

## March 2009 – EDUSS Literacy Case Study - Whitepaper

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The Impact of a Clinic-Based Literacy Intervention on Language Development in Inner-City Preschool Children: An Article Critique  
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The Impact of a Clinic-Based Literacy Intervention on Language Development in Inner-City Preschool Children—An Article Critique

### Purpose

The purpose of this compelling study was to determine the outcome of using a clinic-based literacy program on expressive and receptive language development of children 2 to 5.9 years old of Latino and African-American extraction. Researchers of this study are concerned about oral language development delay of impoverished preschool children. They are equally concerned about getting the point across to parents to be proactive in the engagement of parent-child reading activities. Using the Reach Out and Read literacy support program, researchers conclude that these efforts are sure to enhance oral language development, fluent reading ability, and future school performance.

### Methods

Using a convenience sample, researchers studied 122 clients from two urban pediatric clinics for well-child care. Of the 122, two groups were formulated including an intervention group of 49 participants that was studied for 3 years, and a comparison group of 73 participants that was studied for 3 months. Characteristics of both groups were similar in socio-economic and socio-demographic status. Both groups included African-Americans or Latinos, with no known impairments (visual or hearing), and no known chronic diseases. In cases where two siblings were the same age, researchers included the older child in the study. Parents were asked to participate in the study by allowing researchers to assess parent-child activities in the privacy of their homes. A small percentage of parents declined the offer either because of time constraints or for some other pertinent factor. Those who did participate however provided researchers with a consent signature. Information about researchers' specific interest in literacy was purposefully withheld from clients and no incentives were given for their participation.

Reach Out and Read (ROR) intervention literacy program was the tool used by researchers to integrate promotion of parent-child reading activities into the pediatric care of children. The literacy program is initiated during doctor visits. The program involves literacy development counseling, and distribution of age appropriate children's books.

### Results

Of the 138 families registered, 122 with complete data were used in the investigation. The intervention group of 49 families and the comparison group of 73 families had no statistically significant differences. The Characteristics of Intervention table, the Comparison Families table, and the Outcome Measures table were extremely clear, concise, and on point with the presentation of qualitative and quantitative data. Yet there has been only one published study on the effects of this sort of program, researchers note that the ROR intervention tool has been successfully implemented in many pediatric clinics across the country as it is evidence that ROR has a beneficial effect.

### Contributions

Parker, Greer, & Zuckerman (1995) suggests that children from improvised families are more likely to experience language delay. This could lead to reading deficiency and later affect their performances at school. Although researchers in this study have found documentation on the effects of ROR as it relates to the home literacy environment, there is little or no documentation on the outcome of language development. In order to conclude whether or not this program benefit older children we need a long term investigation to acquire more data.

Needleman, Fried, & Morley (1991) concluded that children who were given books were more interested in reading than children who did not receive books.

Golova, Alario, Vivier, Rodriguez, & High (1999) concluded with the same results. They used a random, controlled trial study to investigate their experience. Consequently, the authors of the research article confirm that the ROR reading program really works. Reliability of the outcome of this research was in the hands of six supervise research assistants who were trained for a 2-week period of time.

### Recommendations

This study may explain, to some degree, why many school age children are not reading as well as they should. Reading deficiency among children may be related to a myriad of causes. This study shows that cultural disparity, socio-economic, and socio-demographic status has a high stake in the outcome of language development in preschool children and in later school performance years. I conclude that in addition to the ROR program, a well planned reading curriculum would enhance to an even greater extent. Five of the most important elements of learning to read fluently include receptive and expressive language development, motivation, decoding, comprehension, and reflective and expressive writing. These elements should be carried out in all literacy programs. It's understandable, however that the focus of this study was on language development because of age. To continue a study of this magnitude means to promote literacy in ways unimaginable. Not to mention the profound effect it would have on how parents and children view literacy as children are moved a step further into becoming independent readers.