Individualization as an Active Ingredient for Evidence-Based Intervention in Home Visiting: An Empirical Examination of Little Talks

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Lehigh University
Little Talks: A modular treatment for promoting children’s communication & language skills
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provisions</th>
<th>Labeling</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Character Feelings</th>
<th>Personal Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That’s the lion.</td>
<td>The frog jumped! (Simple)</td>
<td>The pig is so happy!</td>
<td>We went to the beach with grandma just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A frog!</td>
<td>The wind blew the umbrella away and the girl was soaked. (Complex)</td>
<td>The frog looks angry.</td>
<td>like Little Critter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Simple)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests</td>
<td>Where is the boy?</td>
<td>What did the boy do?</td>
<td>How did the little boy feel?</td>
<td>Do you remember when we went to the beach?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is this?</td>
<td>What is happening on this page?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What color is that?</td>
<td>What did the boy do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mapping Little Talks to Diverse Narrative Styles

Narrative Style Continuum

Storybuilder - Narrative Style Continuum - Storyteller

(Melzi & Caspe, 2005)
Little Talks Manualized Sequence

• Managing Book Sharing Interactions
  • Praise and Positive Book Sharing Interactions
  • Following Your Child’s Lead
  • Engaging Your Child in Book Sharing

• Responding to Your Child’s Communication
  • Reflecting
  • Expanding

• Speech Acts during Book Sharing Interactions
  • Telling/Asking about Labels
  • Telling/Asking about Events
  • Telling/Asking about Feelings
  • Telling/Asking about Personal Experiences
  • Applying Little Talks to Other Activities
Individualization

Aim:

Progress toward diverse style and new skills

Achieved through home visitor implementation:

• Collaborative
• Data-Based
• Decision-making

• Structured by home visit components:
  • Observation
  • Checking-in
  • Collaborative Planning

• Connection of Little Talks lessons to program’s developmental screening

Start with preferred style and skills
Implementation Supports for Individualization

• Fidelity monitoring
  • Self-Report
  • Video observation

• Performance feedback (bi-weekly)
Conceptualization & measurement of individualization in Little Talks

- Deviations from the manualized sequence of 14 Little Talks lessons
  - Change in sequence
    - To later or earlier lessons
  - Repetition
    - Number of changes to number of Little Talks visits
  - Pace
    - Number of new lessons relative to number of Little Talks visits
Description of Individualization

• The grand majority ($n = 49, 92\%$) of home visitors individualized.

• Repetition was most frequent change.

• Home visitors tended to use about half of all lessons.

• Changes were occurring in all visits.

• New lessons were introduced every other visit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>17.15</td>
<td>18.07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier Lesson</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later Lesson</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># New Lessons</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Proportion</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Predictors for individualization variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors (Significant)</th>
<th>Individualization Variable</th>
<th>Direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>Earlier Lessons</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Communication &amp; Language Skills</td>
<td>Later Lessons</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement in Early Learning</td>
<td>New Lessons</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visitor Practice</td>
<td>Proportion of Change</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Engagement</td>
<td>Proportion of Change</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Predictors (Approach Sig)</th>
<th>Individualization Variable</th>
<th>Direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Language</td>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>Faster for English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Engagement</td>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome Association with Individualization Variables

• Parent involvement in early learning
Discussion

Findings/Implications

• Home visitors seemed to embrace individualization
• Nature of individualization varied, and variation mattered
• Reciprocal relationship between predictors/outcomes and individualization variables was implied

Limitations/Next Steps

• Examine the quality of individualizations
  • Match to parent/child needs
• Sample constraints
• No effects detected on children’s communication and language
  • May need more time to detect