



EDUCATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

THE EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS OF PRESCHOOLERS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

AIM



The aim of this study was to describe the emergent literacy skills of preschool children on the autism spectrum prior to school entry. We also wanted to find out how factors of home literacy environment, autism symptomology, age, and general oral language skills are related to children's emergent literacy performance.

WHO TOOK PART?

60 children on the autism spectrum

- Could speak in short sentences
- Could participate in preschool type activities
- Had not yet started school

HOW WE DID THE RESEARCH?



Children participated in two assessment sessions with a speech pathologist.



Parents completed home literacy questionnaires and videoed a home book-reading session with their child.

FIND OUT MORE

You can get the full report of this study and an executive summary on the Autism CRC Connect Hub at autismcrc.com.au/reports

You can contact the researchers about this study via the study's Project Leader:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The research team would like to thank the children and their families for their time and for generously sharing their home literacy practices.

OUTCOMES



PRINT-RELATED SKILLS

Emergent literacy skills include print-related skills, such as letter knowledge, print concepts and early developing phonological awareness (which is identifying the first sound in a word). These skills help support early reading development related to decoding new words.

As a group the children showed relative strengths in print-related skills, such as letter name and sound knowledge and early phonological awareness.



MEANING-RELATED SKILLS

Emergent literacy skills also include meaning-related skills including vocabulary and story retelling and comprehension skills. These skills are important for understanding what the written words or paragraphs mean.

As a group, the children struggled with tasks tapping meaning, especially with story comprehension and retelling tasks.



HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT

In general parents created a rich home literacy environment. They owned a range of children's books and read to their child regularly.



FUTURE RESEARCH

We are now assessing these children as they transition into school. Results will inform whether emergent literacy measured prior to school-entry is predictive of future reading performance.

WHO WERE THE RESEARCHERS?

