

Ordinary activities and not-so-ordinary outcomes

What does research tell us about the relationship between children's participation in everyday activities and their early literacy and language development?

Participation in the everyday routines, activities, and experiences of their families' home and community lives can provide young children with rich and varied learning opportunities that promote early language and literacy development.

Researchers at the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL) were interested in identifying which of the hundreds of typical household and community activities in which a child might be involved were associated with acquiring different literacy and language abilities. Their focus was to achieve a better understanding of the ways parents are more likely to engage their young children in literacy-enhancing activities as part of including them in the routines of daily family life.

The researchers examined 30 studies—including 6,703 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with and without disabilities or delays. Their analysis clearly showed that the frequency of children's participation in ordinary activities such as meal preparation, family outings, shopping trips, and household chores, contributed positively to the quality of their language and literacy learning.

The children's literacy-related outcomes included phonological awareness; rhyme production, detection, or knowledge; phoneme awareness and detection; and reading ability. The language-related outcomes included expressive language, verbal ability, and receptive language (including oral comprehension).

The particular everyday activities that were associated with the most positive child outcomes were library or bookstore visits, shared reading,

and alphabet and writing activities. The child outcomes that were most strongly associated with participation in everyday activities at home and in the community were letter and word knowledge, rhyming, verbal expression, and language comprehension.



An ordinary trip to the market is filled with rich, highly engaging opportunities to see, hear, learn, and practice early language and literacy skills.

This *CELLnotes* summarizes findings reported in Dunst, C. J., Valentine, A., Raab, M., & Hamby, D. W. (2013). Relationship between child participation in everyday activities and early literacy and language development. *CELLreviews* 6(1), 1-16.

Acting on the Evidence



Download free, two-page CELL practices guides in versions for parents or practitioners at www.earlyliteracylearning.org

Child participation in everyday home, family, community, and preschool activities provides young children many opportunities to learn early language and literacy skills. All of the CELL practice guides that have been developed for parents and early childhood practitioners encourage the use of everyday learning in home, community, and classroom as sources of child learning activities. The two-page practice guides listed below are available for free download on the CELL project web site: www.earlyliteracylearning.org. At this web address you can find multimedia practice guides such as videos that illustrate practices supported by research.



Especially for PARENTS

- Infants:**
Out and About
Places To Go and People To See
World of Words
- Toddlers:**
Books and Crayons of One's Own
Act Natural
Magic of Catalogs and Magazines
- Preschoolers:**
Write Right
Mail Call
Word Wise

Especially for PRACTITIONERS

- Infants:**
Literacy-Rich Classroom and Community Activities
Literacy-Rich Home Activities
Literacy-Rich Outings
- Toddlers:**
World of Learning
Words All Around Us
Exploring Magazines and Catalogs
- Preschoolers:**
A Place for Writing
Keyboarding with Kids
Words Everywhere