

The Benefits of Storytime

Many parents know that reading with their children can support literacy development. Now a new study adds to the growing body of research that suggests it could also deter aggression, hyperactivity, attention problems, and other behavioral issues.

The randomized trial included 675 families with children ranging in age from infancy to 5 years old. While 450 families served as controls, the remaining 225 participated in the Video Interaction Project.

Parents met with a facilitator at a pediatric clinic to discuss their child's development and were later videotaped playing and reading with their child for several minutes. Afterward, the parents watched the video with the facilitator, who identified the child's responses to "positive parenting" actions.

Published in *Pediatrics*, the

study was a continuation of previous research, which found that 3-year-old participants showed improved social and emotional behavior, including a decreased likelihood of aggression or hyperactivity.

The latest findings showed that when researchers examined those children 18 months later, the results endured. And children who were enrolled in a second phase demonstrated increasingly positive effects.

Alan Mendelsohn, MD, associate professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine and lead author of the study, told the *New York Times* this research demonstrates that "when parents read and play with their children when their children are very young — we're talking about birth to 3-year-olds — it has really large impacts on their children's behavior."

— KAEALYN RILEY

