

Contributions of print exposure to first and second grade oral language and reading in Chile

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This study examines the contribution of print exposure to oral language (expressive vocabulary and listening comprehension) and reading (word reading and reading comprehension) in first and second grade in Chile, and tests whether the contribution of print exposure to reading comprehension is mediated by language and word reading skills. Two-hundred and eighty one children (mean age 6.55 years) participated. Print exposure was measured with a book-cover recognition task in first grade, and outcomes were measured both in first and second grade. Print exposure had direct effects on all outcomes in first grade and indirect effects in second grade. Effects on first grade reading comprehension were partially mediated by listening comprehension and word reading, but not vocabulary. We discuss the importance of the findings for improving reading comprehension in countries with low access to books.

Contributions of print exposure to first and second grade reading in Chile

Exposure to print at an early age has long been known to contribute to oral language, word reading, and reading comprehension (Bus, Van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991, 1997, 1998; Mol & Bus, 2011; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992). However, the mechanisms through which print exposure contributes to reading comprehension have not been thoroughly studied. Furthermore, most studies of print exposure have been conducted in countries with wide access to books and where sharing books with young children is commonplace. This study examines the effects of print exposure in the context of a country with limited access to books. We measure the contribution that print exposure makes to vocabulary, word reading, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension in first grade, and we test the hypothesis that the effects of print exposure on reading comprehension are mediated by vocabulary, listening comprehension, and word reading. Finally, we follow children into second grade and evaluate whether print exposure measured in first grade continues to contribute to oral language and reading skills assessed after one year.