

The Effects of Parental Involvement on Reading Success in Kindergarten

By Elizabeth Brady

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

July 2015

Graduate Programs in Education
Goucher College

Table of Contents

List of Tables	i
Abstract	ii
I. Introduction	1
Overview	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Statement of Hypothesis	3
Operational Definitions	3
II. Review of the Literature	5
The Effects of Reading Daily with Adults on Kindergarteners Reading Ability	5
Development of Early Literacy Skills	5
Assessments in Kindergarten	7
Impact of Struggling Readers	8
Long-Term Benefits of Early Reading Intervention	9
Parental Involvement in Reading Development	11
Effect of Parents on Reading Development	12
Summary	15
III. Methods	17
Design	17
Participants	17
Instruments	19
Procedure	19
IV. Results	21

Table 1	21
V. Discussion	22
Implications of Results	22
Theoretical Consequences	22
Threats to Validity	23
Connections to Previous Studies	24
Implications for Future Research	26
Summary	26
References	28
Appendix	32
Appendix A	32

List of Tables

1. Table 1

21

Abstract

A study was conducted to research if there is an improvement in kindergarten students reading fluency, if they read daily at home with an adult. A small sample was used to conduct the research. The students reported their reading on a daily reading log. The data was then broken down into two groups, the number of days read and the number of books read. The researcher observed a low participation in parental involvement in the daily reading program. As a result, there was a wide range of data. Children who read more days and more books did show a larger gain in reading fluency, however, there was not a significant gain over children who did not read books or many days. More research with a more specific sample is required for concise results.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Early Childhood Education in the United States has become increasingly important in a child's education. As the standards for elementary aged children have become more and more rigorous, expectations for kindergarteners also have changed. They have become more academically versus socially based as an introduction to school. As a result of the importance put on kindergarten, reading is a critical skill for a child to develop early.

Reading is a skill that is taught continuously from children's first days in kindergarten to their graduation from high school, starting with the basic skills that are required to learn to read, and progressing to comprehending content, and not just word recognition. Building reading fluency is an important skill for any teacher to teach, but this is especially true for kindergarten teachers. A child needs to have a strong foundation in fundamental skills to be able to read and comprehend. Reading is a complex task that requires a child to perform many tasks at once. As a result of the cognitive ability required, reading is taught as a process (Nithart, et al., 2011).

Children who are poor readers view themselves as failures in school and have difficulties with their self-image. It is important for children who struggle to read to be identified early and to be given the proper interventions. Reading skills have continued to be an area of concern across the United States, and studies suggest early struggling readers have a long term effect on society (Khan, 2011). For example, school systems have to spend more money on reading programs. Children can also develop negative attitudes towards reading and school which can be passed on to their own children (McNamara, Scissons, & Gutknecht, 2011). Several interventions are available for children to participate in, such as Reading Recovery and Early

Reading Intervention, which are two programs that focus on letters, sounds and decoding text (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). The earlier children are able to be placed in their intervention, the better off they are for maintaining and building upon skills required for their grade level.

A strong family support system is an area of need for all children, but especially, for those in early childhood. School is a new experience for both the children and the parents. Nebrig (2008) states, "Parents play an important role in supporting the development of language by simply talking with and reading aloud to their children" (p. 18). Both in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classrooms, programs have been developed that encourage parents and children to read together. Both parents and teachers play an important role in a child's educational growth, as well as emotional, academic, and physical development (Lynch, 2010). Research shows that children who have parents who are actively involved in their child's education have seen major gains in emotional, social, behavioral, and cognitive skills (Sjuts, Clarke, Sheridan, Rispoli, & Ransom, 2012). Programs that not only excite and engage the child, but also the parents with their approach, instead of just supplying activities, have increased children's reading skills.

Children's education starts at home, with their first teacher, their parents. Therefore, it is important for children to have parents that model good reading skills for them by being their teacher as well as their parents. Reading is a process which requires practice, so children need to not only read at school, but at home as well. Children need to read frequently on their own ability level to improve their skills. Children are more likely to read well and succeed in later years when they enter school with necessary language and pre-reading skills (Nebrig, 2008). Children who had parents read to them at home when they were younger had improved literacy skills and improved test scores in reading later in their education (Nebrig, 2008)

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects on a kindergarten child's reading fluency from reading daily at home with an adult.

STATEMENT OF Hypothesis

Kindergarten children who read more at home with their parents will not have higher reading fluency scores than children who do not read at home.

Operational Definitions

Parental support means parents/guardians of a child in school, who help their child with their school work. They do this by completing homework with the child, reviewing and practicing academic skills, and reading to and with their child. In addition to supporting their child at home, parental support also includes assisting the classroom teacher in the school, by volunteering during the day or doing tasks assigned by the teacher, and communicating with the classroom teacher on the needs of the child.

For the purpose of this study, motivation is the reason to act or complete a task of children reading at home. During this study the children were motivated to read at home by earning a sticker on the reading incentive board. Once a child reached 100 books, he/she received a character to put on the board and continued to earn stickers. At the end of the year, the child who read the most books received recognition and a reward.

Reading Fluency, according to Fountas and Pinnell (2007), is the pace at which a reader moves through a text. An appropriate rate is when the reader moves along rapidly with few pauses and slow-downs or stops. The rate should be appropriate to the text, not too fast or too slow.

Fountas and Pinnell ([2007](#)) Benchmark Assessment System is a comprehensive assessment that is administered one-on-one to determine a child's independent, instructional, and frustration reading level. The teacher or test administrator assesses a child's reading fluency by administering running records. The teacher has pre-selected text for the child to read aloud. While the child reads, the teacher or test administrator marks the errors. In addition to the running records, the child is also assessed in the following areas:

- Where-to-Start Word Test
- Letter Recognition
- Concepts of Print
- High Frequency Word Lists
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics
- Word Structure
- Vocabulary

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Effects of Reading Daily with Adults on Kindergarteners Reading Ability

This literature review seeks to explore the impact of reading daily with an adult on a kindergarten students' reading ability. Section one provides an overview of the development of early literacy skills. Section two explores the impact of struggling readers. Section three explores the long-term benefits of early intervention. Section four discusses the impact of parental involvement in reading development. Section five explores the impact of parents on reading development, and in section six, a summary is provided.

Development of Early Literacy Skills

Reading is a complex function that requires the brain to perform many tasks all at once so a person can not only read a word but understand what they have just read. La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, and Piñata (2003) states, "Trajectories of school performance tend to remain relatively stable over time; children who experience success early on in school generally continue to demonstrate success in social competence and academic achievement" (p. 148). La Paro et al. (2003) continues to describe starting kindergarten as "a major change for the child and the family" (p. 147). Reading is learned in small steps with each one becoming more challenging (Nithart et al., 2011). According to the National Reading Panel ([National Institute of Child Health and Human Development](#), 2000), there are five areas of reading and reading instruction. They are: fluency, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, and comprehension. A child is taught tools and strategies in each of these five areas. In Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, and vocabulary are a significant part of the school year

curriculum. Comprehension and fluency are taught, but the focus only starts once children have a strong foundation in phonics.

One of the first skills taught is identification of the letters in the alphabet. Many students begin with singing their ABC's, but that is not the definition of learning the letters. According to Nithart et al., (2011), "Early stages of the acquisition of reading skills require learning of the correspondence between the visual and auditory forms of verbal units that is between letters and sounds" (p. 346). A child should identify and recall the correct name for a letter. Once children have mastered letter identification, they start to learn the sounds that the letters make (Nithart et al., 2011). ~~The~~ children at first only learn the most common sound for the letter. For example, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten teachers explain that C makes the same sound as K. Children need to be taught that the spoken word can also be written and vice versa. This is when children are taught to count words in a sentence and syllables. When children have learned common letter sounds, they start to blend the sounds together (Nithart et al., 2011). They learn to segment sounds in words, and blend them together, as well as adding phonemes and deleting phonemes. A skill that many people do not consider to be a reading ability is ~~to~~-name letters and numbers in sequence and identify patterns. Children need to be taught these abilities so they are able to sequence events when comprehending and identifying word patterns (Nithart et al., 2011). For children to be able to write and comprehend, they need to first learn how to write their own names and to recall short phrases and sentences in spoken language.

In addition to all of the above skills, kindergarten teachers also focus on print awareness skills (Lynch, 2010). Print literacy is some form of written text for communicative purposes, generally involving the reading or writing process (Lynch, 2010). Print awareness skills are reading left to right, top to bottom, and front to back. Other skills include identifying the role of

authors and illustrators. While reading, children with good print awareness skills are able to point to each word while they read the word. Children need to be taught how to hold a book, to turn the pages, and to read from left to right and top to bottom. Research indicates that the more a child knows about written language, the more successful ~~they~~ he/she is ~~are~~ at learning to read and to write at school (Lynch, 2010). Teachers also need to teach basic speaking and listening skills. Children need to learn how to speak and listen in reference to reading, so they are able to share, discuss, and express themselves in regards to text. Oral language is a significant part of this process, as children need to have the language development to relate to text, and to build their vocabularies (Lynch, 2010).

Assessments in Kindergarten

Education is shifting its focus to early childhood education. As a result, more schools are assessing if children are ready for school. Teachers are asked to assess if a child comes to school with the skills needed to be successful in school (Mashburn & Henry, 2004). These assessments measure, a child's readiness for school, academic success, and communication skills (Mashburn & Henry, 2004). Kindergarten assessments are not pencil and paper activities, but use manipulatives and observations. In many cases they are administered in small groups or one-on-one. Two types of school readiness test are given to kindergarten age children, developmental screenings and pre-academic screenings (Gillard, 2008). Since kindergarten is the first school experience for many children, many assessments measure the potential success a child will have in school (Gillard, 2008).

In many school systems, children are given formal standardized assessments to predict their future reading success. Many of these assessments test a child's letter identification, phonemic awareness ability, and phonic skills. Children are administered an assessment that has

them identify as many letters as they can in a specific time period. This is a predictor for a child's ability to learn reading skills (Schelling, 2009). An early predictor of word decoding is phonological awareness skills (Schelling, 2009). In this test, children are usually given a word and they have to respond with the beginning sound. Phonological awareness instruction is critical for any school program, for children to acquire the skills needed for reading (Nithart et al., 2011).

Impact of Struggling Readers

Struggling readers have a massive impact on schools and society. School systems spend thousands of dollars on reading intervention programs and many children graduate from high school who have difficulty completing a basic job application (Schelling, 2009). Boys are 50% more likely to struggle with reading than girls (Schelling, 2009). According to Smetana (2005), struggling early readers, lack the early literacy skills that have been shown to facilitate learning how to read, such as, the development of both expressive and receptive oral language and the understanding that print symbolizes language and holds information (p. 284). Children who are identified as having reading difficulty in kindergarten continue to have reading problems in fourth grade (McNamara et al., 2011).

Children who are struggling readers are impacted in more ways than just their reading ability. Struggling readers are more likely to have other difficulties such as behavior and, social, and attention (Schelling, 2009). Schelling (2009) states, "Poor readers also avoid reading, further exacerbating their problems" (p. 2). Children who have reading difficulties view themselves as failures in school, which can lead to problems among their social groups (Schelling,

2009). Children start to develop negative school experiences which can follow them into adulthood. Children who are not identified early with reading difficulties are more at risk for long-term reading issues (Schelling, 2009). However, children who have had been identified early and with proper intervention can overcome their reading struggles (Schelling, 2009).

While many children learn to read in the early years of school, some children struggle to gain all of the skills required to become proficient readers. According to Schelling (2009), “Children who have difficulty learning to read struggle with the primary skills necessary for decoding development” (p. 1). The children can be divided into two groups: children who have the language skills but struggle with the processes required to put the spoken word with the written word and children who lack both the language skills and the print awareness and phonological skills (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010). According to Vernon-Feagans et al. (2010), “many children that come from lower economic homes and minority families, are doubly disadvantaged and more at risk to fall behind peers” (p. 183). Over time the achievement gap continues to increase, especially in the early childhood years. In families where the child is from both, a minority background and low income family, the child is twice as likely to become a struggling reader (Vernon-Feagans et al., 2010).

Long-Term Benefits of Early Reading Intervention

Research indicates that the earlier children receive reading intervention, the more successful they become in reading. With the focus continuing to shift to early childhood education, early intervention is critical for preschoolers at risk for reading difficulties (Sjuts et al., 2012). Teachers believe that children from lower economic families require interventions to start earlier due to the fact that they are entering school with a deficiency much greater in language and vocabulary skills than those from families of higher economics (Lynch, 2010).

Teachers also believe their ability to teach children with early reading difficulties improved, but also that they transferred strategies to teach other students (Simmons et al., 2011). While no program can guarantee reading success, research does suggest early intervention can reduce the need for intense intervention later in school. With all of the demands across the country for eliminating achievement gaps, early intervention is an effective way to help to start to close the gap between poor readers and fluent readers (Hurry & Sylva, 2007).

Many programs have an emphasis on phonological skills or reading strategies.

Phonological intervention is a focus on decoding, with an emphasis on letters and letter sound fluency. Reading Recovery is a program where involving children reading a familiar book, working with letters, assembling a cut-up story, and then reading a new book (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). Children are taught the letters and letters' sounds, but also the text clues and how they relate to strategic activities that make a successful reader (Hurry & Sylva 2007). Hurry and Sylva (2007) believe, "if the early developmental stages of literacy acquisition are critical for determining later success, then it can be justifiably argued that early intervention to accelerate and improve struggling readers skills" (p. 238) While some areas did show long term improvements, not all areas of reading were as successful (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). The areas that did not show great gains were reading comprehension and spelling. However, phonological skills showed improved skills and continued with their reading success six years later (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). The students showed continued improvement when taught using only one program at a time (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). Some at-risk students were able to "catch up" to their peers by middle school. Students who were identified as struggling readers in middle school, were not the same students who were identified in kindergarten.

While early intervention is important for at-risk readers to have success, it is also important to factor in other influences on the child outside school, such as a child's home life, and pre-natal and infant care (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). Reading is an ongoing process that gets built upon year after year, and struggling readers need to have the same ongoing instruction to maintain their reading ability (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). Children who are entering school for the first time will have different experiences and interests. For this reason it is important to also have a variety of intervention programs that meet their needs as well as be engaging to encourage their participation and learning. The majority of programs developed for early intervention are for skills that are related to decoding and phonics (Duff et al., 2008). Some children do not respond to the above mentioned interventions. For those students, alternate ways of reinforcing reading are essential. Studies suggest that explicit instruction on the alphabet, phonics, and word decoding skills affect reading ability significantly. These skills should be taught in whole group and in small group instruction. During small group instruction, only the skills truly needed by the group should be focused on. When taught explicitly, not only did children's alphabet and decoding skills improve, but they also showed improvement in comprehension and word identification (Simmons et al., 2011).

Parental Involvement in Reading Development

Parents are a child's first teachers. It is important that they play an active role in their child's education. Parents have an influence over the materials their children read and the impact reading has on their children's daily life (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). When parents model good reading practices for their children, their children are is-more likely to have an active interest in books and literature (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Parents are not only important at home to model and enforce reading skillss, but as volunteers in the school working with the teacher.

Parents may be their child's first teachers: however, ~~they~~ parents do not have formal instruction on how to teach and instruct their child on reading. Many schools offer parent programs that teach parents how to do a proper read aloud that will best benefit their child. While any parent can have a powerful influence over his/her child's reading ability, it is important to make sure fathers or male influences are involved, especially for boys (Chatel & Talty, 2001). In some cases, ~~p~~Parents ~~in some cases~~ may need to have training in reading with their child. Parents need to be instructed on the use of language skills and the development of language for children (Chatel & Talty, 2001). Parents also learn that, when reading, other skills need to be practiced. Some of the skills that parents can learn and work on at home are print awareness, letters and letter sounds identification, and phonological skills. Eventually, the parents could even start to work on basic writing skills to reinforce the above skills and comprehension (Chatel & Talty, 2001). While most parents are not able to work in the classroom, most parents are available to help and work with their child at home on a daily basis.

Parents can be used to reinforce skills at home and to help instruct children at school. Having parents at home and in school actively involved in their child's education improves a child's reading skills, and that leads to successful readers later in life. Many struggling readers have parents who had issues with reading when they were in school (Schelling, 2009). Children who are considered "at-risk" for reading enter school lacking early literacy skills and literature experiences. To help develop and allow for literature experiences, programs have been developed that allow parents to either enter schools and read to children, or share a storybook at home with their child. According to Nebrig (20087), "Through storybook reading, children become familiar with rich language patterns and gain an understanding of what written language sounds like. Conversing with children, encouraging story-telling, and asking children open-

ended questions about a story read to them not only exposes them to the structures of language, it also gives them an opportunity to practice their language skills” (p. 18) It allows parents who have not had positive reading experiences themselves to build their confidence and share their experiences with their child. It can also serve as a bridge between the classroom and home (Smetana, 2005).

Effect of Parents on Reading Development

Parent involvement in early childhood can be a predictor for later success in reading. Greater parent involvement in the early school years results in strong pre-reading skills and later reading success (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008). Children from a two-parent family had a greater involvement at both home and school. Single parent households had a lower involvement with some involvement coming from older children in the family. Early childhood is one of the most important times in a child’s education. It is during those formative years that children learn the skills to not only learn the rules and routines of a class, but also proper social behaviors. It is during those years that they learn the skills required to read. Parents need to be involved in that process to understand where their child’s needs are academically and where best to provide them the support they need. The level of involvement within the first three years of a child’s life and education can predict reading success up through sixth grade (Arnold et al., 2008). Teachers view involvement of parents, ~~to-as~~ including interactions, both in school activities, and in at-home activities (Arnold et al., 2008). Parents are a child’s primary teacher, whether they realize it or not and therefore, play a major role in their child’s reading success.

Parents can be helpful in many ways in the classroom to build reading skills. First, parents are a great source for modeling reading. Children need not only their teacher to model reading skills, but also other adults in their lives. Parents can volunteer and work with small

groups. Children who have parents involved in their school day out perform peers who have no parent volunteers in their rooms (Porter DeCusati & Johnson, 2004). Children also stated that they enjoyed having parents volunteer in their classroom and assist them with reading. When parents were involved in reading at school, the children were more likely to choose reading activities and have positive attitudes towards reading. Parent can also have a powerful influence over children when working one on one at school. Parents who have had some direction can be great tutors for children, and parents who have tutored successfully have fewer problems with their child's behavior and attitude at home (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Teachers that use approach to engaging families, rather than simply providing activities, appeared to be more engaged and children's scores improved (Sjuts et al., 2012).

Research indicates that a child has more success in school when a parent is involved (Craig, 2009). It is critical that children have examples of good reading and good readers. Parents are the first to expose their child to books and reading. Parents involved in their child's education not only help their child perform better at school, but also in other areas of life. Parent involvement in kindergarten significantly improves a child's interpersonal skills (Craig, 2009). It is important to have parent involvement start early, for continued support. According to Craig (2009), "Children who have attended Head Start or other early learning centers may start with higher initial levels of parent involvement, and parents of these children may be more likely to continue to be involved throughout school (p. 54). Children who read books with their parents consistently demonstrated better speaking and listening skills (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Children who have a parent that believes reading and school are important will put more effort and emphasis on their own school work.

Parents who read and expose their child to books and reading have lasting effects on [their a child's](#) reading ability later in school. The number of books a child is exposed to is directly related to the development of vocabulary and listening comprehension skills. Vocabulary and language skills are significantly related to children's reading in [Grade 3](#) (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). At home children are exposed to two types of literacy activities, informal and formal (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Informal literacy activities consist of a focus on the reading of a story rather than recognizing and relating to the print of the text. Together the parent and the child look at the illustrations and the message of the book (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Formal literacy activities are when a parent and child are reading a book together and the parent discusses the letters on the page and the relationship of letters and the words (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). When parents were reading aloud to their child, the child was able to develop a higher level of receptive language and emergent literacy skills. Children also developed informal interactions with print that led to the child's development of emergent reading skills, such as print awareness, letter identification, phonemic awareness (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

Parents need to reinforce the skills taught at school in the home. Research shows two types of home involvement: academic instruction and academic socialization (Sy, Gottfried, & Gottfried, 2013). Academic instruction [is can involve one-on-one interactions](#) between the child and parent that focus on specific academic skills established by the teacher and parents. Academic socialization is when parents reinforce academic values, beliefs, and expectations (Sy et al., 2013). Children who had parents that worked with them on needed skills showed improved achievement. However, when parents not only work with their child on needed skills, but also instill strong beliefs and high expectations for school, the child showed improved reading ability through middle school (Sy et al., 2013).

Summary

Reading is a life skill that anyone who wishes to have a successful life must learn to master. Reading is a process where skills are built on one another, which is why building a strong foundation of reading skills in early childhood is so critical. Children need to develop good reading habits and behaviors. Struggling ~~when~~ during reading can leave a lasting impressions on children that could follow them through adulthood. When children are young, the differences in their reading ability are varied, but it is easier for young struggling readers to catch up to their peers than when they are in later grades. Parents can have the biggest influence over their child's reading attitudes and opinions on reading, as well as ~~their~~ his/her abilities. A parent who is actively involved in their child's education will work together with the child's teacher to build their reading acquisition skills (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

Kindergarten is when a child starts to develop and build a love of reading. It is important that a child has a chance to grow and understand not only the need for reading, but that reading can also be fun and fulfilling. Research indicates that the attitudes and motivation for reading established in kindergarten will continue through first and second grade (Sperling & Head, 2002). Children who are generally excited about reading will read more, and therefore, improve their reading skills. Higher ability readers are generally more excited about reading therefore, self-motivated to read. They also place a higher value on reading (Sperling & Head, 2002). Early intervention is critical to helping struggling readers to gain their confidence when reading so they too develop an interest in books and reading and can be intrinsically motivated to read.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of reading daily on a kindergartener's reading fluency. The researcher hypothesized that kindergarten children who read more at home with their parents will not have higher reading fluency scores than children who do not read at home.

Design

This study used a quasi-experimental design of a pre-measure, then treatment and **p**Post-measure. The independent variable was the parents reading to their children daily. The dependent variable was the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. A pre-assessment of reading fluency was conducted and then after the treatment, a post assessment of reading fluency was given.

Participants

The study participants were selected from a middle socioeconomic school in Glen Burnie, Maryland. The school services grades Pre-K to fifth grade, with 546 students enrolled as of fall 2014. The school has four kindergarten classes, but the participants were all from the same kindergarten classroom.

There were a total of 22 students, who, at the start of the study, were all five years old, with fourteen girls and eight boys. The demographics of the group were as follows: one Middle Eastern, one South Pacific, two African American, three multi-racial, four Hispanic, and eleven Caucasian. Of the twenty-two in the study group, seven of the students received special educational services for academics, speech, language, or occupational therapy. English as a

second language services were given to three of the twenty-two students. Free and reduced lunch services were provided for ten of the twenty-two study participants.

The school offered programs to support their students' needs. The school had two reading specialists that pull children from grades first through fifth. These interventions not only retaught reading skills and allow children to practice skills, but also enriched students' reading skills. The school also had a mentor program. Members from the community mentor fourth and fifth grade boys. The boys may have difficulty in school with both academics and behavior, or lack male role models in their home. The boys met with the mentors once a week and would do community service, meet with community representatives, and discuss good character traits. The school had PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) in place. PBIS helps with positive behavior throughout the school. Students were rewarded for good behaviors that correlate with the school's rules. Students were given "paws" as rewards that can be traded for extra privileges set by the classroom teachers, or to purchase items from the school store.

All students in grades third through fifth, approximately a total of 553 students, took the Maryland State Assessment (MSA), which assess skills in math and reading. Students in fifth grade only are also assessed in science. Across all three grades the students performed better in reading than math. The fifth grade students scored the highest, with 95% proficient or advanced in reading. The Hispanic sub-group were comprised the only ethnicity that did not score 60% proficient or advanced in all three grade levels. Throughout the grades tested, the females scored on average five to ten percent higher than the boys in each respected grade. In third grade, free and reduced lunch students (FARM) scored 58% proficient and in grades four and five, FARM students scored 75% proficient or advance. Special education students in all three grades scored considerably lower than all other subgroups. Fifth grade special education students were the

only grade level where students scored above 50% proficient or advanced. English language learners scored proficient and advanced across all three grade levels. The school scored 55th out of 78 ranked elementary schools in the county.

Instruments

The Fountas and Pinnell [\(2007\)](#) Benchmark Assessment ~~_(2007)~~ for grades K-2 was used to assess the children's reading fluency. The assessment was given at the start of the study and again at the end of the study. The kit includes 28 total books, fourteen fiction and fourteen nonfiction texts, an assessment guide, an assessment forms book, an optional assessment item book, a calculator and a stopwatch. The assessment measures the accuracy of a child's reading, speed, and comprehension of the text. The first time a child is given the assessment, the examiner gives the child a Where-to-Start Word Test. There are four levels to choose from. Based on the level and the number correct, the examiner selects that level text in a range from A-N. The test examiner has the child read text while tracking the errors on a separate sheet of paper. Once the child finishes reading, the examiner asks the child comprehension questions. If a child scores with a 95-100% accuracy, ~~they~~ he/she is ~~are~~ at ~~their~~ his/her independent level.

The reading log used for recording the daily reading at home was created by the researcher for the purpose of this study. At the top of the page is the child's name. The parent writes the title of the book read, who read the book, whether it is the child or an adult, and the date. There are 20 lines to write book titles on. There is no reliability or validity data on this instrument.

Procedure

At the start of the 2014-2015 school year, the classroom teacher met with all kindergarten parents. At the beginning of the year conference, the reading program was explained and

modeled. An example of the reading log was handed out to parents. During the conference, the teaching assistant assessed each child, with the Fountas and Pinnell (2007) Benchmark Assessment, Where ~~to~~ Start word list. During staggered day entrance each study participant was given the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. All scores were recorded and stored with the reading logs. The reading logs were kept in the child's daily folder. Parents recorded the books read by writing the title of the book, who read the book, and date. For every ~~ten~~ 10 books read, the student received a fish sticker to put on ~~their~~ his/her reading hook. For every 100 books read, the child got a fish cut out to hang on ~~their~~ his/her hook on the reading board. Once the reading log was full, the log was stored and a new log was placed in the child's folder. In May 2015, each participant was reevaluated using the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment. At the end of the year celebration, the study participants who read 100 or more books received an award and the participant who read the most books received a special gift card.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between kindergarten children reading daily at home with an adult and their reading fluency. The reading levels gained on the Fontas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment were analyzed using a t test for independent groups for the group of students. The reading gains for students who read no days or no books were compared to the gains of students who read more than 100 days or 100 books. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Reading Gains ~~f~~For Students Reading No Books Compared ~~w~~With Students Reading More Than 100 Books.

Levels	Groups	Mean	N	Standard Deviations	t	Significance
Days	0 Days	2.71	7	1.80	1.20	0.26
	More than 100 Days	5.17	6	5.08		
Books	0 Books	2.71	7	1.80	1.21	0.25
	More than 100 Books	5.00	7	4.66		

The null hypothesis, kindergarten children who read more at home with their parents will not have higher reading fluency scores than children who do not read at home, was supported.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Implications of ~~of your~~ Results

The results of the daily kindergarten reading program were conducted through a reading log sent home every day in the child's folder over the course of one school year. The researcher examined two areas that could affect a student's reading fluency: the number of days read, and the number of books read. Through the course of the research, the researcher observed many children would read multiple books on one day, but then not read again for several days.

—The first study group was the number of days read. Children who did not read at all over the course of the school year, showed a small improvement in gains, 2.71. Children who read more than 100 days showed a much larger improvement in gains, 5.17. There was only a 0.25 significance difference. The second study group was the number of books read over the course of a year. Children who did not read any books, on average showed gains of 2.71. Children who read more than 100 books showed gains average of 5.00. The significance difference was 0.25. Children who read more days or more books showed much larger gains in reading fluency level, than children who did not read any books or any days but the gains were not significantly different. While gains were made when children read more with an adult, there was not a high significance in the data.

Theoretical Consequences

When reviewing the data, the results indicate that the more a child reads at home the better ~~their~~ his/her reading fluency will become. The results show that there are more gains made in reading fluency when reading on a daily basis, than the number of books being read.

However, the results were not significant.

_____—There was a wide range of data. There were seven students who read no books or no days over the course of the study. This was the largest group of consistent data. Only eight students read more than 100 books or read more than 100 days. The same can be said of the gains made. The initial reading fluency levels were spread over a range of level one to a level of four. The final reading fluency levels were spread over a range of level one to a level of fourteen. The levels gained are spread from no levels gained to an improvement of twelve levels.

When discussing the results of the research it is important to look at the population. There was only a small sample used during the course of the research. If a larger group was had been used, the gains might have differed significantly.

The school where the study was conducted has had an increased problem with parental involvement. The staff is very welcoming and supporting of the students and their successes, but there has been a growing lack of parental involvement both within the home and in the community. The school has also had decreased reading scores on standardized testing. As a result, reading fluency skills has become a school wide focus, where teachers are doing many drills and lesson introductions on reading fluency daily.

Threats to ~~the~~ validity

_____—Children's individual characteristics were a threat to the validity of the research. Children who are advanced for their age group would outperform peers whether they were reading at home daily or not reading at all with an adult. The same could be expected of children with special needs. A parent could read multiple books with their special needs child for more than 100 days, but due to the disability the child has, the child will not improve their

[his/her](#) reading ability.

Another threat to the validity of the research is children who read at home either independently or with an adult but did not record their reading on the log. The children were given small short paper readers every week as part of their homework. The booklets review sight words, and as the year goes on the books become longer as new sight words are introduced. The children can read the books independently, practicing their reading and fluency skills, but the booklets may not have been written down. Older siblings may also have read to the children, and those books may not have made it onto the log. The daily lives of families can be busy and hectic, and books may have been read together, but never recorded on the log in the folder.

The gains made by the children are a threat to the validity of the research. Children who went from a level one to two, did not have a very big gain in reading fluency. Children who went from a level three to a four or higher, showed a very much improved reading fluency. A level one or two reading text is basic sentence structures with easy to decode words, using pictures only. Starting at a level three text, the sentence structures become much more complex and require a basic letter sound association knowledge to read. Comprehension also becomes more important for the children to be able to read.

Connections to [P](#)previous [S](#)tudies

According to Porter DeCusati and Johnson (2004), “School-Family teamwork and collaboration is more likely to produce positive results than school systems and families working independently” (p. 235). [T](#)his shows how important is for schools to work together with families to help children succeed in school. An area of much need of “teamwork and collaboration” is reading fluency skills. The study was looking for a connection between reading fluency and the involvement of parents. While the results were not overwhelming for the

benefits, it does support the argument the more involved a parent is in a child's education, the more successful the child is. Over the past several years, there has been an effort by school systems to increase their parent involvement (Porter DeCusati & Johnson, 2004). Many researchers have conducted studies to see the effects of parental involvement and student success: however, more research is always needed to be updated and relevant to today.

—Kindergarten is when the foundation for reading skills is started. According to Schelling (2009), "It is imperative to identify reading problems as early as possible." (p. 2). The earlier children are identified, the earlier they can get help and overcome any reading difficulties later in school. When students are identified early, schools can communicate and gain the parents' support. Children need to practice their reading skills regularly, to improve their reading fluency. Children who are poor readers early in school, who are not given the support by the school and their family, will continue to struggle later in school (Schelling, 2009). It is a critical age and time in children's school careers to establish strong reading skills and communication between home and school. For the purpose of this research, the sample ~~was used~~ ~~were~~ in kindergarten, where many children have not been identified as having reading difficulties. The researcher can use the results and data to help support reading difficulties within the classroom. Children who are reading on a daily basis, but do not show gains in reading fluency, as well as with instruction, can be placed in an intervention or extra support programs.

—It is important to establish a strong communication between the home and school to support children's reading skills. The earlier the parents are able to get into the habit of having an active involvement in the child's reading, the better the chance the child has to get higher reading fluency scores. Kahn (2011) believes, "By applying a new systematic plan based on

early school home communication, a child's reading fluency may improve significantly." (p. 63). The more a parent can be involved in their child's education, the more likely the child is to be successful. The research used a home-school reading log. The log was not time consuming for either the parents or the teachers. The parents would write the book title and who read the book. The teacher could use the log to see book interests of the children, and to see who did the reading. The parent could also use the log to track their own reading, and to provide notes to the teacher. By building a strong home-school communication and involvement, the parents are always aware of the needs of the children and where best they can help.

Implications for ~~F~~uture ~~R~~esearch

While the research gave a positive result, there is still more research to be conducted to answer all questions in regards to children's reading fluency being influenced by reading daily at home. Reading regularly improves children's reading fluency and comprehension. Future research could be conducted to see if the amount of time a child reads daily at home impacts ~~their~~ his/her reading fluency. With a larger population, there may have been more significant differences between the groups. Also, having a more homogeneous group being used in the study would have given more significant results. Excluding the children with special needs ~~;~~ or children who are gifted, would perhaps result in more significant differences in the data. Giving books to the family to take home daily would possibly improve the participation of the children and families. As the year goes on, also providing on level text for the children to take home will encourage not only parents to read to children, but also to have the children read to the parents.

Summary

—The effectiveness of a daily reading program is consistent with research that has been conducted previously. The results over the course of the year prove that the more children

read at home with parents, the better their reading fluency. The researcher noticed over the year that children who received their incentive for ten books were more excited and initiated the reading at home and school. As the children read more with their parents, they were more excited about read alouds and books in the classroom. By having a greater interest in books, they were more encouraged when reading and their fluency was affected. More research is needed to show greater significance in gains with a more specific sample. The daily reading program is a starting point for further questions and research.

References

- Arnold, D. H., Zeljo, A., Doctoroff, G. L., & Ortiz, C. (2008). Parent involvement in preschool: Predictors and the relation of involvement to preliteracy development. *School Psychology Review, 37*(1), 74-90.
- Chatel, R.-G. & Talty, P. (2001). Parent Empowerment To Build Children's Literacy Skills. [Washington, D.C.] : Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse, <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED459438>
- Craig, M.-J. (2009). *The influence of early parent involvement on later learning-related social skills: A latent growth curve analysis*. Available from ProQuest Education Journals. (Order No. 3373979)
- Duff, F.-J., Fieldsend, E., Bowyer-Crane, C., Hulme, C., Smith, G., Gibbs, S., & Snowling, M.-J. (2008). Reading with vocabulary intervention: Evaluation of an instruction for children with poor response to reading intervention. *Journal of Research in Reading, 31*(3), 319-336. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9817.2008.00376.x
- Fountas, I.-C., & Pinnell, G.-S. (2007). *Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment system 1: Grades K-2, levels A-N* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Gillard, A.-M. (2008). *The predictive validity of kindergarten assessment*. Available from ProQuest Education Journals. (Order No. 3332349)
- Hurry, J., & Sylva, K. (2007). Long-term outcomes of early reading intervention. *Journal of Research in Reading, 30*(3), 227-248. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/204200237?accountid=11164>

- Khan, F. (2011). *The effects of school home communication and reading fluency in kindergarten children*. Available from ProQuest Education Journals. (Order No. 3481049).
- La Paro, K.-M., Kraft-Sayre, M., & Piñata, R. C. (2003). Preschool to kindergarten transition activities: Involvement and satisfaction of families and teachers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 17*(2), 147. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/203879662?accountid=11164>
- Lynch, J. (2010). Kindergarten teachers' beliefs about students' knowledge of print literacy and parental involvement in children's print literacy development. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 56*(2), 157-171. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/763128637?accountid=11164>
- Mashburn, A.-J., & Henry, G.-T. (2004). Assessing school readiness: Validity and bias in preschool and kindergarten teachers' ratings. *Educational Measurement, Issues and Practice, 23*(4), 16-30. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/212244996?accountid=11164>
- McNamara, J.-K., Scissons, M., & Gutknecht, N. (2011). A longitudinal study of kindergarten children at risk for reading disabilities: The poor really are getting poorer. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 44*(5), 421-430. doi:10.1177/0022219411410040
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Retrieved from <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/smallbook.htm>.

- Nebrig, M. R. (2008). *Parent and teacher perceptions of home activities to encourage emergent literacy*. Available from ProQuest Education Journals (Order No. 3314487).
- Nithart, C., Demont, E., Metz-Lutz, M., Majerus, S., Poncelet, M., & Leybaert, J. (2011). Early contribution of phonological awareness and later influence of phonological memory throughout reading acquisition. *Journal of Research in Reading, 34*(3), 346-363. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9817.2009.01427.x
- Porter DeCusati, C.,-L., & Johnson, J.-E. (2004). Parents as classroom volunteers and kindergarten students' emergent reading skills. *The Journal of Educational Research, 97*(5), 235-246. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/204200237?accountid=11164>
- Schelling, C.-M. (2009). *The development of early reading skills in a sample of kindergarten students*. Available from ProQuest Education Journals. (Order No. 3383169)
- Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development, 73*(2), 445-460. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/204200237?accountid=11164>
- Simmons, D.-C., Coyne, M.-D., Hagan-Burke, S., Kwok, O., Simmons, L., Johnson, C., . . . Crevecoeur, Y.-C. (2011). Effects of supplemental reading interventions in authentic contexts: A comparison of kindergarteners' response. *Exceptional Children, 77*(2), 207-228. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/204200237?accountid=11164>
- Sjuts, T.-M., Clarke, B.-L., Sheridan, S.-M., Rispoli, K.-M., & Ransom, K.-A., & University of Nebraska-Lincoln, N. [s3](2012). Beyond activities: Engaging families in preschoolers' language and literacy development. CYFS Working Paper No. 2012-7. Nebraska —Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools.

Smetana, L. (2005). Collaborative storybook reading: Bring parents and at-risk kindergarten students together. *Reading Horizons*, 45(4), 283-320. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/204200237?accountid=11164>

Sperling, R.-A., & Head, D.-M. (2002). Reading attitudes and literacy skills in prekindergarten and kindergarten children. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 29(4), 233. doi:10.1023/A:1015129623552

doi:10.1023/A:1015129623552

Sy, S.-R., Gottfried, A.-W., & Gottfried, A.-E. (2013). A transactional model of parental involvement and children's achievement from early childhood through

adolescence. *Parenting: Science & Practice*, 13(2), 133-152.

doi:10.1080/15295192.2012.709155

Vernon-Feagans, L., Gallagher, K., Ginsberg, M. C., Amendum, S., Kainz, K., Rose, J., &

Burchinal, M. (2010). A diagnostic teaching intervention for classroom teachers:

Helping struggling readers in early elementary school. *Learning Disabilities Research*

& Practice, 25(4), 183-193. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5826.2010.00316.x

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Name: _____

Reading Log

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____

Book Read: _____ Date: _____ Read By: _____