

Bedtime Stories for Young Brains

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The New York Times:

A little more than a year ago, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement saying that all pediatric primary care should include literacy promotion, starting at birth.

That means pediatricians taking care of infants and toddlers should routinely be advising parents about how important it is to read to even very young children. The policy statement, which I wrote with Dr. Pamela C. High, included a review of the extensive research on the links between growing up with books and reading aloud, and later language development and school success.

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But it turns out that reading to — and with — young children may amplify the language they hear more than just talking. In August, *Psychological Science* reported on researchers who studied the language content of picture books. They put together a selection from teacher recommendations, Amazon best sellers, and other books that parents are likely to be reading at bedtime.

In comparing the language in books to the language used by parents talking to their children, the researchers found that the picture books contained more “unique word types.”

“Books contain a more diverse set of words than child-directed speech,” said the lead author, Jessica Montag, an assistant research psychologist at the University of California, Riverside. “This would suggest that children who are being read to by caregivers are hearing vocabulary words that kids who are not being read to are probably not hearing.”

Read the whole story: [The New York Times](#)