

ABSTRACT

Three-year-old children and their mothers were randomly assigned to an elaborative reminiscing (ER) group or an active control group. Mothers in the ER group practiced using strategies, or prompts, to help elicit details from their children about past shared events. ER mothers evidenced an increase in use of the strategies after a 4-month period and their children produced a greater number of event details as a result. Transfer of these strategies to book reading was also examined but was not indicated.

INTRODUCTION

Children of parents who reminisce with them about shared events in elaborative ways have better narrative skills and vocabulary than children whose parents reminisce using a repetitive style (Haden, Haine, & Fivush, 1997; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1994). Studies examining such "elaborative reminiscing" have focused on mostly English-speaking families of middle to high socioeconomic status. In one study with low-income, Hispanic families, Reese, Leyva, Sparks, & Grolnick (2010) trained Hispanic mothers in the use of ER strategies. Children whose mothers received ER training produced higher quality narratives and had better reading comprehension skills than children of mothers in a control condition. One aim of the current study was to examine the efficacy of ER training in the context of a home visit program with low income, Hispanic 3-year-old children and their mothers. A second aim was to examine whether ER training would transfer to book reading, that is, whether mothers would become more elaborative as they read a book with their child.

METHOD

Participants

- 3-year-olds and their mothers in a home visit program; randomly assigned:
 - 1) ER group ($n = 11$): Received ER training + monthly home visits
 - 2) Control group ($n = 11$): Received usual monthly home visits
- Similar demographic characteristics within each group:
 - 100% Hispanic, 87% low income, 57% spoke only Spanish

Procedure

- Mothers in ER group received 45-min of training on five ER strategies used in Reese et al. (2010) (see Figures 1-2 for description of training/strategies)
- Mothers used strategies w/ child daily over 4-months; kept a monthly log noting type of event discussed and duration of discussion
- Prior to training and after 4-month practice period, mothers were videotaped discussing one past shared event with child and also reading a storybook to child. They also rated the frequency of having event conversations and reading books with their child using scale from 1-5.

Coding of mother-child event conversations and book reading

- Mothers' utterances
 - ER prompts: wh-questions, repeat/add, follow leader, ask for feelings, and connect events
 - Other prompts: closed-ended questions, repeated questions, simple repetition of information said by child
- Child's utterances: New details (persons, objects, places, actions, descriptors, enactments)

Scoring

- Total number of mother/child utterances of each type summed across each conversation/book reading

Figure 1. ELABORATIVE REMINISCING TRAINING

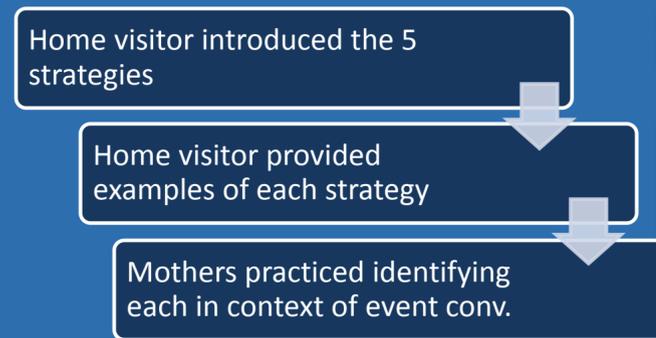


Figure 2. THE 5 STRATEGIES



RESULTS

Figure 3. Baseline/post-ER ratings for frequency of weekly past event discussions

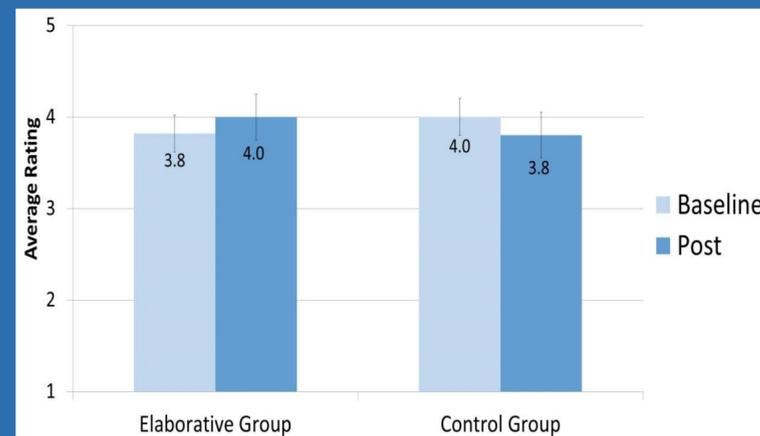


Figure 5. New details provided by child

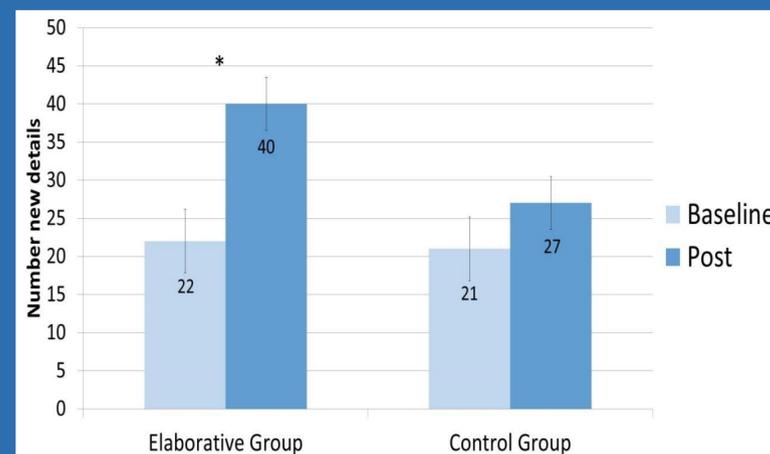


Figure 4. Mothers' use of ER strategies: Event Talk

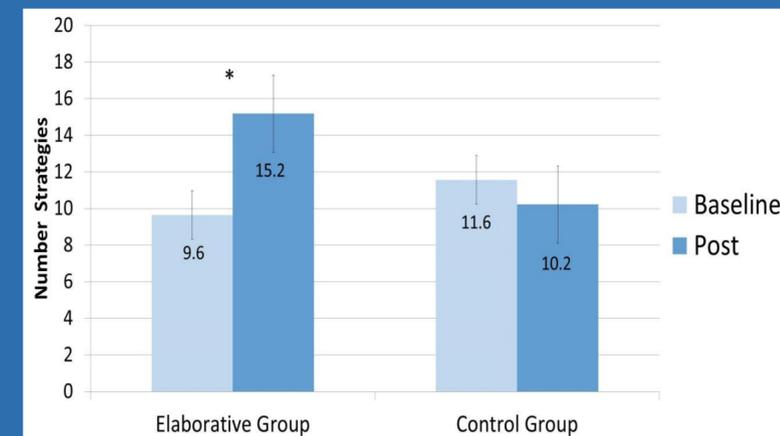
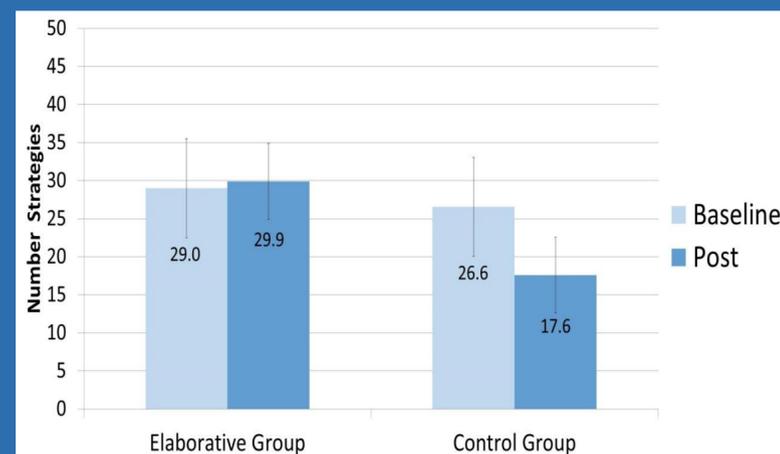


Figure 6. Mothers' use of ER strategies: Book Reading



RESULTS

Group (ER, control) X Time (baseline, post) mixed ANOVAs with following dependent measures:

Ratings of frequency of event conversations/book reading

- Event conversations: No effects (see Figure 3)
- Book reading: Main effect of time, $p < .01$
 - $M_{baseline} = 4.10$ ($SD = .89$)
 - $M_{post} = 4.67$ ($SD = .66$)

Mothers' use of ER strategies

- Group X Time interaction, $p < .01$ (see Figure 4)

Children's production of new event details

- Group X Time interaction, $p < .05$ (see Figure 5)

Mothers' use of ER strategies during book reading

- No effects (see Figure 6)

CONCLUSIONS

- Elaborative reminiscing was an effective intervention in the context of a home visit program with Hispanic mothers and their children, over half of whom were Spanish-speaking.
- Mothers who engaged in elaborative reminiscing increased their use of ER strategies as prompts during event conversations with their children. In turn, children of ER mothers provided more event details during the post-conversation with their mothers than they did during the baseline conversation. They also produced more detailed narratives than did children of control mothers. These findings add to the existing literature on the efficacy of ER strategies (Reese et al, 2010).
- Engaging in elaborative reminiscing about shared events did not transfer to mother-child book reading. In fact, mothers in both ER and control groups used a greater number of ER strategies in the context of book reading than during a past event conversation. Perhaps the book more naturally afforded elaborative talk (e.g., pictures, scripted story) than did the past event conversations.

REFERENCES

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