

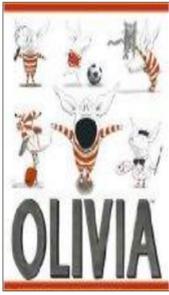
Enriching parent-child conversations and children's narration skills via shared reading

Amélioration des performances narratives et de conversation parent-enfant en situation de lecture

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INTRODUCTION

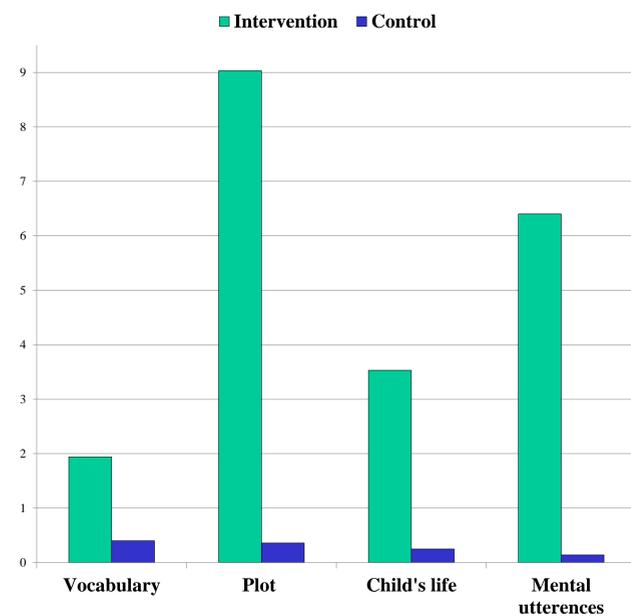
- Understanding that people have different points of view is essential in attributing meaning to human behavior and has significant implications for children's social interactions (Jenkins & Astington, 2000).
- Home discourse predicts the development of children's mental understanding. Children whose parents refer more to mental dimensions when conversing with them showed a high level of social understanding (e.g., Symons, Fossum & Collins, 2006).
- Children's books depict a variety of social situations. They enable children to become familiar with characters motivated by a variety of mental states: desires, emotions, intentions and beliefs (e.g., Dyer, Shatz, & Wellman, 2000).
- Although books offer exposure to mental concepts, there is still a discrepancy between how adults understand a story and how children understand it.
- The study examined the effectiveness of an intervention, designed to enrich the mental discourse between children and their parents while reading children's books.**



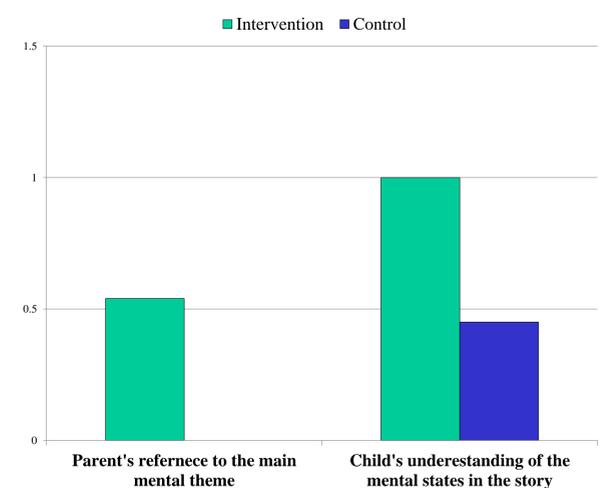
MEASURES

- Parents and children were videotaped before and after the intervention while reading books that are rich with reference to mental states.
- References to linguistic aspects and plot:
 - Total number of utterances during the interaction.
 - References to meanings of words requiring clarification.
 - References to plot structure and content.
- References to socio-cognitive themes
 - Mental utterances: utterances related to feelings (angry, surprised), desires (want, need), intentions (intend to, plan to) and cognitive mental states (know, think, remember).
 - References to mental causality
 - References relating the events of the story to the child's own life.
 - children's understanding of primary mental states.

Progress: Children's references



Understanding of the main mental theme



METHOD

Participants

58 preschoolers ($M = 4.5$ years) and their mothers from low SES.

30 children in the intervention group and 28 in the control.

The design

Two programs:

- The intervention:** Parents received books weekly and were coached how to read them to their children 4 times a week.
- The control:** Parents received the same books weekly and were encouraged to read them to their children 4 times a week without guidance.

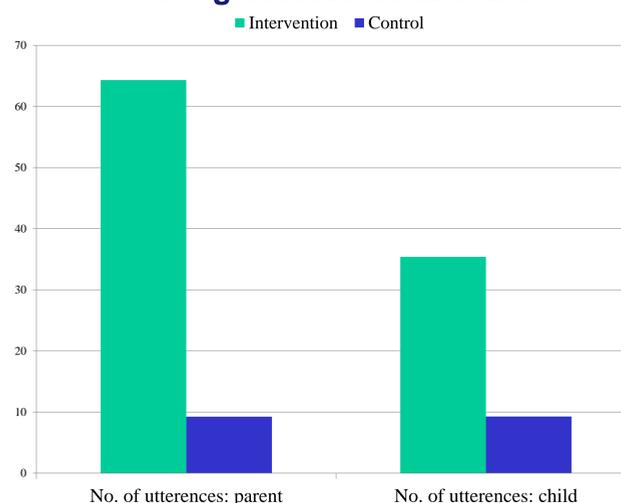
The intervention model: 4 sessions

- Vocabulary and plot: Parents were instructed to read the story, stopping to explain words requiring clarification and points in the plot that we defined as important.
- Socio-cognitive themes: Parents were instructed to focus on the mental characteristics of the story. They were told to stop and ask the child about the main beliefs and feelings of the characters.
- Relationship to child's own life: Parents were instructed to relate the major mental aspects of the story to the child's own life.
- Child retells the story: Parents encouraged the children to tell the story as they understand it.

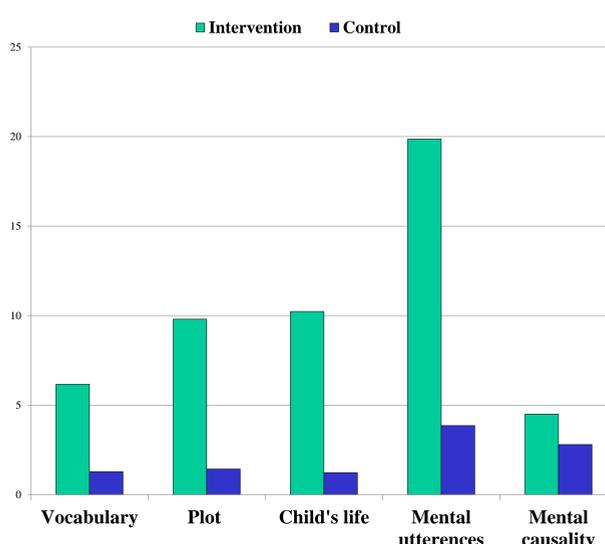


RESULTS

Progress: No. of utterances



Progress: Parents' references



DISCUSSION

- Books are a commonly available stimulus both at preschool and at home.
- Books offer clear opportunities to discuss a variety of mental states and their relevance to the characters' and child's behavior.
- programs like the one that was presented here can acquaint parents and educators with ways of enriching this discourse while reading to children.
- The study was published:**
Aram, D., Fine, Y., & Ziv, M. (in press). Enhancing parent child shared reading interactions: Promoting reference to the books' plot and the socio cognitive themes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*.

