The benefits of Early Book-Sharing
Targeting risk factors for aggression in early childhood

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What is book-sharing? (and why is it our focus)
• Dialogic Reading
  • Active
  • Bidirectional relationship
  • Fluid exchange between two partners

• Booksharing involves extensive labelling of objects, questioning, commenting about the pictures, complex “decontextualized talk”

• Three decades of positive evidence supporting booksharing
  • Frequency of early book sharing predicts child literacy and language
Core elements of dialogic reading

• Active child participation

• Pointing and naming

• Follow the child’s lead (emphasize the stimuli to which child attends)

• Active questioning (first “where”, then “what” & “who”)

• Elaborations and active linking of book content to the child’s real world
Techniques

• Pointing and naming

• Questions (What/Where/How)

• Following the interest of the child

• Using Actions

Book is “tool” to promote interaction between caregiver and child
Dialogic “linking” and elaboration
Caregiver sees child looking at illustration of caregiver brushing child’s hair in the book. She points to and names the object and action.
Dialogic “linking” and elaboration

*Caregiver enacts the action by pretending to brush her own child’s hair, continues to name the action while doing it, repeated a few times.*
Dialogic “linking” and elaboration

Child then brushes his own hair, caregiver continues to name action. May point to action in book again to end sequence of “linking”
What we consider book-sharing
### Multiple Benefits

<table>
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<th>Cognitive Competence</th>
<th>Language Development</th>
<th>Socio-emotional development</th>
<th>Caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Brain Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Speech Bubble Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Heart Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Mother and Baby Icon" /></td>
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- **Cognitive Competence**
- **Language Development**
- **Socio-emotional development**
- **Caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness**
Programme Delivery

Group presentation → group discussion and activities → one-on-one sessions
RCT of book-sharing, Khayelitsha (South Africa)

91 families, 14-16 month old children, randomised to:

- 8-week programme in book-sharing (n=49)
- No intervention control group (n=42)

Main Outcomes:
Child Language and Attention
Effects on Parental Sensitivity and Reciprocity

Sensitivity (d=0.78)

Reciprocity (d=0.45)
Parental Report on Infant Language (CDI)

CDI Understands: $t(80) = 3.25, p = 0.002; \, d = 1.21$

CDI Understands & Says: $U = 357.50, z = 4.43, p < 0.001; \, d = 0.98$
Infant Attention (ECVT)

Attention: $t(80) = 4.91, p<0.001, d = 1.10$

![Graph showing infant attention comparison between Index and Control groups, with Pre and Post conditions. The graph indicates a significant increase in attention post-intervention.]
Benefits of Early Booksharing (BEBS)

• Based on our earlier work with 14 month olds:
  • BEBS - focus on promoting parenting skills relevant to child social understanding and aggressive behaviour
• Materials and content were revised for the BEBS study

Funded by Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)
Benefits of Early Booksharing (BEBS)

• Training is extended to include book content with themes about:
  
  • Emotions
  
  • Intentions
  
  • Perspectives
  
• Prosocial behaviour and child socio-emotional development
Main Results

- Impact on child language and attention
- Impact on home language environment (LENA conversational turns)
- Impact on sensitive parenting and reciprocity (serve and return) in book-sharing and free play
- Impact on caregiver complex cognitive talk (mental state talk)
- Reduction in harsh verbal parenting
Minimal impact on:

- Child theory of mind
- Child behaviour (defiance, aggression, pro-social behaviour)
- Caregiver reported harsh physical discipline
Possible interpretations

• Positive findings very encouraging – particularly harsh verbal parenting

• Disappointing findings on child behaviour

• However – intervention did improve parenting behaviours known to predict theory of mind, aggression, pro-social behaviour

• Possible that the 6-month window post-intervention not long enough for observable changes to be seen – 12 month or later follow up
Possible interpretations

• Also possible that intervention would need to address difficult child behaviour more directly

• Embedding behaviour management techniques such as time-out, establishing of routines, and strategies such as ignoring and distraction

• A successful intervention may require both positive reinforcement and non-violent discipline techniques