

Joint book-reading strategies in working-class African American and White mother-toddler dyads.

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Joint Book-Reading Strategies in Working-Class African American and White Mother-Toddler Dyads

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Twenty working-class mother-toddler dyads were videorecorded during three joint book-reading activities. Ten of the dyads were white, and 10 were African American, balanced for parent educational level, family income, and parental occupation. The children ranged in age from 18 to 30 months and were normally developing. The parents read an experimental book to their child two times and a favorite book they brought from home one time. Videotapes of the joint book-readings were analyzed to determine cultural differences and the effects of book familiarity on the occurrence of maternal and child communication behaviors. The results show many similarities between the cultural groups in joint book-reading behaviors. However, statistical analyses revealed a significant difference between the cultural groups in the use of questions. African American mothers used significantly fewer questioning behaviors compared to the white mothers. White children

produced more question-related communications, and African American children produced more spontaneous verbalizations. Several effects of familiarity were also found. The findings are compared to anthropological reports on caretaker-child interaction in African American families and implications are discussed.

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