


"Extra Talk Makes Kids Smarter"

Based on the ideas in *Meaningful Differences in the
Everyday Experience of Young American Children*
by Betty Hart & Todd Risley
1995

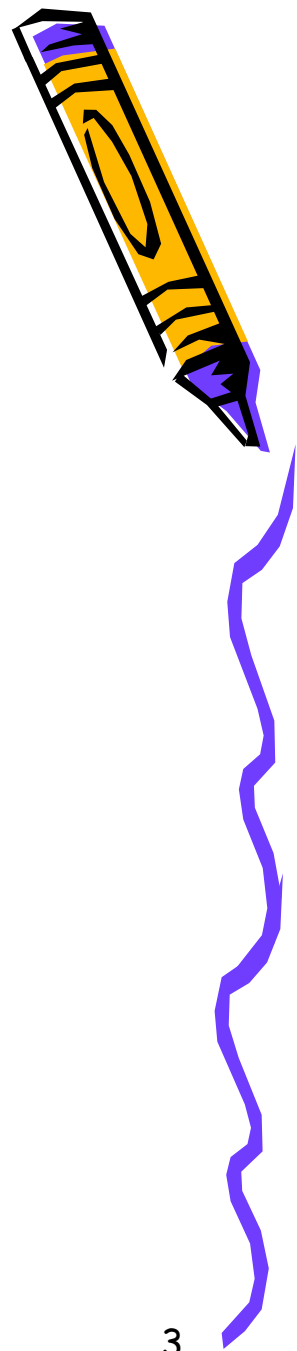
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- Nina Marino
 - Director of School Readiness
 - Lake County Office of Education
 - Region I School Readiness Network

I hope I die during an
in service
because the transition
between life and death
would be so subtle.



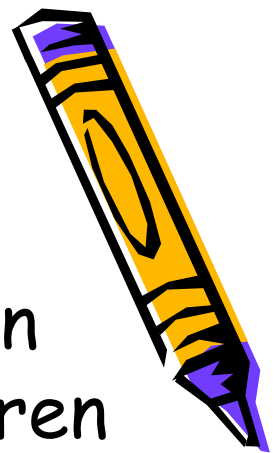
Overview of the Study

- 42 families for 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years
- Researchers tape recorded one hour each month of every word spoken at home
- Children were 9 months old at start of study
- Study ended when they turned three years old.

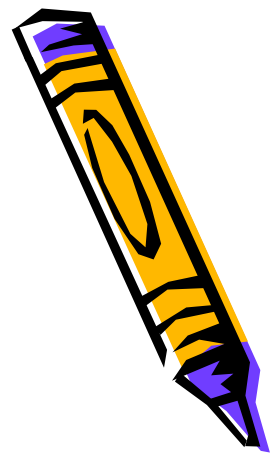


CONCLUSIONS

“The most important aspect to evaluate in child care settings for very young children is the amount of talk actually going on, moment by moment, between children and their caregivers” (p. xxi). By giving children positive interactions and experiences with adults who take the time to just talk to them, children will get the vocabulary, oral language and emergent literacy concepts to have a better chance to succeed at school and in the workplace.

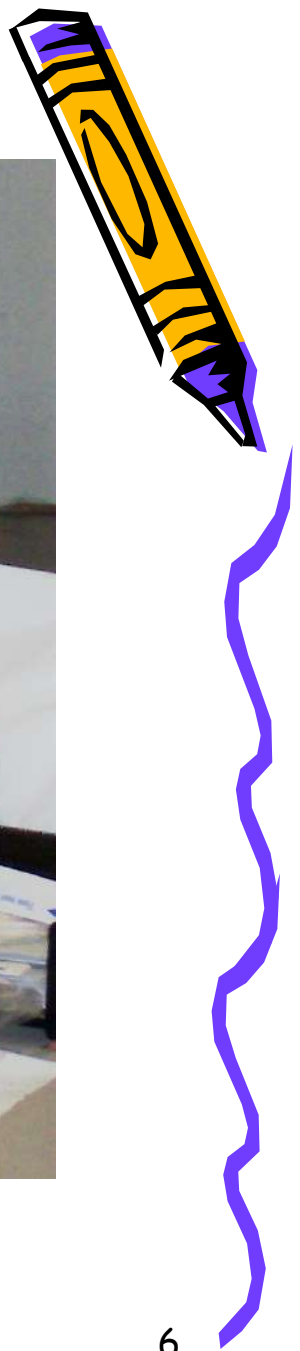


Discovery # 1 - There are differences in the amount of talk that goes on in families

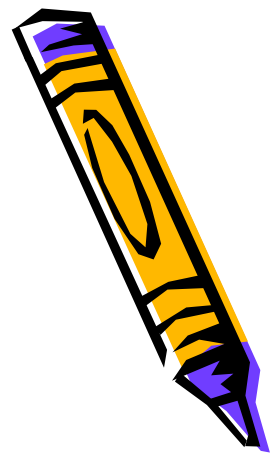


- Minutes interacting: 40 minutes - 15 minutes.
- Responding to children: 250 times - 50 times.
- Expressing approval and encouragement: 40 times - 4 times.
- Words said to child: 3000 words - 500 words.





Discovery # 2 - Children's experience with language was linked to IQ scores



- The more parents talked to children, the faster the children's vocabularies grew.
- This resulted in higher IQ test scores at age 3 and later.
- Socio-economic status and race did not account for this result. (p. xx)

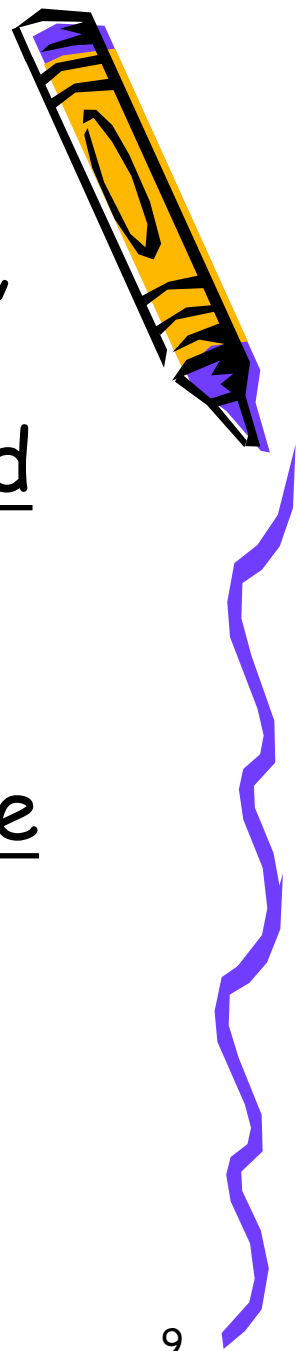


Discovery # 3 - "Extra talk" changed the content of the conversations



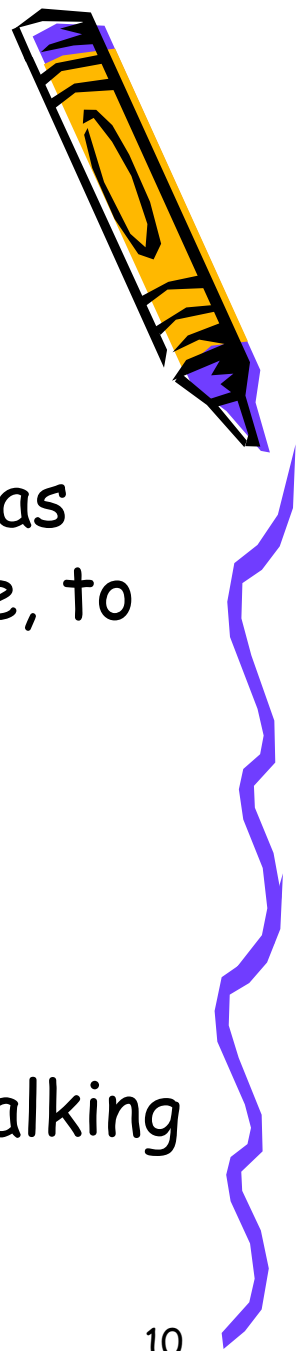
- All parents used a similar number of commands, prohibitions and questions ("Pick up your toys. Stop That. What are you doing?").
- Talk that was beyond "taking care of business" automatically changed the content.





- When talking about feelings, plans, current activities and past events, vocabulary became more varied and descriptions richer.
- This talk also became more positive and responsive to their children's talk. (p. xxi)



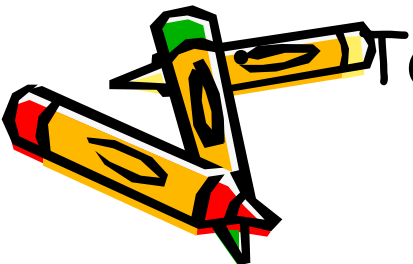


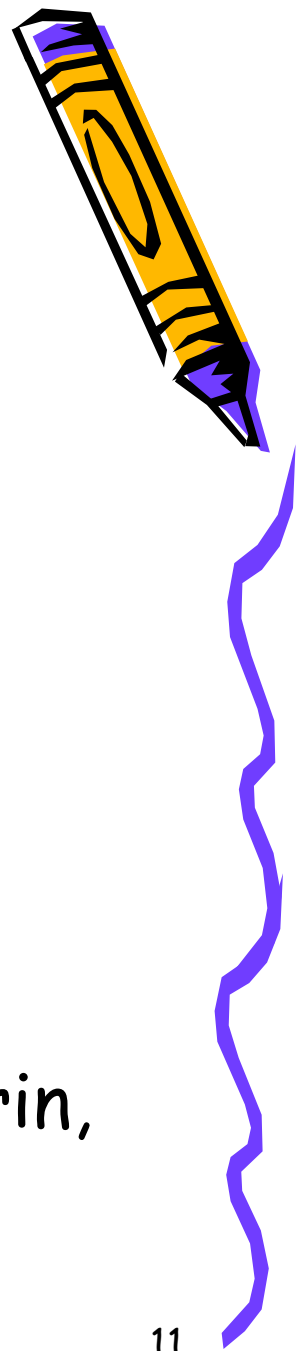
How did parents add quality to everyday interactions?

- They just talked - beyond what was necessary to manage or provide care, to be sociable or to keep the child cooperative and distracted

2. They listened:

- To add information
- To encourage children to continue talking
- To encourage children to elaborate





3. They tried to be nice

- When enforcing a rule or discouraging negative behaviors

4. They gave children choices

- To teach the child how to take responsibility & appropriate behavior

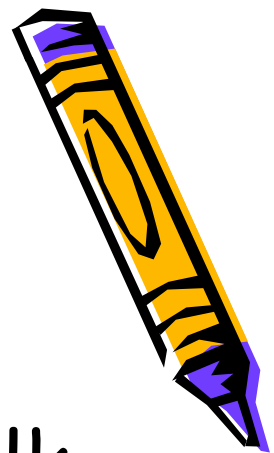
5. They told children about things

- What was worth noticing and remembering, what to expect or how to cope with situations

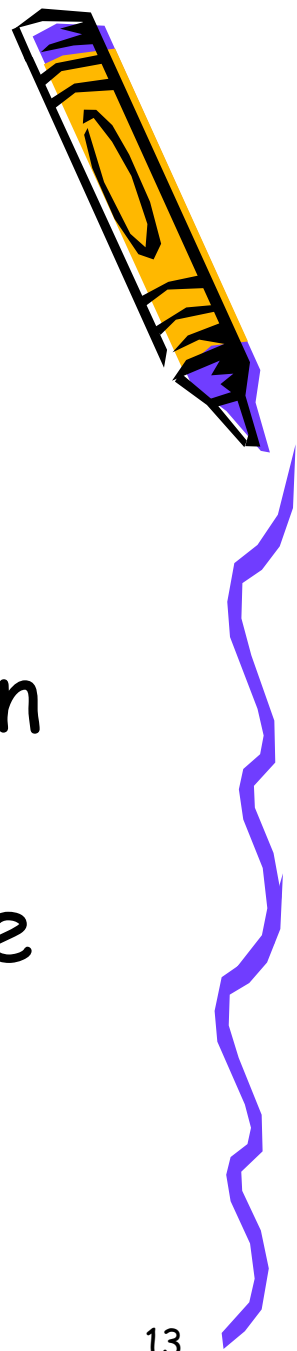


Conversation styles were passed on to the children (p. xxi)

- As early as age 3, children's own talk matched their parents' talk.
- Children were talking as much as - but only as much as - their parents talked.
- Children's talk was as varied - but ~~only~~ as varied - as their parents' talk.

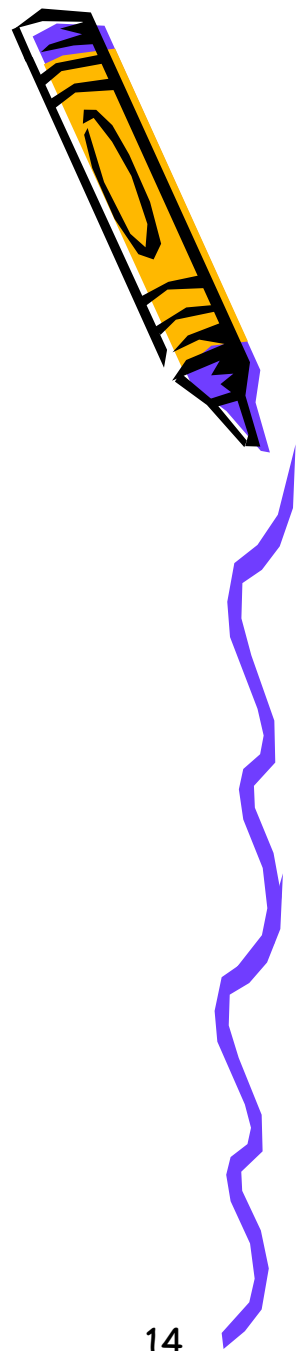


"Quality experience does not depend on parents' material or educational advantages." (p. 91)



Quality interactions were found in upper, middle and working class families as well as low/no income families.





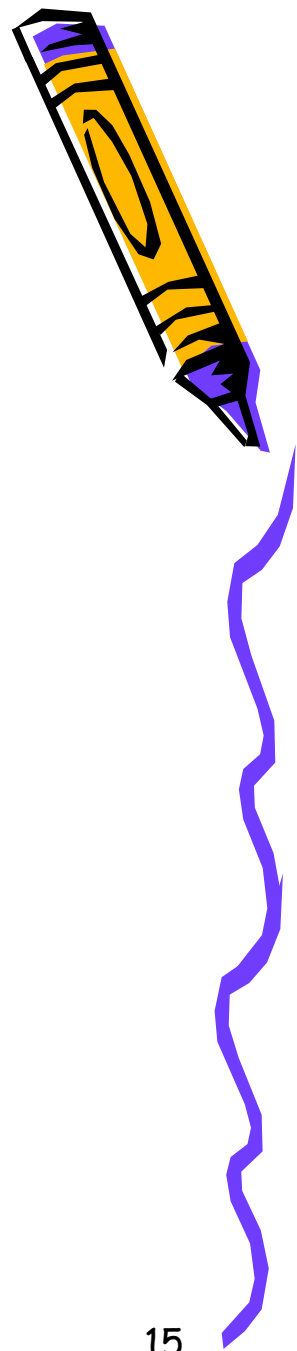
“Extra talk” helps children:

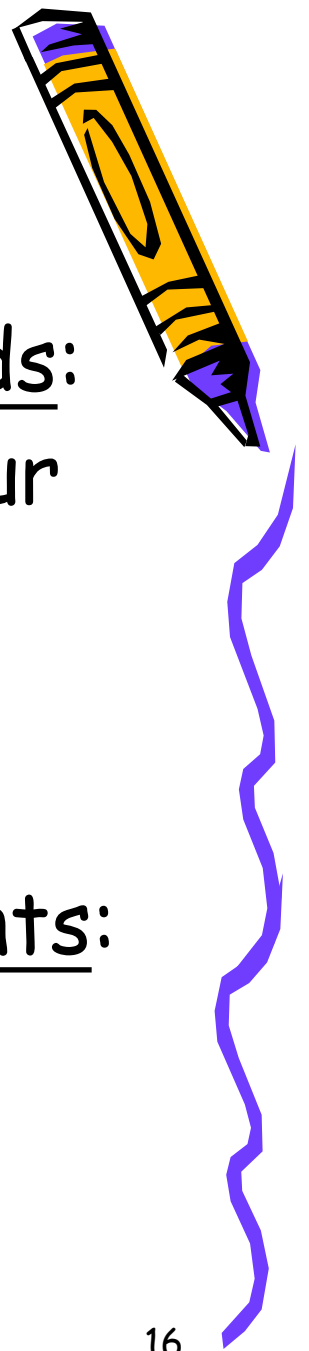
- Hear a broader variety of words
- Learn more meanings for words
- Acquiring more sophisticated background knowledge
- Talk more and play with language



Average Words Heard Per Hour

- Professional family - 2153 words
- Working class family - 1251
- Low income/welfare - 616





Affirmations & Prohibitions (p. 128)

Affirmations and encouraging words:

- Professional parents - 30 per hour
- Working class - 15 per hour
- Welfare - 6 per hour

Prohibitions and negative statements:

- Professional - 5 per hour
- Working class - 8 per hour
- Welfare - 11 per hour



Accomplishments at age 3 and later (p. 143)

"The number of words a parent said per hour was strongly related to the child's rate of vocabulary growth, vocabulary use at age 3 and general accomplishments measured in IQ and other tests." (p. 146)



Test Results



Vocabulary use at age 3 was strongly associated with follow up test scores (at age 9) on:

- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)
- Test of Language Development (TOLD)
- Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills
(CTBS)





Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.

Indeed it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead



