



# PROGRAM 2: SHARED BOOK READING INTERVENTION FOR PRESCHOOLERS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

## AIM



*This study investigated whether a home-based shared book reading intervention would help facilitate early functional spoken language and emergent literacy skills in preschoolers on the autism spectrum.*



## HOW WE DID THE RESEARCH?



A speech pathologist provided the shared book reading intervention to parents over eight weeks with one training session and four fortnightly follow-up visits, and phone calls on alternative weeks. Parents recorded videos of shared book reading sessions each week with individualised feedback provided at follow-up visits.



**The intervention focused on three main topics:**

- 1. Words, words, words.**  
Introducing new vocabulary in the books.
- 2. What's in the story?** Talking about the characters of the story, what happened next, and summarising the story.
- 3. Promoting** having fun during the book reading sessions.

To investigate changes in parent and child behaviours we asked parents to video themselves sharing a book with their child prior to, immediately, and 8 weeks following intervention.

## WHO TOOK PART?

**17** families with a preschool child on the autism spectrum took part in the study.

All the children:

- were under **6 years** of age
- had not yet started school
- could attend to a book for 5 minutes
- regularly engaged in shared book reading with parents
- were not currently attending any other shared book reading programs

## KEY FINDINGS

### Increase in time spent sharing the book

Following intervention, there was a significant increase in time spent sharing the book for the intervention group only - from 4.5 minutes to 7.5 minutes post-intervention.

### Parent book reading behaviours

Post-intervention, parents showed a significant increase in book-related language compared to the waitlist control group, even after adjusting for the increase in time spent sharing the book. Parents also increased their use of story-related language.

### Child behaviours

Children whose parents participated in the intervention became more talkative, and used a wider variety of words when sharing books with their parents.

### Eight week follow-up

All gains were maintained eight weeks later.

### Parent feedback

All parents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with all aspects of the intervention and reported it changed the way they shared books with their children.

### Future directions

Future research needs to explore integrating this intervention into existing models, eg speech pathology intervention or early childhood curricula.



## FIND OUT MORE

Find the full report of this study and an executive summary at [autismcrc.com.au/reports](http://autismcrc.com.au/reports). Contact the researchers about this study via the study's Project Leader:

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## WHO WERE THE RESEARCHERS?

