiences who have limited shared experience with the context,” (p. 243). Through examining past research they found that shared book reading was a great opportunity to learn this type of language, a finding also supported by Beck and McKeown (2001). The later of these researchers found that children can usually only comprehend situations that make sense to them, but decontextualized language helps them understand ideas that are not currently here and now (p. 10). This study and van Kleeck, Gillam, Hamilton, and McGrath (1997)’s research indicate that decontextualized language skills relate to other components of literacy. These include decoding, understanding story narratives, and print productions (Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 243). This type of abstract language is usually more difficult for students who are D/HH to acquire since it takes more reasoning and language to understand a concept which cannot be seen or physically described.

A similar area to that of decontextualized language is that of symbolism. According to Bus, van Ijzendoorn, and Pellegrini, books can provide a context for learning about the symbolic function of pictures, written language, and written symbols. Picture books read to young children are the foundation for this understanding of representation (as cited in Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1997, p. 47). Symbolic features in a book can often be understood by 14 to 15 months of age (p.58). These findings are also supported by the fact that children can learn the

symbolic relationship between print and speech after listening to a book (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Robertson, 2000). These findings support that reading aloud by parents will lead to increased written language awareness and literacy.

Luetke-Sthalman (1999) examined the benefits of reading aloud to children who are D/HH. She determined that reading aloud helps semantic and syntactic language development. This is the meaning and structure of language, essential to foundations and growth of language. In regards to the text itself, it helps children to understand text structure and the form, function, and conventions of print. It can also help to enhance comprehension (p. 194). Being read to can also increase the vocabulary of children who are D/HH, as has been supported by many other researchers. Children can enjoy the rhythmical language patterns in a text. Reading aloud can also help to stimulate a child's imagination and curiosity, which while not directly related to literacy, are very positive side effects (p.195).

Along with these more specific benefits, Luetke-Sthalman (1999) found that a good reading program can assist all students. In her three parts of a good reading program, adults reading to students is one of the cornerstones. She found that this practice can result in significant differences in the language and literacy abilities of all ages regardless of the type of text they are reading (p. 188).

An intervention performed by Dale, Grain-Thoreson, Notari-Syverson, and Cole for students with a language delay, used shared book reading to demonstrate that this type of reading was the best for increasing overall linguistic performance (as cited in Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999, 29). Through examinations of past research studies, it was found that the reported language skill gains from reading aloud are true for families regardless of their income levels (Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 244).

Overall language gains can be found in most research done on the topic of reading aloud as is demonstrated by the above studies. “Active participation is beneficial to language learning” (Hargrave & Sènèchal, 2000, p. 77). Even after being read a single book, Sènèchal and Cornell saw that young children will add to their receptive vocabulary (as cited in Hargrave & Sènèchal, 2000, p. 76). In the same way, it is seen that grammar, another aspect of language, is “caught” by hearing it rather than being taught. Being read to can help to provide opportunities for children to hear and begin to learn language (Trelease, 2001, p. 49). This is even truer for children who are D/HH because they will “catch” even less of conversations and language due to not hearing it. Book reading can help to provide the strong language example that they need to understand grammar.

There is a circular relationship between reading and language. As children’s language grows in these multiple aspects due to reading, they will be able to read more, and reading more will again only help to increase their language. (Stelling, 1997, p. 75). This cycle is also seen by Wasik and Bond (2001) in that the growth in language from book reading helps to provide richer conversations. Being read to aids in learning vocabulary that is not found in daily conversations and adds to one’s knowledge of syntactic structures (p. 243). The sounds that are heard by the child fill up their listening vocabulary and eventually will be carried over into their speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary (Trelease, 2001, p. 39). Through examination of multiple research studies’ findings, including those above, there appears to be consistency as to the benefit of reading aloud in regards to building vocabulary (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Rosenhouse, Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1997).

An important finding also mentioned by Trelease (2001) in regards to the relationship between reading and language is the impact with more “insignificant” words such as articles like

“the” or “a”. These are notoriously hard for children who are D/HH to hear, learn, and use and are often missing from their speech. The meaning behind these words can be internalized because, the child is hearing it over and over again as read by a role model (parent) and it is placed in the meaningful content of the book (p. 39).

Rogers determined that the benefits for students who are D/HH included language development, the ability to converse about the stories, and better comprehension (as cited in Schirmer, 2000, p. 135). An increase in reading comprehension was also supported by multiple studies reviewed by, and the research of, Rosenhouse et al. (1997). While reading to students who were D/HH at a residential school in their dorms, Gillespie and Twardosz discovered that the students became more independent readers and showed greater interest in books (as cited in Schirmer, 2000, p. 176). Trelease (2001) found a somewhat different benefit from reading aloud related to spelling. Most people spell from visual memory, not from remembering rules. The best spellers have good graphic and geometric symbol recall that was gained from reading (p. 52).

There are also a couple of other areas related to reading and literacy that are affected by reading aloud. This includes gaining a better understanding of literary elements (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Rosenhouse et al., 1997). The children’s background knowledge and understanding of the world around them is also strengthened (Brabham & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Rosenhouse et al., 1997; Trelease, 2001). Not only will they be more equipped to comprehend their environment and the environment in subsequent stories, but they will be aided in building relationships between previously learned ideas, helping to make sense of their world. As stated earlier, this is an area that is usually difficulty or lacking for children who are D/HH. Finally,

reading aloud also has an amazing effect on children's attitudes (Laminack, 2000; Rosenhouse et al., 1997; Trelease, 2001).

The benefits for all children, and especially those for children who are D/HH, has been supported by much of the research on reading aloud. There are documented increases in vocabulary, decontextualized language, fluency, comprehension, syntactic and semantic language abilities, as well as overall language. While each area gives a literacy and language advantage to all children, it provides support in many of the specific areas in which children who are D/HH struggle the most.

Why is it important for parents to read aloud?

Bus and van Ijzendoorn (1997) conducted a study of the reading aloud of picture books and concluded that, "learning to read is a fundamentally social process" (p. 59). Reading is not initially begun as an isolated activity. Many times reading-aloud is also referred to as shared reading. Crain-Thoreson and Dale (1999) relate the idea of shared reading to Vygotsky's idea of scaffolding. An adult provides the social and contextual support for developing language (p. 28). The adult and child are able to develop constructed meaning together as they read (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1997; Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999). With similar views, Plessow-Wolfson and Epstein (2005) determined that when a mother provided scaffolding and used Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development, their children were later able to assume the parent's role during reading (p. 377).

Parents, as opposed to other adults, are ideal to helping their child's language grow because they are motivated to help, they interact with the child in multiple settings, and they spend more time with the child than anybody else (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999). Crain-

Thoreson and Dale (1999), while examining past research, found that parent-implemented reading-aloud interventions had more favorable results than staff-implemented interventions. It was also observed that for an interactive reading intervention, a home based program resulted in higher language measures than either a school based program, or a program that was a combination of the two (30). Again in Wasik and Bond's (2001) review of similar interactive reading interventions, the home component was critical to the program's success (p. 244). Bus and van Ijxendoorn (1997) found that in a secure attachment relationship, such as that which is formed between parent and child, a child is better able to explore unknown aspects of the environment, such as books and other print, with more confidence and less anxiety (p. 49).

Parents have a bond with their children which has been shown to be important. This can be a reciprocal action where the reading aloud is possible because of a bond, but the bond is also strengthened the more a parent reads aloud (Robertson, 2000; Trelease, 2001). It is a one-to-one situation that is perfect for parental bonding. Parents are usually a child's role model and setting the stage with good reading practices is a great way to lead by example. This influential person in a child's life can be the key to helping a child unlock a world of language and sound through books. It is important to remember in considering this research that parent does not mean mother. Mothers are often the ones who end up reading aloud to their children, and they are the focus of many reading aloud promotions. However, when fathers read to their children, especially their sons, it can have a huge impact in their children's motivation to read and view of the masculine role being important in reading (Trelease, 2001, p. 102).

Is frequency a factor?

Wasik and Bond (2001) found that through their own study and the results of past research, children acquired and used words productively if they were repeatedly exposed to them. This constant exposure came through multiple readings and frequent use of the information and vocabulary read in the stories. Crain-Thoreson and Dale (1999) found associations between the frequency and quality of book sharing with the growth and use of a child's vocabulary and abstract language (p. 28). Vivas identified the increase of children's language comprehension and expressive language in preschool and primary school with the frequency with which they were read stories (as cited in Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999, p. 28).

When children are read to again and again they are given another chance to understand the information (Trelease, 2001). This can be important especially if the words or context is new to the child. Reading over and over will provide language immersion for the child and will aid him in learning language (Trelease, 2001, 68). An added benefit to frequent reading and subsequent understanding, is a rise in self-esteem when the child can predict what will happen and feel like an "expert" about a book (p. 68).

Previously reviewed research has shown that reading aloud does benefit the child's knowledge. Mothers in Plessow-Wolfson and Epstein (2005)'s study who read more frequently talked about 15 times more concepts and ideas and asked twice as many questions as other mothers (p. 372). These concepts and questions challenge children to think and process the language that they have heard as well as make connections between different ideas in the story. Overall, it can lead to an increase in language development.

Reading aloud to children frequently has also been shown to build foundations for reading and effect later success (Wood & Salvetti, 2001, 82). This hopefully daily exposure can

effect achievement in decoding, reading comprehension, and picture storytelling (Rosenhouse et al., 1997, 178). Daily reading, is suggested as a standard part of the reading process, especially for children who are D/HH (Luetke-Stahlman, 1999; Robertson, 2000; Schirmer, 2000; Stewart & Clarke, 2003). Beyond all of these positive effects of frequent read alouds, just the act of reading aloud on a regular basis was stated by Trelease (2001) as one of four factors for early readers. Frequent reading aloud can help children's language and reading itself. Trelease (2001) presents a formula for being a better reader that can begin with reading-aloud to a child until they begin to develop the wonderful effects of reading to aid them in reading on their own:

The more you read, the better you get at it; the better you get at it, the more you like it; and the more you like it, the more you do it.

The more you read, the more you know; and the more you know, the smarter you grow.

(p. 3)

What does a good literate environment look like?

Through the above research it can be observed that the factors of language delay can be counteracted as much as possible through reading aloud. Late language input can be challenged by providing reading aloud experiences early on in a child's life. The earlier the input is given, the better. A reduced quantity of language input can be offset by reading frequently and from a variety of quality literature. A reduced quality can be affected by reading literature to help with vocabulary and language acquisition but only in conjunction with appropriate and functioning amplification. Finally, children who are D/HH often have fewer conversations and interactions, however, as reading aloud expands their vocabulary and world knowledge, they will be able to participate in more activities and be a part of more conversations. Robertson (2000) states it in another way that read alouds are so important because hearing children spend up to a year

listening before they begin to talk. Children who are D/HH need more input than their peers with normal hearing and read-alouds can help their language abilities close this gap (p. 62).

To reach each of these four goals, it is important to create an environment where the benefits from reading aloud are maximized. In a review of past studies, Rosenhouse et al. (1997) found, “that children who do not grow up in a literate environment in which they develop their literacy skills have less chance of success in reading acquisition and extraction of meaning from texts than do children who grow up in different conditions,” (p. 168). For this reason there are some basics that make up a good reading-aloud experience. The first is high quality, age appropriate children’s literature, as well as, a variety of other printed material (Trelease, 2001; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). The National Assessment of Educational Progress found that a child’s writing, reading, and math skills correlated to the amount of printed materials in the home (as cited in Trelease, 2001, p. 42).

As mentioned earlier, frequency is essential. A good program should have frequent and consistent reading times to see benefits in multiple areas like vocabulary, story comprehension, language growth, and reading abilities to name a few (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999; Rosenhouse et al., 1997; Trelease, 2001; Wasik and Bond, 2001; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). During each of these reading times it is suggested that the reading aloud be interactive, full of questions, discussions, and expansions of pictures and text as explained in the following section (Trelease, 2001; Wood & Salvetti, 2001).

A literate environment also has no time in a child’s life in which it is appropriate to begin reading. Schirmer (2000) suggests reading aloud before a child who is D/HH can understand every word or concept. This is the same as anyone would do with a baby who is hearing (p. 134). Trelease (2001) reminds parents to begin reading as soon as possible because, the earlier

one starts, the easier it is (p. 99). However, beginning to read aloud is never too late, even if it is begun at school age (Rosenhouse et al., 1997, p. 178). Children are able to learn different things from stories at different stages of their development. This can include gaining vocabulary to widening their syntactical knowledge (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999).

How are the greatest benefits from reading aloud achieved?

Timing and Seating – Setting the Mood

To obtain results similar to those of researchers, it is important to look at the read aloud methods they used. While past studies have stressed frequency and daily reading, it is important that there is sufficient time to read. Plessow-Wolfson and Epstein (2005) found that if parents read over 60 minutes then twice the number of concepts would be presented and twice the number of questions would be asked (p. 372). These are both desirable conditions as they build vocabulary, background knowledge, and challenge the child to think. However, Webster suggests that the reading time should be in shorter sessions (as cited by Luetke-Stahlman, 1999, p. 198). Either way, time set aside for reading is important.

It is important to allow the child to get settled on his or her own. If it is too forced then the child could develop a negative attitude towards reading time (Trelease, 2001). Reading should be a time of positive feelings and making connections instead of a highly structured time (Calkins, 2001; Robertson, 2000). This is important because many children who are D/HH will spend a large part of their day in a highly structured environment. This should be a time where they can enjoy reading and learn language and reading as a child with normal hearing would.

When speaking of literacy for children who are D/HH, Stewart and Clarke (2003) suggest that there should be positive and rewarding experiences with print. Children should be interested and excited about reading. Sharing a book can often be a “pleasant and satisfying experience” (p. 152). Luetke-Stahlman (1999) has seen that parents who are D/HH create a positive and interactive environment to get the most out of the reading time. In fact her first essential practice for reading to students is focusing on the purpose and enjoyment of reading (p. 199). Reading time should be fun for both the parent and the child (Robertson, 2000, p. 62).

The motivation and enjoyment of reading aloud is the most important aspect for older readers (Stewart and Clarke, 2003, pp. 160 – 161). These readers might already have difficulty with reading and without feeling successful, they could be inhibited by past failures. The children’s interest in the material is critical for a positive experience.

The child should sit comfortably, but not so comfortable that the child or the parent becomes drowsy (Trelease, 2001). The environment should be quiet, allowing the optimal listening conditions. Webster’s suggests that the situation should be quiet and relaxed so that enjoyment can be an important factor (as cited in Luetke-Stahlman, 1999, p. 198). The parent should sit next to the child to provide a good sound to noise ratio (Robertson, 2000, p. 62). This could be on the parent’s lap where the microphone of the hearing aid or cochlear implant is close. However, if the child relies on speech reading, Stewart and Clarke (2003) suggest that it is optimal to have the child sit somewhat across from the parent and place the book at a 45 degree angle (p. 153). This ensures that the child can see the parents face and body language, as well as, the text and pictures in the book.

Interactive Reading Styles

There are variety of ways for parents to read aloud to their children including just reading the text, to reading the text while pointing out the pictures or words, to having the child interact with the parent and the story. Giorgis and Johnson (1999) have found that the most natural response to being read aloud to is interacting with the story (p. 80). Luetke-Stahlman (1999) lists interactive dialogue as one of her essential reading practices for children who are D/HH (p. 200). Similarly, Stelling (1997) suggesting having the parent and child take turns reading in a sort of interactive fashion (p. 63). Parents should not force their own interpretation and reading on a child, because the highest literacy gains have been shown to be from children who talk about what they are reading. “Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand,” (Trelease, 2001, p. 64).

Many successful research interventions over the years have followed a style of interactive reading aloud called dialogic reading. This style of reading was originally developed by Whitehurst, the current director of the Institute of Education Sciences, part of the United States Department of Education. In this style of reading, the adult will follow the child’s lead, using wh- and open ended questions, and expanding on children’s utterances (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999, p. 29). Hargrave and Sènèchal (2000) state that this successful process is all about “encouraging the child to participate”, providing feedback, and “adapting [the adult’s] reading style to the child’s growing linguistic abilities,” (p. 76). It is a child centered reading style that makes everyone an active participant maximizing the potential of reading aloud.

Similar to dialogic reading, Wasik and Bond (2001) found a successful interactive reading style that contains comparable elements. Children are encouraged to talk and ask questions. They are given opportunities to interact with the story and the adults make sure that it

is interesting and inviting. Conversations are an important part of this reading style. This style of reading can be supported by the Schlesinger and Meadow's observation that children who are D/HH ages 3, 5, and 8 had communicative competence that was related to their "reciprocal and supportive interactions with their mothers" (as cited by Plessow-Wolfson and Epstein, 2005, p. 369).

There are numerous statistics to support the benefits of an interactive reading style. Sènèchal found that children who were actively engaged with an adult in book reading ended up learning more vocabulary than did those children who were not an active participant in the reading (as cited in Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 244). Hargrave and Sènèchal (2000) later found that the dialogic-reading helped children to have significantly greater gains in language than children who were just read to (pp. 85 – 86). Wasik and Bond (2001) used a preschool intervention using interactive book techniques, and the children in the groups scored significantly better on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test- III (PPVT-III), a receptive vocabulary test (p. 247). This score was in comparison to students who listened to books being read in a non-interactive fashion.

Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) observed different types of reading styles. The effects of each method was "statistically significant" and consistent for vocabulary gains across storybooks and grades (p. 470). The involved reading helped to create an average 18% increase in vocabulary acquisition as compared to just reading the book aloud (p. 471). They found that the children who knew significantly more words on a vocabulary pretest were the students who were read to with an interactional reading style (p. 469). Just reading aloud produced the smallest vocabulary gains for children while the greatest gains came from those who in the interactional reading groups (p. 470). In using the same styles with kindergarteners who had

lower memory abilities, comprehension was aided the most by the interactional style (p. 471). This finding is helpful for children who are D/HH because, as mentioned earlier, they often have trouble reading due to difficulty recalling the story.

Asking questions

An integral part of reading aloud that is related to an interactive reading style is asking questions. Beck and McKeown (2001) developed a system of reading aloud called Text Talk. An important part of this idea was asking open ended questions throughout the reading. These could lead to more discussion about the book (p. 18). While using a different method, Wood and Salvetti (2001) found that part of storybook reading should include an invitation for children to ask questions or make comments throughout the reading. If the child, like many children who are D/HH, is not able to, or does not have the language to, ask these types of questions, the parent can provide a scaffold or model (p. 79).

Parents and their children can be the ones doing the asking. Children should be encouraged to ask questions that might require researching the answer (Trelease, 2001, p. 103). Through research of past studies Rosenhouse et al. (1997) determined that an important element of reading aloud is that parents are active in asking questions (p. 168). However, while these are the suggested practices, the percentage of questions asked to children who are D/HH while reading, according to Lartz was lower than those asked to children who are hearing. Upon examination of these questions, it was found that they were the same types that were usually addressed to younger children (as cited in Plessow-Wolfson & Epstein, 2005, p. 370). This is not helping children who are D/HH to expand their language and vocabulary. Through the research of Hargrave and Sènèchal (2000) it was determined that when adults ask questions, it

creates the opportunity for children to structure their responses and use language. This ultimately leads to improved language skills (p. 87). Multiple studies show that children who did answer questions about target words during their reading aloud time were able to comprehend and produce more of those words than children who listened to a story where the words were repeated or pointed out (p. 76).

Showing good practice of these reading-aloud ideals, mothers in Plessow-Wolfson and Epstein's (2005) study helped their children's story comprehension through asking questions (p.377). This same practice was a part of Wasik and Bond's (2001) interactive book reading where children were encouraged to talk and ask questions about the story (p. 247). The similar process of dialogic reading encourages the asking of "wh" questions. These seem to be more beneficial since it requires the child to use speech unlike asking "yes-no" questions or just pointing (Hargrave & Sènèchal, 2000, p. 76). This can start with asking more "who" and "what" questions that are easy and successful for the child. However, after this point the parent can use more open-ended questions that challenge the child to use more elaborate language (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999).

Trelease (2001) suggests asking questions that have the child predict what is going to happen in the book. (p. 99). Nystrand and Gamoran suggest building questions from previous child responses. These were shown to have a strong positive effect on the child's understanding of the story (as cited in Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 16). Beck and McKeown (2000) found that when a child is unable to answer any of the above types of questions, that the adult should go back and reread the applicable part of the text and restate their question (p. 16). They had the adults in their study also use questions that prompted students to talk about different ideas (p. 14).

Robertson (2000) warns that while questioning is important, it must come naturally. Children should not feel like they are being grilled. Like others studying reading aloud, she emphasizes that these questions should be ones that generate discussions (p. 62). This helps the children to use language and practice relevant vocabulary. Luetke-Stahlman (1999) suggests that parents also beware of literal questions. “How” questions, or those that are more analytical can create better conversations (p. 197). This was also supported by a review of research done by Beck & McKeown (2001) who found that analytic talk to be the most beneficial (p. 11).

In Response to the Questions – Child discussions and parent acknowledgement

Growth in the area of literacy occurs through talking about the text and thinking about what is occurring (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 11). “Dialogue among participants is as important as the information provided by the text in terms of what is remembered by the student,” (Luetke-Stahlman, 1999, p. 201). Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) through their research on reading aloud with early elementary school grades, confirmed “teacher explanations and student discussions” as “critical factors” leading to students’ understanding of words and concepts, as well as, “construction of meaning from texts read aloud” (p. 471). Haden, Reese, and Fivush found that children who had high-level conversations preformed better on both vocabulary and language measures as compared to those students who focused on low-level utterances (as cited by Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 243). This relates back to the findings about the benefits of “wh” and analytical questions, as they create higher-level dialogue. Similarly, DeTemple & Snow found that children whose parents engage them in conversations focused on information that is not explicit to the story scored better on vocabulary measures than those that did focus on the explicit (as cited by Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 243).

Schirmer (2000) states that young children understand print by using the environment around them. This makes having conversations every time a book is read very important. These discussions will often change each time the book is read (p. 114). Conversations like these about the text can help children understand and become familiar with more rare vocabulary and new grammatical structures (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 11). These conversations are also found to be helpful when they are dealt with when the ideas in the story are present, rather than being saved for the very end of the book.

Luetke-Stahlman (1999), who includes interactive dialogue as one of her essential practices of reading to students who are D/HH, states that these conversations should be aimed at increasing understanding (p. 200). Word and text meaning can also be discussed throughout the story to aid in student comprehension (p. 213). This practice also relates to the discussion of syntactical structures to help the child understand what is being read (p. 217). These structures may be unfamiliar to an older child and can be discussed so the child can explain what he does not understand (Stewart & Clarke, 2003, p. 154). Giorgis and Johnson (1999) suggest using these discussions to examine the “layers of meaning” that are found in books. Children are encouraged to talk about what is happening and the complexities of the storyline (p. 82).

One warning offered in regards to conversations throughout the story is that of “side-tracked stories.” It is okay to acknowledge such stories and how they share differences to the story that is being read. If these stories are not integrally related to the text, a tangent story can disrupt the child’s comprehension rather than aiding it (Stewart & Clarke, 2003, p. 17). Trelease (2001) offers another warning, stating that there should be discussions, but these are not to turn into quizzes of the child’s knowledge (p. 100).

While children may answer questions and begin their own discussions, parental acknowledgement and explanations are equally important. Elley found that if children received explanations of word meaning during a reading, as opposed to those that only listened, they tended to have greater vocabulary gains (as cited in Hargrave & Sènèchal, 2000, p. 76). Similarly, when adult acknowledgments increase, so does the complexity of the child's expressive language (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999, p. 38). Likewise, parental input during book-reading demonstrated a meaningful relationship to, and gains in, a child's abstract language (van Kleeck et al., 1997, p. 1269).

Hargrave and Sènèchal (2000) suggest that feedback aids children and can come in the forms of recasting, expanding, praising, or correcting the errors in what was said (p. 77). This is also one of the key components of the effective dialogic reading system (Hargrave & Sènèchal, 2000; Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999). It is also suggested that parents can acknowledge their children through an active role in illustrating, explaining, and acting as a mediator between the text and child (Rosenhouse et al., 1997, p. 168). Parents can also provide their child with encouragement and reinforcement to their responses and questions (Wood & Salvetti, 2001, p. 79). When parents repeat and rephrase what their child is saying, it can help encourage more elaborate language on the part of the child (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 16). To help children get even more from a book, an adult can "think-aloud" demonstrating the language, and the process of, predicting, clarifying, and summarizing as they read (Block & Pressley, 2003, p. 119). Calkins (2001) agrees with a similar suggestion of modeling the learning process by taking a step back from the text and talking through how the parents thinks about it. This helps to pause and "get things straight" for the child, and models how more advanced readers would read (p. 56). After examining all of the types of parental acknowledgments, van Kleeck et al. (1997)

found there were two types of influential input. One is that of non-challenging input, which is used to promote success. The other is challenging input that is used to promote learning (p. 1269). Both are important and both can work together to make a well rounded reading experience.

Background Knowledge

Having an idea about background knowledge is important to keep in mind when reading aloud for many reasons. Adults should help children to understand and make inferences about what they are reading by combining the ideas in the text with the children's prior knowledge (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Block & Pressley, 2003; Calkins, 2001). Luetke-Stahlman (1999) considers relating the text to real life, and vice versa, as another essential practice of reading aloud. This practice can aid the child who is D/HH in understanding the concepts of the text and the meaning behind the words that they are reading (p. 203). When this previous knowledge is discussed during reading, the parents can help the child by modeling the connections they can make until the child is able to do it on their own (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 13). There does, however, need to be a balance so that the child is not relying only on their background knowledge, but is using that information to help comprehend the new ideas in the text (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Luetke-Stahlman, 1999). While helping the child think about what they already know in regards to the story topic, reading-aloud can also help children to understand more about the world around them (Schirmer, 2000, p. 134). This comes through building connections and talking to the child explicitly about these connections (Morrow & Asbury, 2003, p. 53).

Attention to Vocabulary

As shown by past research, reading aloud can have a great impact on a child's vocabulary. In order to get the most from the words in a text, it is important that they are emphasized in a meaningful context, as part of the story (Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 247). Explicit attention should be paid to new words, or vocabulary that a parent is helping a child to learn (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 18). This can be done by "calling attention to picture cues; explaining, defining, and paraphrasing; and providing synonyms and antonyms," (Luetke-Stahlman, 1999, p. 213). Learning new words through these methods should be reserved for during the reading of the text or right after it has been read, as opposed to trying to pre-teach anything (Stelling, 1997, p. 79).

Trelease (2001) observes that the vocabulary knowledge of an adult is eventually determined, not by how many words he or she knows, but by how many "rare" words are known. These are words that come up less in conversations, making gaining vocabulary from reading essential. When an adult typically talks to a three year-old he uses nine rare words for every 1000 words. There is three times this number of rare words found in children's books. When children become more advanced readers, they can find seven times that number in a newspaper (p. 17). In fact, a parental complex, model of language will be present more during book reading than during any other context (Crain-Thoreson, 1999, p. 29). While conversations are great for helping children who are D/HH build and practice language, they may not be learning all the vocabulary that they will eventually need.

Focus on vocabulary should extend beyond the reading of the story. Wasik and Bond (2001) found that if children could learn more book-related vocabulary if they had more opportunities to interact with the words rather than if they only heard the words while being read

a text. In their intervention, having multiple chances to hear the labels for vocabulary was key. Other educational researchers obtained similar results finding that children would learn words that they were exposed to multiple times (p. 247). Through previous work, Beck & McKeown (2001) had similar results where vocabulary was not absorbed as part of a repertoire unless children thought about or used the word after the book was read (p. 18).

Using Voicing

One practice that appears in many successful reading aloud strategies is using different voicing for characters and parts of the story. “Through our voices our [children] may come to believe that there is something valuable between the covers of a book,” (Laminack, 2000, p. 81). Parents can practice knowing the characters and how their personalities would effect how they sound (p. 80). Luetke-Stahlman (1999) suggests, as an additional tip to parents beginning to read aloud, that they use expression when reading (p. 198). Stewart and Clarke (2003) also suggest that varying tone is important for reading to children who are D/HH. This can help children to associate “changes in voice patterns with changes in characters,” (p. 153). Trelease (2001) recommends using lots of expression when reading and again using different tones for different characters and dialogue (p. 101).

Focusing on Conventions of Print

While it is important that children who are D/HH gain language and vocabulary skills from reading aloud, there is also the added benefit of learning to read and understand about print and books. Parents can begin by examining the cover with the child. This includes reading the author’s and illustrator’s names and explaining what each one does (Luetke-Stahlman, 1999;

Morrow & Asbury, 2003; Schirmer, 2000; Stewart & Clarke, 2003; Trelease, 2001; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). The cover can also be used to demonstrate how children can use their background knowledge, in combination with the title and picture to predict what is going to happen in the book (Luetke-Stahlman, 1999; Trelease, 2001; Wood & Salvetti, 2001). Parents can demonstrate to their children how to hold a book and how to turn the pages by letting the child participate (Luetke-Stahlman, 1999; Robertson, 2000). The children can also follow along with the words learning which way we read in English, using their finger to move along the words from left to right and top to bottom (Robertson, 2000; Trelease, 2001). All these are important literacy skills and necessary for school and reading.

Retelling

Another technique for helping children be successful through reading aloud is the process of retelling used both during and after a reading. Calkins (2001) suggests taking time to pause and help the child understand what has been happening by going back over the story (p. 59). Stelling (1997) found that retelling allowed children to review what had occurred and really begin to internalize those events (p. 77). Wood and Salvetti (2001) also agreed that the adult should go back with the child and retell the story using the pictures and continuing to talk about what happened (p. 79).

Story Props and Activities

Having materials to enhance a story is another way to aid in comprehension, retention, and enjoyment. Parents can use things like puppets or props to role play a story (Stewart & Clarke, 2003; Wasik & Bond, 2001). Even if it is not to act a story, some props add a third

dimension to a book. This could include something like having a bowl of blueberries while reading *Blueberries for Sal* (Trelease, 2001, p. 102). Having a concrete representation of the story can help a child who is D/HH make more sense of vocabulary and more abstract ideas in the story. Often also the props allow the child to hear the label for certain words more often and act to draw in interest and motivation (Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 247).

These materials are also appropriate and effective when used as an extension of the story after it is finished being read. These activities can be used for the parent to make a connection between what was read and what is currently happening. Children can get more practice at talking about, and discussing, the story and new vocabulary (Wasik & Bond, 2001, p. 247). It is suggested that this be thought about before the book is even begun (Luetke-Stahlman, 1999, p. 197). It was also found through past research that these activities for children who are D/HH can develop reading appreciation (p. 198).

Activities that accompany books can help children understand the most important aspects of the story. Enthusiasm should be present during the activities. It can bring a text to life and can take just about any form (Stelling, 1997, pp. 80 – 81). Stewart & Clarke (2003) suggest making a book from family photographs and having the child write simple captions for each (p. 176). The book could follow along with the topic of a story that has been previously read.

Specific Strategies for Reading to an Infant and a Toddler

Trelease (2001) suggests holding the infant with the parent's arms encircling to give support but not imprisonment. At six months a child will probably need something to suck on to stay still. At eight months, it is okay to let the child help turn the pages. However, parents should be aware not to stop reading the book because a baby just wants to flip all the way

through. By 12 months a child should be more involved. At 15 months it is important to choose reading times wisely that will be the least frustrating to a most likely active child. While a typical child may have an attention span of three minutes, this can be expanded to be more like 30 minutes by reading multiple times a day (p. 63).

While reading, even though a child may not understand the words, the parent should point to the things on the page (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1997; Trelease, 2001). This is a type of referencing behavior for the child to look at the page. However, this should be a reciprocal behavior where the parent should monitor where the infant is looking and immediately follow a look with pointing to the object (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1997, pp. 49, 53). A parent can vary his or her voice from excited to a whisper (Trelease, 2001, p. 64). Even if a child cannot respond, a parent should talk about the book and pause as in a normal conversation. This give and take feeling of a conversation helps to build language and can hold the child's attention for longer (p. 64). It can also improve how well the child responds in conjunction with pointing (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1997, p. 53).

For a toddler, or child with some language, the parent can work on labeling using picture books. Both the parent and child can take turns labeling pictures (Trelease, 2001, p. 65). It is important for this age to keep a focus on the experience and routine of reading even if they do not always comprehend what is being read (Stewart & Clarke, 2003, p. 153). Trelease (2001) suggests that if a passage is too far above the child's level, it can be changed or eliminated from the story (p. 100). Schirmer (2000) states that many parents do not read word-for-word in a story but rather surround the story with conversations that change the way that is read almost every time (p. 114).

How should reading material be selected? What is appropriate?

“Children need literature because good stories help them to make sense of the world, challenge their intellect, enlighten their imagination, nurture their desire to read, and heighten their awareness of self and others.”

(Fisher, Flood, & Lapp, 2003, p. 179)

The best place to start when selecting reading material is to look at where the child’s current intellectual and language level is. Often children will have a listening, or receptive level, that is above their own reading level (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Trelease, 2001). Books should be chosen that are just above this level. This type of book helps to challenge the child (p. 100). One that is above a child’s independent reading level can also enrich their language and listening skills (Stelling, 1997, p. 75). Luekte-Stahlman (1999) puts this into a Vygotskian perspective. A book should be in a child’s zone of proximal development yet be challenging. In other words, it should be at their level plus one in the areas of vocabulary and syntax. However, a book should never be above a child’s emotional level (Trelease, 2001, p. 103).

According to Luekte-Stahlman (1999), a book should be of high interest to the child and possibly focus on the child’s own experiences. Books with “absorbing plots, lively characters, and multiple layers of meaning” are good selections (p. 197). If the book is not appealing to the parent, regardless of recommendations, it should not be read (Trelease, 2001, p. 100). Also, not all books lend themselves to being read aloud. Parents should examine the amount of dialogue in a book, because this can often make it hard to read and hard to listen to (p. 104). The content should also be looked over before being read aloud (p. 83).

For infants, Trelease (2001) recommends Mother Goose rhymes and songs. These stimulate language and listening for a baby (p. 99). Engaging books will be those that stimulate a child's sight and hearing using colorful pictures and exciting sounds. This can include rhyming (p. 62). However, it is suggested that babies begin with black and white illustrations before moving onto color pictures (p. 99). Infants have trouble connecting the real life object to a two dimensional picture on a page. Books that have a single color image per page will be the best. At this age, the plot becomes secondary to the pictures and sounds in the book (p. 65).

As the infant becomes a toddler, Trelease (2001) recommends finding books that have rhythm, rhyme, repetition, are silly, exciting, and dramatic, as well as having lots of color (p. 62). Around age two and half the child can move onto books that have a simple plot. At age four, the plot of a story takes on more importance. By age eight or nine, plots will often center on real social and emotional issues that children that age are facing (p. 84). The progression for selecting books then follows to move from short pictures books with few sentences to longer ones with more text, and then to chapter books and on to "full-length novels" which are 100 or more pages (pp. 76, 100). This process should be done gradually through the use of many different books. There is no suggested, or specific, age for which children should begin to be exposed to chapter books (p. 76). If a child asks for another book after finishing a story, it signifies that his attention span is longer and he may be ready for the next level of books (p. 83). While picture books are great to be read to all ages of children, if there is at least a two year age gap between children being read to at the same time, it is advised that the a parent read to each separately as they will get greater value from this experience (p. 100).

Reading aloud to older children can be more challenging, however, not impossible. Trelease (2001) suggests picking the right timing, and not competing with the child's other

favorite activities. Also there is a higher chance of success if the reading time is kept short (p. 55). Picture books are still not out of the question, even for secondary students. They can create powerful discussions and bring to life a different perspective than would be seen by a younger child. Picture books should be picked that have an interesting story and appealing illustrations (Giorgis, 1999, p. 52). Stewart and Clarke (2003) remind parents that motivation is important. The story should be understandable and interesting (pp. 160 – 161). Sometimes this motivation will come, as do many actions at this stage in life, from their peers. Often they will hear about a book from a class or a friend (Trelease, 2001, p. 45).

Stewart and Clarke (2003) suggest that reading for older students, age ten and above, does not only have to come from literature. Parents can find print in their house that represents functional reading. These are often then easy for the child to read back and will provide confidence and encouragement. This can include clothing care, recipes, labels, shopping lists, etc. (pp. 161 – 162). Informational reading can help the student gain knowledge, insight, or understanding. This can include newspapers, encyclopedias, atlases, etc. Even reading about pro-sports can be a motivating activity (p. 163). Instructional reading involves how to do different activities like assembly instructions, rules for a game, operating manuals, etc. (p. 164). The final and most familiar category is recreational reading, which is that for pleasure. Some children this age can be intimidated by longer books. Since motivation is still an important factor comic books, joke books, and magazines can be appropriate reading material (p. 165). There is no one right book to read to every child.

One successful type of literature is the series book. These can often contribute to an increase in the amount of a child's leisure reading. As they are read, and eventually read on their own, more of the same type of book, children will gain more background information on the

world of the series and the story structures that are being used. This will only in turn lead to a better understanding of the series, which increases enjoyment, and results in the desire to read more volumes (Rosenhouse et al., 1997, pp. 179 – 180).

References

- Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985). *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*. Champaign-Urbana, IL: Center for the Study of Reading.
- Beck, I. L. & McKeown, M. G. (2001). Text Talk: Capturing the benefits of read-aloud experiences for young children. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(1), 10 – 20.
- Block, C. C. & Pressley, M. (2003). Best Practices in Comprehension Instruction. In L. M. Morrow, L. B. Gambrell, & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (2nd ed.) (pp. 111 – 126). New York: Guildford Press.
- Brabham, E. G. & Lynch-Brown, C. (2002). Effects of Teachers' Reading-Aloud Styles on Vocabulary Acquisition and Comprehension of Students in the Early Elementary Grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(3), 465 – 473.
- Bus, A. G. & Ijzendoorn, M. H. (1997). Affective Dimension of Mother-Infant Picturebook Reading. *Journal of School Psychology*, 55(1), 47 – 60.
- Calkins, L. M. (2001). *The Art of Teaching Reading*. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.
- Crain-Thoreson, C. & Dale, P. S. (1999). Enhancing Linguistic Performance: Parents and Teachers as Book Reading Partners for Children with Language Delays. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 19, 28 – 39.
- Daniels, L.A. (1988, September 7). Illiteracy seen as a Threat to US Economic Edge. *The New York Times*, p. B8.
- Easterbrooks, S. R., & Baker, S. (2002). *Language Learning in Children Who Are Deaf And Hard of Hearing: Multiple Pathways*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Fisher, D., Flood, J., & Lapp, D. (2003). Material Matters: Using Children's Literature to Charm Readers (Or Why Harry Potter And The Princess Diaries Matter). In L. M. Morrow, L. B. Gambrell, & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (2nd ed.) (pp. 167 - 186). New York: Guildford Press.
- Giorgis, C. (1999). The Power of Reading Picture Books Aloud to Secondary Students. *The Clearing House*, 73(1), 51 – 53.
- Giorgis, C. & Johnson, N. J. (1999). Children's Books: Reading aloud. *The Reading Teacher*, 53(1), 80 – 87.

- Hargrave, A. C. & Sènèchal, M. (2000). A Book Reading Intervention with Preschool Children Who Have Limited Vocabularies: The Benefits of Regular Reading and Dialogic Reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(1), 75 – 90.
- Laminack, L. L. (2000). Living Language: The art of reading aloud. *Teaching Prek -8*, 31(1), 80 – 81.
- Luetke-Stahlman, B. (1999). *Language Across the Curriculum: When Students are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*. Hillsboro, OR: Butte, Publications, Inc.
- Morrow, L. M. & Asbury, E. (2003). Current Practices in Early Literacy Development. In L. M. Morrow, L. B. Gambrell, & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (2nd ed.) (pp. 43 - 63). New York: Guildford Press.
- Plessow-Wolfson, S. & Epstein, F. (2005). The Experience of Story Reading: Deaf Children and Hearing Mothers' Interactions at Story Time. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 150(4), 369 – 377.
- Robertson, L. (2000). *Literacy Learning for Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*. Washington, D.C.: Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Rosenhouse, J., Feitelson, D., Kita, B., & Goldstein, Z. (1997). Interactive reading aloud to Israeli first graders: Its contribution to literacy development. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 32(2), 168 – 183.
- Schirmer, B. A. (2000). *Language and Literacy Development in Children Who are Deaf*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Stelling, J. (1997). *The Words They Need: Welcoming Children Who Are Deaf And Hard of Hearing to Literacy*. Timonium, Maryland: York Press, Inc.
- Stewart, D. A. & Clarke, B. R. (2003). *Literacy and Your Deaf Child: What Every Parent Should Know*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press.
- Traxler, C. B. (2000). The Stanford Achievement Test, 9th Edition: National Norming and Performance Standards for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 5(4), 337 – 348.
- Trelease, J. (2001). *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (5th ed.). New York: Penguin Books.
- van Kleeck, A., Gillam, R. B., Hamilton, L., & McGrath, C. (1997). The Relationship Between Middle-Class Parents' Book-Sharing Discussion and Their Preschoolers' Abstract Language Development. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 40, 1261 – 1271.

Wasik, B. A. & Bond, M. A. (2001). Beyond the Pages of a Book: Interactive Book Reading and Language Development in Preschool Classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(2), 243 – 250.

Wood, M. & Salvetti, E. P. (2001). Project Story Boost: Read-alouds for students at risk. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(1), 76 – 83.

What are some resources on reading aloud?

The Read Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease

Language Across the Curriculum: When Students are Deaf or Hard of Hearing by B. Luetke-Stahlman

Literacy and Your Deaf Child: What Every Parent Should Know by D.A. Stewart and B. R. Clarke



A Parent's Guide to Reading Aloud to Your Child Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing



An accompaniment to *A Parent's Guide to Reading Aloud to Your Child Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Instructional DVD*

Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli

- Use your finger as you read to show that we read from left to right and up to down

Retell the story to help the child understand and really begin to internalize what happened.

Use story props and fun activities while reading aloud.

- Puppets or props can be used for role playing
- Can add a third dimension to the book
- Concrete representations of the story can help your child understand vocabulary and abstract ideas
- Props allow your child to hear the label for the word more often
- Activities can help your child practice talking about the story and using new vocabulary
- These can really bring a text to life

An example of this would be reading *Little Red Riding Hood* and then showing a child a picnic basket. Then you might be able to go on a real picnic with your child or use pretend food to pack up a meal for Grandmother. This would reinforce the idea of a picnic basket and bring in other vocabulary about the story and about food.

This informational brochure is intended to inform parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing about reading aloud. It explains why reading aloud is important, especially for these children, and how to go about reading aloud and getting the most out of the experience.

“Reading aloud is invaluable in creating the language foundation that many deaf and hard-of-hearing children lack.”¹

“Reading aloud to children has been pursued at home and in schools for centuries, and indeed is probably the most highly recommended activity for encouraging language and literacy.”²

“The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.”³

¹ Stelling, J. (1997). *The Words They Need: Welcoming Children Who Are Deaf And Hard of Hearing to Literacy*. Timonium, Maryland: York Press, Inc.

² Beck, I. L. & McKeown, M. G. (2001). Text Talk: Capturing the benefits of read-aloud experiences for young children. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(1), 10 – 20.

³ Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985). *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*. Champaign-Urbana, IL: Center for the Study of Reading.

- Ask about predictions
- “How” questions can lead to better conversations
- Must be natural

Let your child discuss and respond to them.

- Children who have conversations have better language and vocabulary
- Better vocabulary can come from focusing on information that is not directly in the story
- Helps familiarity with rare vocabulary and new types of sentences
- Best to discuss during the story then to save all discussions for afterwards
- Should be aimed at increasing understanding
- Not a quiz of the child’s knowledge
- Vocabulary can be gained from explaining words during the story
- Research has shown that the more parents respond, the more a child will talk and use more difficult language
- You can restate, expand, praise, or correct what your child has said
- Helpful for children to stop and get the story straight

Table of Contents

Hearing, Language, and Reading 4

Why should I read aloud? 5

How often should I read? 6

How to Get the Most Out of Reading Aloud 7

How should we sit? 7

How do I set the mood? 7

Now I just read? 8

How do I read interactively? 8

What are other good reading practices? 10

What if my child is only an infant or a toddler?
How should I read to him? 12

What are some resources on reading aloud? 13

How to Get the Most Out of Reading Aloud

How should we sit?

- Find a quiet place that is good for listening
- Allow child to get settled on his or her own
- Sit comfortably, but not so you get drowsy
- Sit next to the child so your voice will be heard clearly and be loud enough
- Make sure your voice is directed at the microphone of their hearing aid or cochlear implant
- For children who speech-read, sit the child across from you and put the book at a 45° angle so your face and the book can be seen

How do I set the mood?

- Reading should be more about feelings and not structure
- Focus on the enjoyment of reading
- For an older reader, motivation is highly important
- This should be fun for both you and your child

Hearing, Language, and Reading

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) often have difficulty with language due to:

- Hearing language later
- Hearing less language
- Poor hearing of the language that is heard
- Less opportunities to interact with others

Research shows these language issues effect:

- Vocabulary
- General knowledge of the world around them
- Story comprehension

Factors such as these contribute to a national reading average of fourth grade for high school graduates who are D/HH.

You can help to make a difference
for your child!
READ!

Why should I read aloud?

According to current research:

- Exposure to story books is the biggest factor in a preschooler's vocabulary
- Vocabulary knowledge in first grade predicts reading ability in up to at least third grade
- Children who read aloud show gains of more than twice as many new words
- Reading aloud to children before age 6 effects language, literacy, and reading

Benefits from reading aloud:

- Understanding non-literal language
- Decoding (getting meaning from text)
- Understanding stories
- Improved development of sentence structure
- Improved development of word meaning
- Hearing more language
- Better reading abilities
- Better understanding of the surrounding world
- Better understanding of things and events that they have never seen or experienced

Reading is a social process that is aided by the bond of a parent. This bond is only strengthened through the time spent together. Even when children were read aloud to in school, research has demonstrated that it was the parent's reading aloud that helped children the most.

How often should I read?

Research has shown:

- More exposure to a word, leads to more words that are learned and used
- More frequency provides more opportunities to hear and learn
- Reading at least everyday is very important for children who are D/HH
- Frequency is connected to greater benefits in vocabulary, story comprehension, language growth, abstract language and reading abilities

The more often the better, you can never read too much!

Now I just read?

No, reading aloud should be interactive. Research shows that the highest literacy gains come from children who talk about what is being read.

Reading interactively has...

- Shown greater vocabulary growth
- Lead to significantly greater gains in language
- Aided comprehension

Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember.

Involve me and I understand.

- Chinese proverb

How do I read interactively?

Ask questions.

- Ask open ended questions that don't have one specific answer
- Invite your child to ask questions during reading
- Provide an opportunity for your child to structure their response and use their language
- Ask "wh" questions more than "yes-no" questions
- Can lead to improved language skills
- Can help children remember and use more of the words from the story

What are other good reading practices?

Help build your child's world knowledge.

- Combine ideas in the story to what your child already knows
- Relate the text to real life and vice versa

Use the story to build vocabulary.

- In a story, words are more meaningful
- Call attention to picture clues
- Explain new words
- Paraphrase difficult parts of the story
- Books provide a more complex language model than almost any other time
- Use the words over and over to help the child learn them

Use different voices and expression when reading the story.

Talk about different parts of the book and about reading.

- Read the author and illustrator's names and explain what they do
- Read the title, look at the cover, and predict what will happen
- Show your child how to hold the book correctly

What if my child is only an infant or a toddler? How should I read to him?

- Hold the child with the parents arms encircling to give support
- Give something to suck on so they will stay still
- Let the child turn the pages
- Choose reading times that will not frustrate your child if they are very active
- Read multiple times a day to help expand his attention span
- Point to the pictures
- Talk about the book and pause as you would in a normal conversations to let the other person talk
- Label picture books
- Change or eliminate parts of a book that may have language that is way to hard for your child

Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli

2008

Recommended Booklist for Reading Aloud to Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing



Compiled by Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli

Books About Being Deaf or Hard of Hearing

A Button In Her Ear by Ada Litchfield

Hearing Aids for You and the Zoo by Richard Stoker and
Janine Gaydos

Hooray for Harold by Tim Peters

I Hear the Day by Catherine Johnston

I'm the Boss of My Hearing Loss by Amy Kroll

Invisible Inc. (series book) by Elizabeth Levy

*My Ears Are On! The Story of A Little Girl and Her Cochlear
Implant* by MaryAnn Simpson

My Hearing Loss and Me by John F. Anderson, Jr.

Oliver Gets Hearing Aids by Maureen Riski and Nikolas
Klakow

Patrick Gets Hearing Aids by Maureen Riski and Nikolas
Klakow

“Children need literature because good stories help them to make sense of the world, challenge their intellect, enlighten their imagination, nurture their desire to read, and heighten their awareness of self and others.”⁴

⁴ Fisher, D., Flood, J., & Lapp, D. (2003). Material Matters: Using Children's Literature to Charm Readers (Or Why Harry Potter And The Princess Diaries Matter). In L. M. Morrow, L. B. Gambrell, & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (2nd ed.) (pp. 167 - 186). New York: Guilford Press.

- Shiloh* by P Naylor
- Sideways Stories from Wayside School* by Louis Sachar
- Stone Fox* by John R. Gardiner
- Stuart Little* by E.B. White
- The Call of the Wild* by Jack London
- The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Alice Dalgliesh
- The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes
- The Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Reid Banks
- The Mouse and the Motorcycle* by Beverly Clearly
- The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbit
- Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls

Table of Contents

- How to Select a Good Read Aloud 4
- How this Booklist is Organized 6
- Baby Books 7
- Books with Interesting Language (Rhyme and Repetition) 8
- Picture Books 9
- Picture Book Series 11
- Novels/Chapter Books 12
- Shorter Novel Series 14
- Longer Novel Series 14
- Books About Being Deaf or Hard of Hearing . 15
- Other Resources 16

Picture Book Series

Amelia Bedelia by Peggy Parish
Angus by Marjorie Flack
Arthur by Marc Brown
Berenstain Bears by Jan and Stan Berenstain
Biscuit by Alyssa Stain Capucilli
Clifford the Big Red Dog by Normal Bridwell
Curious George by H.A. Rey
Frances by Russell Hoban
Franklin by Paulette Bourgeois
Froggy by Jonathan London
If You Give a... (*Moose a Muffin, Mouse a Cookie, Pig a Pancake, Mouse to the Movies*) by Laura Numeroff
Little Bear by Else Holmelund Minarik
Little Critter by Mercer Mayer
Madeline by Ludwig Bemelmans
Magic School Bus by Joanna Cole
Maisy by Lucy Cousins
Olivia by Ian Falconer
Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter
Pinkerton by Steven Kellogg
Spot by Eric Hill

How to Select a Good Read Aloud

Start by looking at your child's intellectual and language level. Often children can listen to books that are more difficult than what they can read alone. Selecting a book that is just above your child's own reading level can help their language and vocabulary to grow. Make sure, however, that the topic is appropriate for your child's age.

Books should be of high interest to your child and possibly focus on some of their own experiences. These help to provide motivation and enthusiasm. Make sure that the book is also enjoyable for you to read. If you do not like it, it probably will not be a great experience for your child either.

When selecting a book for your infant or toddler, begin with black and white illustrations before moving on to color pictures. Infants have trouble connecting real life objects to pictures on a page, so pages with a single color image are the best. Books with exciting language, like rhyming and repetition, will be stimulating to your child's hearing as the pictures will be stimulating for their sight. At this age, pictures and sounds are more important than the plot.

Children who are a little older enjoy books with rhythm, rhyme, repetition, and color. They also enjoy books that are silly, exciting, or dramatic. When the child is around two and a half many books will begin to have simple plots, and the story line of the book will become more and more important from that point on. The process of moving from one level of books to a harder

Picture Books

A Chair for My Mother by Vera B. Williams
A House for Hermit Crab by Eric Carle
Abiyoyo by Pete Seeger
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
 by Judith Viorst
Anno's Counting Book by Mitsumasa Anno
Bear Feels Sick by Karma Wilson
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs by Judi Barrett
Corduroy by Don Freeman
Diary of a Worm by Doreen Cronin
Doctor De Soto by William Steig
Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert
Frog and Toad are Friends by Arnold Lobel
George and Martha by James Marshall
Goin' Someplace Special by McKissack
Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Suess
Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes
Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey
Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel by Virginia Lee
 Burton
Miss Nelson is Missing by Harry Allard
Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney

How This Booklist is Organized

This booklist provides a sampling of books that are recommended for reading aloud to your child. Baby books are those appropriate for infants and toddlers. The books with interesting language are appropriate for a wide range of children as they are exciting to listen to and engaging to read. The picture book series are great for younger readers, just as the novel series can be motivating for older readers. The series books just mean that the author has written multiple books using the same characters and usually the same setting. The novels span from shorter, easier to read books, to longer novels appropriate for older children. The shorter novel series means the books are under 100 pages. The longer novel series are over 100 pages and more appropriate for older children, or children with more advanced language. There is also a short list of books that focus on children who are deaf or hard of hearing and are learning to listen and talk. Finally you can find a list of other resources to which to refer when looking for suggested read alouds.

Baby Books

Ah-Choo! By Mercer Mayer
Baby Animals: Black and White by Phyllis Tildes
Baby Says by John Steptoe
Black on White by Tana Hoban
Blue Hat, Green House by Sandra Boynton
Counting Kisses by Karen Katz
Good Dog Carl by Alexandra Day
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
Little Bo Peep by Tracey Campbell Pearson
Max by Ken Wilson-Max
My Very First Mother Goose by Iona Opie
Pat the Bunny by Dorthy Kunhardt
The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown
Tomie's Baa Baa Black Sheep and Other Rhymes by Tomie DePaola
Where is Maisy by Lucy Cousins

Books with Interesting Language (Rhyme or Repetition)

Are You My Mother by P.D. Eastman
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? By Bill Martin, Jr.
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
Do You Want to Be My Friend? By Eric Carle
Go, Dog, Go by P. D. Eastman
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
Henny Penny by Paul Galdone
If I Ran the Zoo by Dr. Suess
Owl Babies by Martin Waddell
Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? by Bill Martin, Jr.
The Foot Book by Dr. Suess
The Gingerbread Boy by Paul Galdone
The House that Jack Built by Jeanette Winter
The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything by Linda Williams
The Napping House by Audrey Wood
The Teeny Tiny Woman by Barbara Seuling
The Wheels on the Bus by Marayann Kovalski
Tikki Tikki Tembo by Arlene Mosel

level should be done gradually and over a number of stories. If your child is asking for another book when you are finished, that is a good sign that he/she is ready for a longer or more difficult book.

For older children, finding time and interest in reading aloud may be more difficult. Motivation is important. Try to pick times that do not interfere with other favorite activities. Higher success will also come from having shorter reading times. The story should be understandable and interesting. Many times motivation can also come from reading something that peers might be talking about in school. Series books are also great for any child, but especially older children, as they gain interest through one book and are encouragers to read the rest of the series. These books help to build knowledge about the world of the series and the story structures used by the author. Having this information will create a better understanding of the books, increasing enjoyment, and resulting in the desire to continue having you read them aloud, or reading them on their own.

Stellaluna by Janell Cannon

Strega Nona by Tomie DePaola

The Island of the Skog by Steven Kellog

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Today I Feel Silly by Jamie Lee Curtis

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

Novels/Chapter Books

A Wrinkle in Time by Margaret L'Engle
Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko
Because of Winn-Dixie by kate DiCamillo
Black Beauty by Anna Sewell
Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson
Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis
Caddie Woodlawn by Carol Ryrie Brink
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl
Charlotte's Web by E.B. White
Chocolate Fever by Robert K. smith
Danny, Champion of the World by Roald Dahl
Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Clearly
Frindle by Andrew Clements
Hatchet by Gary Paulsen
Holes by Louis Sachar
James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl
Mr. Popper's Penguins by Richard and Florence Atwater
Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH by Robert C. O'Brien
Number the Stars by Lois Lowry
Old Yeller by Fred Gipson
Role of Thunder Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor

Shorter Novel Series

American Girl Series by various authors

Cam Jansen by David Adler

Encyclopedia Brown by Donald J. Sobol

Henry and Mudge by Cynthia Rylant

Junie B. Jones by Barbara Park

Magic Tree House by Pope Osborne

Nate the Great by Marjorie Sharmat

Longer Novel Series

A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket

Baby Sitter's Club by Ann M. Martin

Box Car Children by Gertrude Chandler Warner

Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis

Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling

Land of Oz by L. Frank Baum

Little House by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Ramona Quimby by Beverly Cleary

Redwall by Brian Jacques

Spiderwick Chronicles by Tony DiTerlizzi

The Littles by John Peterson

Other Resources

The Read-Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease

Hey! Listen to This: Stories to Read Aloud by Jim Trelease

Read All About It by Jim Trelease

Children's Book Corner: A Read-Aloud Resource by Judy
Bradbury

PBS Parents Bookfinder

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/bookfinder/>

*Have You Ever Wondered About Hearing Loss and Deafness?:
An Annotated Bibliography of Children's Books About
Deaf and Hard of Hearing People* by Deborah
Oldman-Brown

Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli

2008

* “A Parent’s Guide to Reading Aloud to Your Child Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Instructional DVD” was also created. Please contact Eileen Bouldin Brankatelli for a copy. This parent friendly DVD includes tips, techniques, and strategies for reading aloud. It also specifically addresses different language and age groups. These are enhanced through real demonstrations with children.