

There are many “positives” to reading the same books and telling the same stories over and over again

What does research tell us about the effects of repeated book reading and repeated storytelling on young children’s literacy and language development?

Parents who find a certain Cat in a red-and-white-striped Hat starring in their nightmares can take some comfort in findings from a study of the effects of repeated reading of children’s books. As it happens, those excited requests to “Read it again!” serve a very positive purpose.

Researchers at the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL) examined 16 studies that focused on repeated storybook reading to determine its effect on children’s early literacy and language development. Their analysis of the study findings, which were based on 466 child participants, revealed that repeated book reading had benefits for building young children’s story-related vocabulary and story-related comprehension.

The researchers identified eight characteristics of the adult-child reading sessions that influenced child outcomes. These were (1) encouraging child participation in the activity, (2) using props and illustrations, (3) giving positive verbal feedback about the child’s participation, (4) labeling pictures and asking the child to label or point, (5) modeling appropriate responses to questions, (6) clarifying meaning of words, (7) prompting child comments, and (8) asking the child open-ended questions such as about what might happen next in the story.

The use of several characteristics of repeated reading opportunities together had the greatest positive impact on the children’s gains in vocabulary and comprehension. Taken together



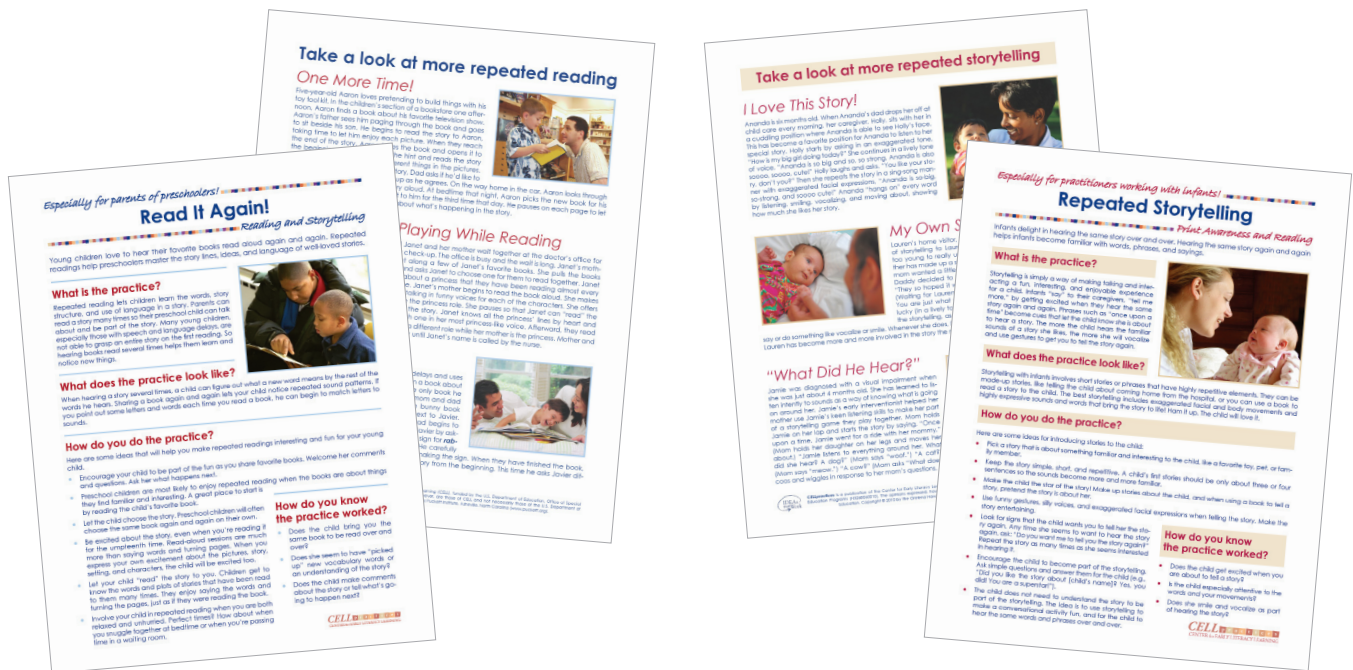
the findings suggest that reading the same book on four or more occasions for 20 minutes or more during each episode over the course of a month had the greatest positive effects on child outcomes. Findings show that readers should choose age-appropriate books that are interesting to the child, read them repeatedly over a period of weeks, encourage the child to participate actively, respond to the child’s questions, and ask open-ended questions about the story.

This *CELLnotes* summarizes findings reported in Trivette, C. M., Simkus, A., Dunst, C. J., & Hamby, D. W. (2012). Repeated book reading and preschoolers’ early literacy development, *CELLreviews* 5(5), 1-13.

Acting on the Evidence

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

Staff of CELL have created a number of practice guides especially for parents and early childhood practitioners to encourage putting this research evidence to use in home, community, and classroom settings. All of 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 also find interactive posters called *CELLpops* and multimedia practice guides such as videos that illustrate practices supported by this research.



Especially for PARENTS

Infants:
Baby's First Picture Books
Tell Me More! Tell Me More!
The Right Touch

Toddlers:
I Wanna Be a Storyteller
Let Me Tell the Story
Looking at Books Together

Preschoolers:
Read It Again!
Read with Me
Let's Read Together

Especially for PRACTITIONERS

Infants:
Repeated Storytelling
Touch-and-Feel Books

Toddlers:
Creating Young Storytellers
Reading Together Out Loud

Preschoolers:
Read and Repeat
Tales for Talking