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Shared book experiences in kindergarten: Helping children come to literacy

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Abstract

Repetitive shared book experiences provided by public school kindergarten staff were used to improve literacy competence and preparation for formal first-grade reading instruction. The entire 1983–1984 kindergarten population (N = 228) of a rural, racially mixed, southeastern school district in South Carolina received eight shared reading experiences for each of three classic children's books. The shared book experience is defined as the situation in which a group of two or three children sit close enough to an adult to see the print as a book is read. Readings were provided by teachers, teacher aides, school volunteers, older students, and audiotapes. The children were individually administered the South Carolina State Department of Education's mandated Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (Boehm & Slater, 1974) during the first 3 weeks of first grade. The control group, composed of the 1982–1983 kindergarten population (N = 269), had 73% of its children at or above the state cutoff for first-grade readiness, and the

experimental group had 83% at or above the cutoff. ($T = 22.2, p < .01$). In addition, the school district staff reported a 10% increase in the number of children being placed in "top" reading groups. Repetitive, personal shared book experiences were found to enhance literacy awareness and competence, to improve preparation for formal first grade, and to broaden children's literacy interests.



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