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Effect of adapted phonic faces story books on phonological skills of children with severe expressive language disorders

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Abstract

Although No Child Left Behind (2001) encourages the inclusion of children with speech and language disorders in the regular curriculum, children with severe speech and language disorders often do not receive the literacy education provided to grade-school children. This study examined the effect of adapted phonic faces story books on the phonological skills of children with severe expressive language disorders. The participants were 12 children with expressive language disorders between the ages of 4 and 6 years old. The children were randomly assigned to one of two groups: a control group (n = 6) who received traditional story books and a treatment group (n = 6) who received adapted phonic faces story books. The adapted phonic faces story books contained large, colorful, stylized faces on each page. The faces had large, expressive mouths and eyes, and the letters in the words were outlined in thick, black lines. The children in the treatment group were exposed to the adapted phonic faces story books for 15 minutes per day, five days per week for eight weeks. The children in the control group were exposed to traditional story books for 15 minutes per day, five days per week for eight weeks. The children's phonological skills were assessed at baseline and again after the intervention period. The results showed that the children in the treatment group made significantly more progress than the children in the control group. Specifically, the treatment group children increased their phonological skills by an average of 1.5 standard deviations, while the control group children increased their phonological skills by an average of 0.5 standard deviations. These findings suggest that adapted phonic faces story books may be an effective tool for teaching phonological skills to children with expressive language disorders.

taught alphabetic skills to three children with severe speech impairments in the context of traditional alphabet books vs. Storybooks. Both storybooks were converted into e-books using PowerPoint (Microsoft Office, 2003) and accessed using a switch. Two graphemes were selected based on incorrect pretest administration of the The Phonological Awareness Test (Roberson & Salter, 1997). The three subjects were exposed to the target words in a ABAB design where the treatment conditions were reverse during baseline period. Five probes assessing phonological and literacy skills for targeted graphemes were administered following each intervention session. Results revealed greater improvement in letter identification, sound to letter identification, identification of letter location, and word recognition. Identification of location of letters and sounds in all word recognition tasks improved across all three subjects during the Phonic Faces Storybook phases as seen in the pre and posttest scores on seven subtests (rhyme substitution, isolation, segmentation, blending and grapheme substitution) of the Phonological Awareness Test (Roberson & Salter, 1997) as well as silent and oral reading on the Informal Reading Inventory. Anecdotal evidence also demonstrated eagerness to work on the task and preference for Phonic Faces e-books vs. alphabet books, as well as increased speech production (imitation of speech sounds). Limitations of this study include a small number of subjects and use of a small number of words. These issues will be addressed in future research studies.

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