Home Literacy Environment, the Quality of Mother-Child Book Reading Interactions, and Taiwanese Children's Early Literacy Development

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Abstract

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to understand whether the length of time of mother-child shared book reading related to two dimensions of mother-child shared storybook reading quality (instructional and affective quality of book reading) and 103 Taiwanese 3-to-6-year-old children's early literacy development including the children's receptive language ability (as measured by the Chinese version of PPVT_R), the children's emergent reading behaviors (as assessed in a solo reading task), and children's print concepts (as assessed using a portion of Clay's (1982) Concepts about Print Test). This study also explored the extent to which mothers' instructional and affective quality related and interacted as they relate to Taiwanese 3-to-6-year-old children's early literacy development. Moreover, this study explored whether the pattern of these relationships differed as a function of children's home literacy environment. Results showed that Taiwanese mothers showed a tendency to use interactive shared book reading style, to convey moral and social rules, and to use a scaffolding-like procedure, and performed observable behaviors that were rated as high to medium in affective quality during shared book reading interactions. Taiwanese children exhibited nine emergent reading behaviors. In addition, from direct effects model, a great length of time of shared book reading was found to be strongly associated with high level of maternal instructional quality during shared book reading activity, and a higher level of instructional quality used by mothers was found to be strongly associated with children's higher emergent reading skills. In the interaction effects model, mothers' instructional quality moderated the association between affective quality and receptive language ability and between affective quality and concepts of print. The home literacy environment moderated the association between mothers' instructional and affective quality when engaged in shared book reading and Taiwanese 3-to-6-year-old children's receptive language ability.
As more mothers of young children entered the labor force, increasing numbers of young children spent substantial hours in various child-care settings. These changes gave rise to a large body of research on the impact of the quality of early child care on children’s development. However, a full understanding of the role of the quality of early child care requires consideration of the interplay among child care, family, workplace, and society. Although understanding the links between structural indicators of quality and children’s development is important, we also need to understand the mechanisms by which structural quality affects children’s development, which requires examining what actually happens in the early-care setting (i.e., the process).