**Theoretical Significance**

- Written language is thought to be a secondary ability that has to be explicitly taught (van Kleeck, 1998; Justice & Ezell, 2004).
- Children are capable of learning about letters and sounds before explicit instruction begins (Petitto, Holowka, Sergio, Levy, & Ostry, 2004).
- Oral language (Petitto, Holowka, Sergio, Levy, & Ostry, 2004; Dehaene, 2004) and reading (Sakai, 2005) are both impacted by alphabet book reading.

**Research Questions**

- Are 20-24 month old toddlers capible of learning letter and sound skills following six weeks of exposure?
- Will 20-24 month old toddlers demonstrate gains following six weeks without specific exposure?
- What types of letter awareness and sound awareness skills can be demonstrated by 20-24 month old toddlers?

**Subjects**

- 16 toddlers (8 male, 8 female), ages 20-24 months from 2 different daycare centers.
- Matched by age, gender, and daycare into two groups.
- All children demonstrated normal language development as determined by the PLS-4.

**Method**

- Experimental Group: Alphabet book reading 3x/week
- Control Group: Perceptual play 3x/week
- Initial Pre-test: Mid-test at 6 weeks, Post-test at 12 weeks
- Home Literacy Questionnaire

**Task Analysis**

- Yes, the first experimental group demonstrated no loss of skills following 6 weeks with no intervention.
- May be due to additional mastery of “primed” letters or overall increased interest in and awareness of letters and sounds.
- Both groups improved letter scores, but environment likely played a role.
- Letter-sound correspondence was significantly impacted by alphabet book reading.

**Sample Phonics Faces Alphabet Book Page**

- Yes, 15/16 had higher post-test than pre-test scores, indicating that they had improved their understanding of the target letters and sounds.
- Both groups improved letter scores, but environment likely played a role.
- Letter-sound correspondence was significantly impacted by alphabet book reading.

**Future Research**

- Assessment of all letters
- Classroom setting
- Phonics faces versus other alphabet books
- Children with documented speech-language disorders and delays

**References**