The effect of vocabulary therapy in toddlers with language impairment

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Poor vocabulary skills have a negative impact on:

1. Speech and communication
2. Language comprehension
3. Early reading development
4. Reading comprehension
5. School success
6. Jobs and employment
7. Children need a minimum of 1000 active words at start of reading development

Bacchini et al, 2004; Bishop, 2006; Brackenbury & Pye, 2005; Gray, 2003; Leonard & Deevy, 2004; Mulder et al, 2010; Sheng & McGregor, 2010; Steele & Mills, 2011

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• **Research question:** Is evidence-based vocabulary therapy more effective than care as usual?

• **Participants:** Toddlers with language impairment in special kindergarten language units with speech and language therapy

• **Outcome measure:** number of new target words versus control words

• **Results:** Yes, toddlers learn significantly more new words in evidence-based vocabulary therapy than care as usual

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**Pretest**

- Picture naming task with 25 target and 25 control words

**Intervention**

- Experimental intervention (12 sessions of 15 minutes in 4 weeks)
- Control intervention (usual care) (12 sessions of 15 minutes in 4 weeks)

**Posttest**

- Picture naming task with 25 target and 25 control words
Results

Number of new words learned

- Significantly more words learned by the experimental group: interaction effect $F(1,15) = 9.196, p<.01$
- Experimental group learned 4x more target words than control group
- No sig effect on verb learning, only nouns