

Books-Bonds-Babbles: How Shared Reading Supports Child Development in Monolingual and Multilingual Contexts

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Disclosures

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I have no other relevant financial relationships to disclose or conflicts of interest to resolve

What's special about booksharing?

- Promotes language development
- Promotes children's attention
- Engages children's imagination
- Supports emotion regulation
- Strengthens parent-child bonds



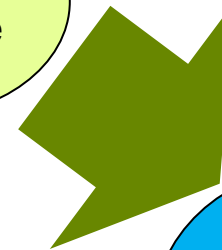
Caregiver-child interactions

Child development

Cognitive stimulation

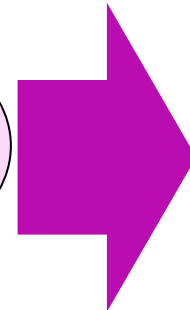


Cognitive-language

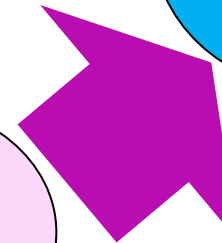


Academic achievement

Affective interactions



Social-emotional





Shared
bookreading

Caregiver-child
interactions

Cognitive
stimulation



Child
development

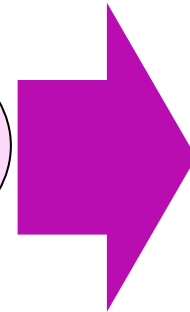
Cognitive-
language



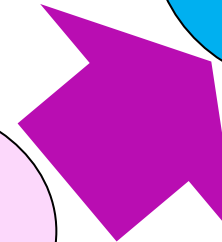
Academic
achievement

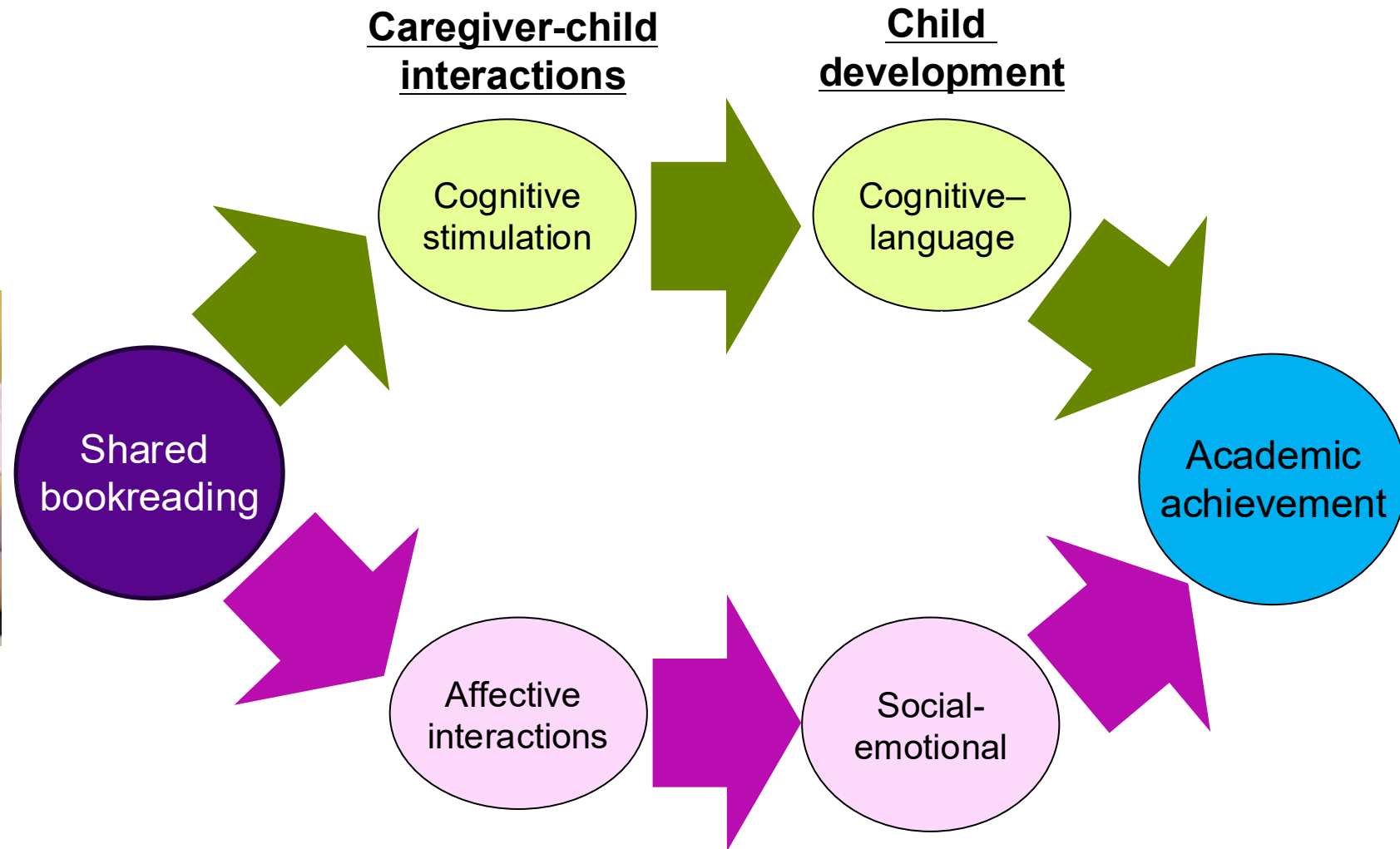


Affective
interactions

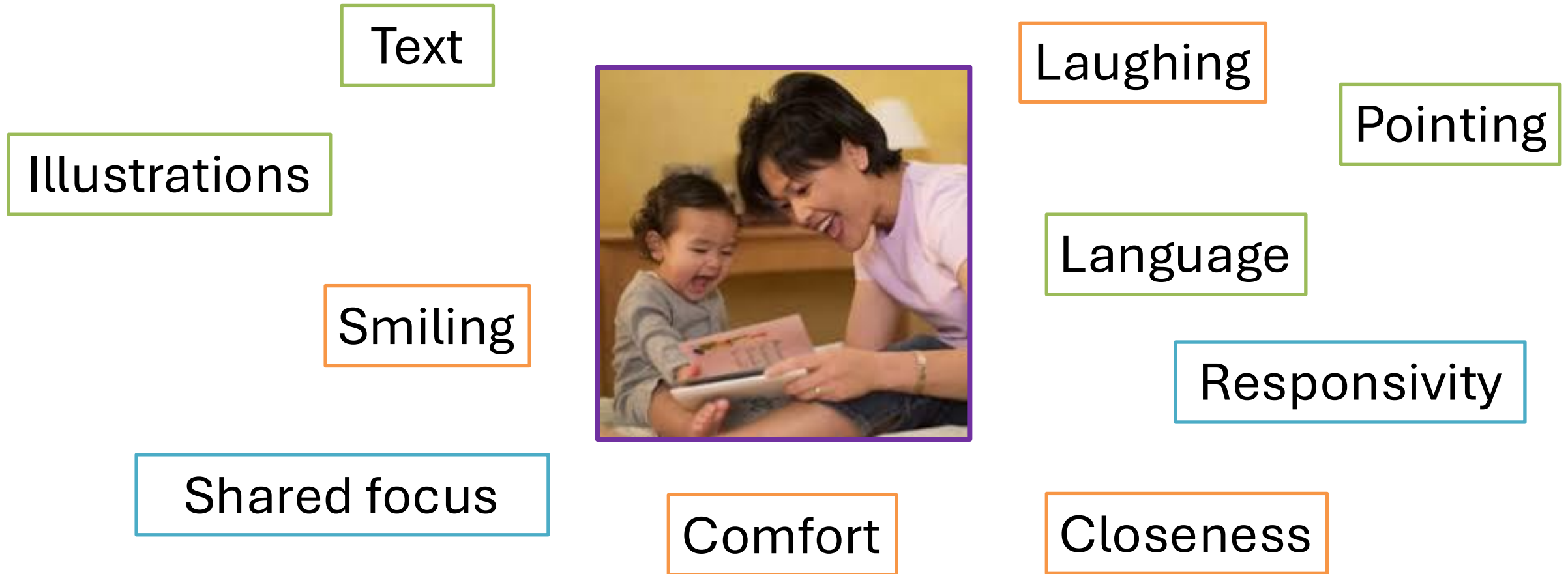


Social-
emotional





Shared bookreading is a catalyst for *symbol-infused joint engagement*



Shared bookreading is a catalyst for *symbol-infused joint engagement*

Symbols

Text

Illustrations

Language

Pointing



Joint engagement

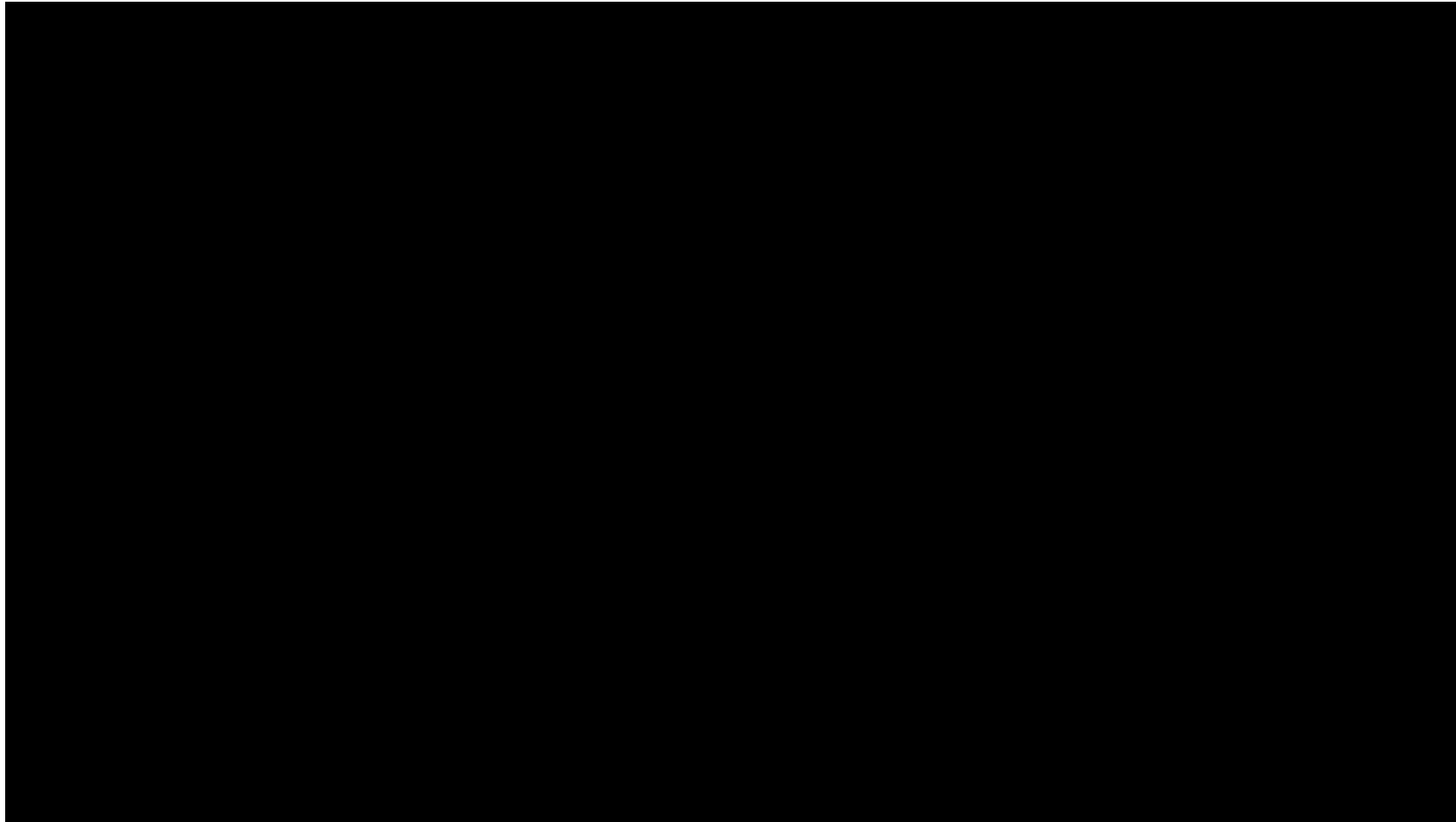
Laughing, smiling

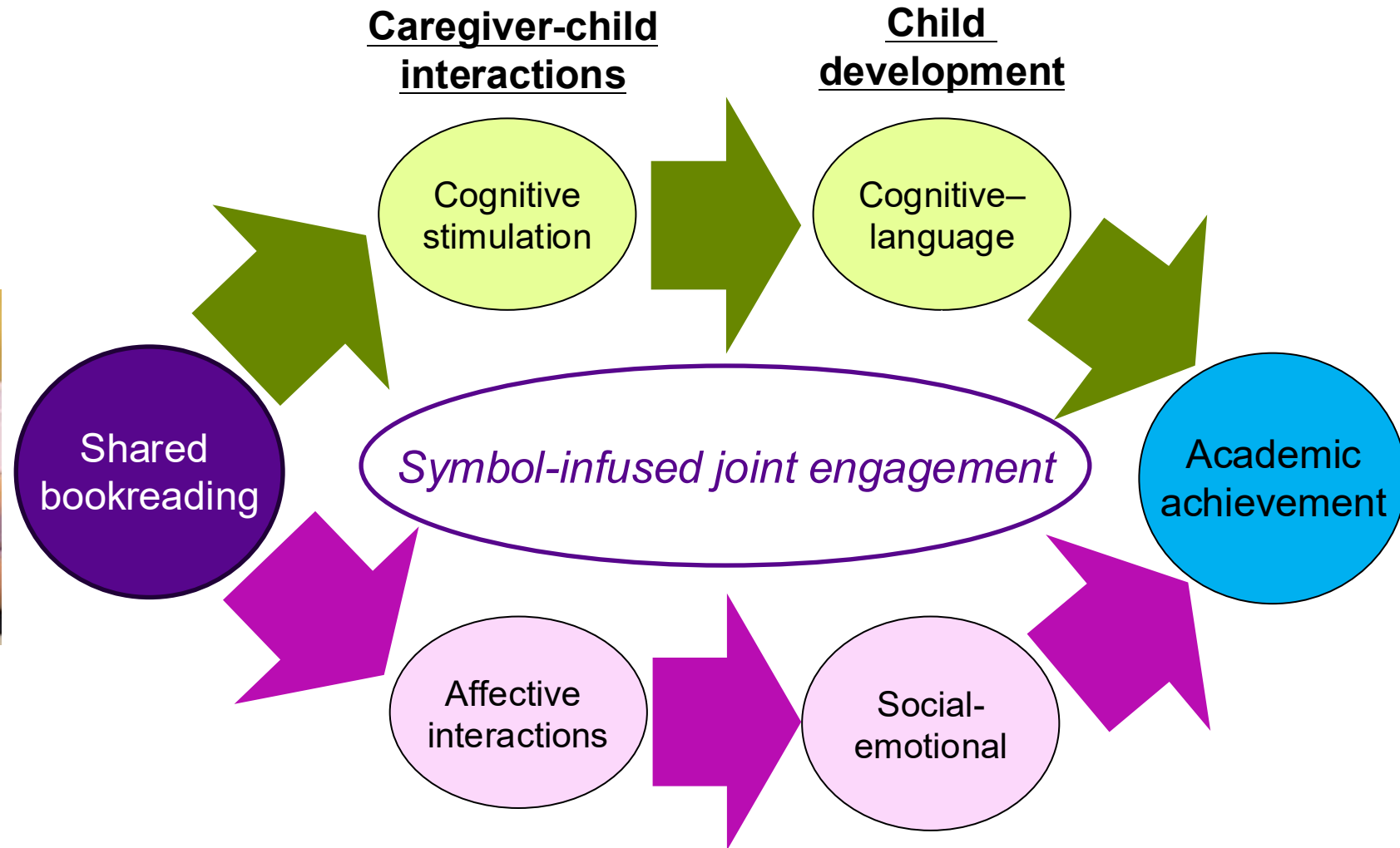
Closeness

Responsivity

Comfort

Shared focus







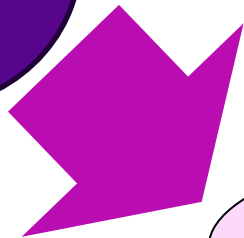
Books



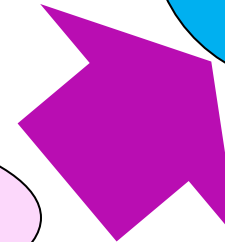
Babbles



Academic achievement



Bonds



Today's talk

1. Why is shared bookreading special?
 - **Promotes bonds and babbles**
2. Evidence that books → babbles
3. Evidence that books → bonds

Today's talk

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Two different studies

1. 22 Latine families in NYC
 - Recorded longitudinally at **2, 6, 9, and 12 months**
2. 29 Latine families in California
 - Recorded at **18 months**

Day-long recordings of children's natural environments

Language ENvironment Analysis (LENA)

- Unobtrusive data collection
- Up to 16 hrs of continuous audio recording

Primary measures of interest:

- Adult words (AWC)
- Conversational turns (CTC)
- Child vocalizations (CVC)



Recording Logbook

9:00 – 10:00 AM

Where was your child during this time?

At home

Outside of home. *Where:* _____

Who was with your child during this time?

Mom

Dad

Siblings: Age(s): _____

Other adults How many: _____

Other children How many: _____

Was your child doing one of these activities during this time?

Napping

Taking a bath

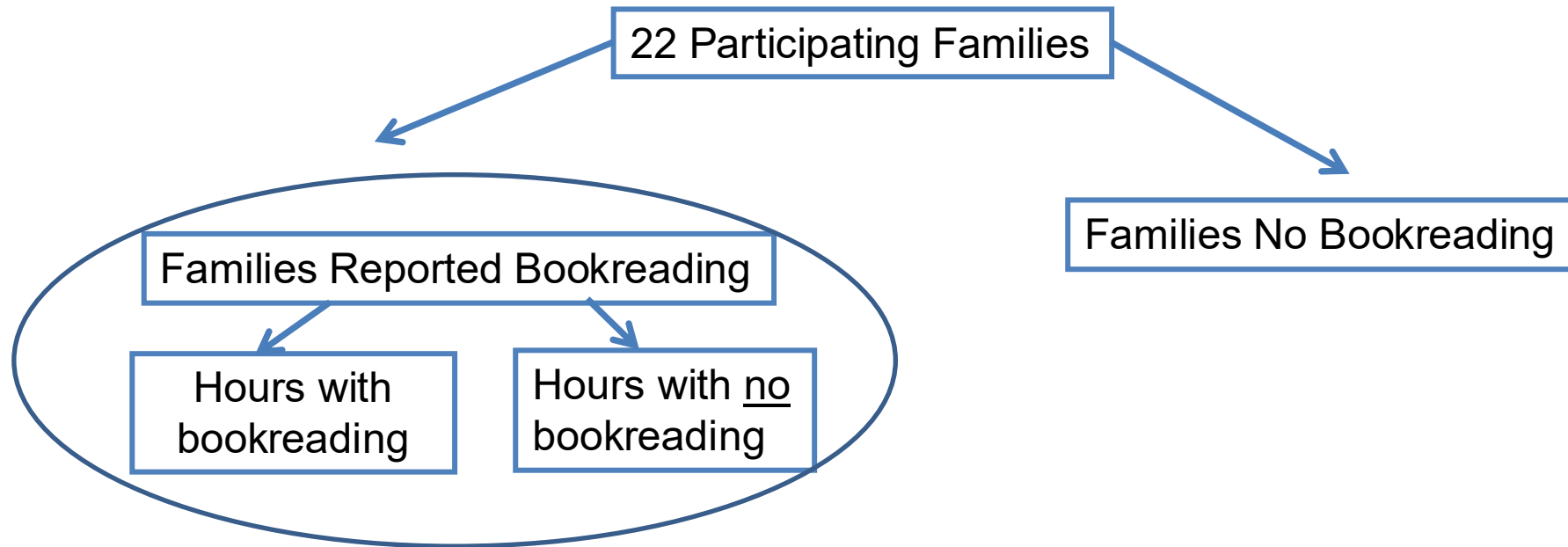
Feeding

Looking at books / being read to

Was the television on during this time?

Yes

No

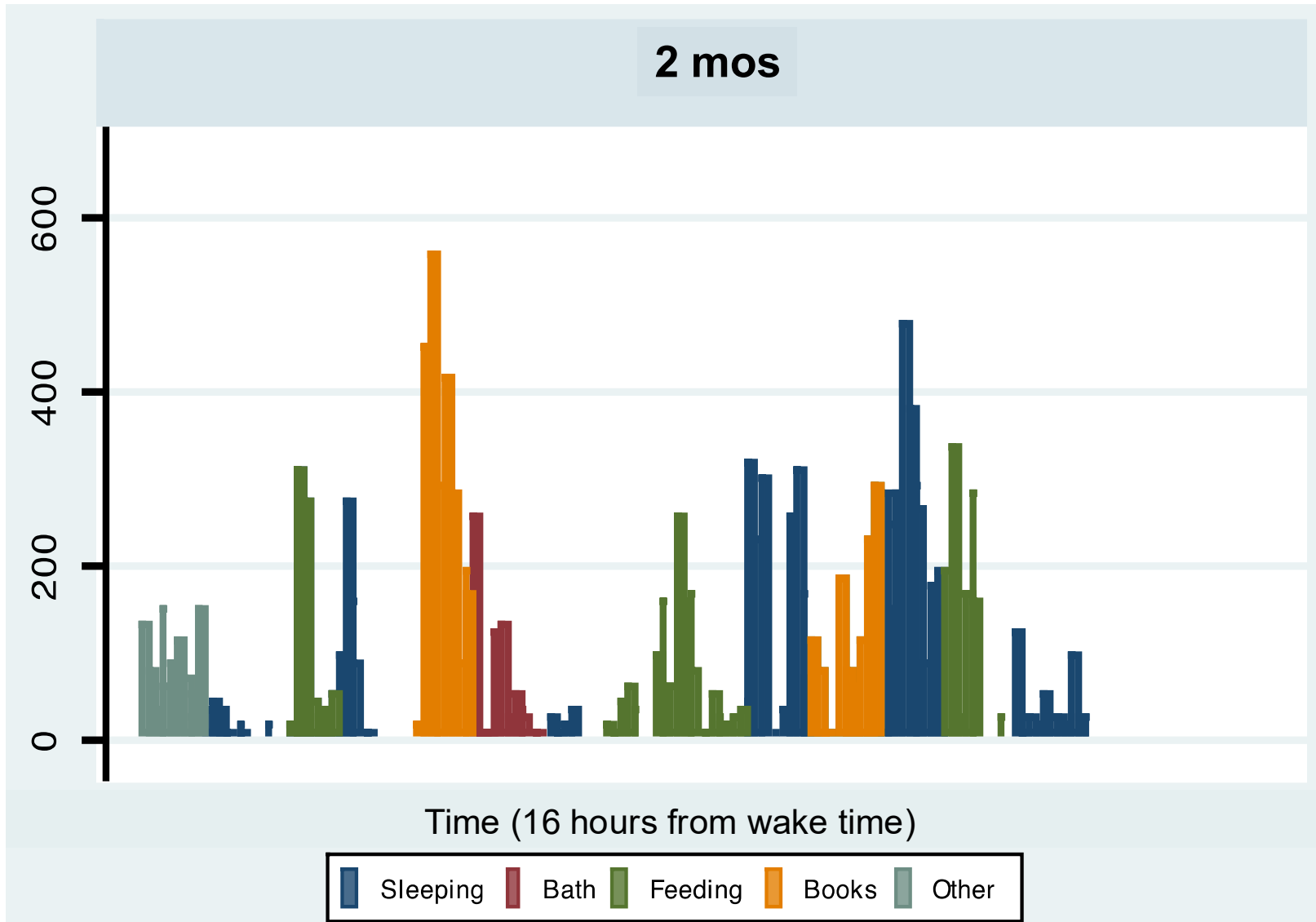


LENA Measures of Language Interactions during these intervals:

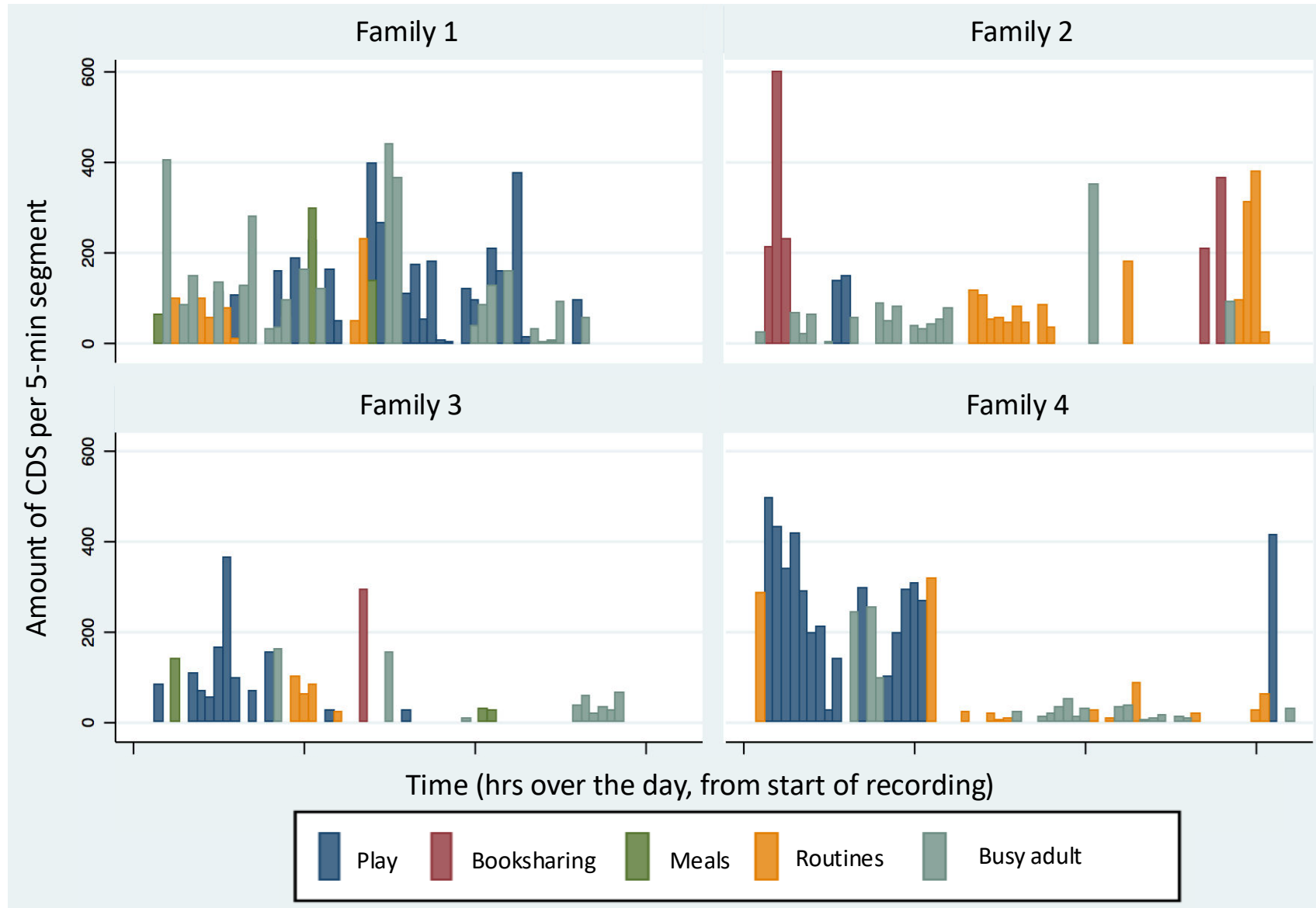
- Adult Words
- Conversational Turns
- Child Vocalizations

One day in the life of a 2-mo-old infant

Amount of speech in environment

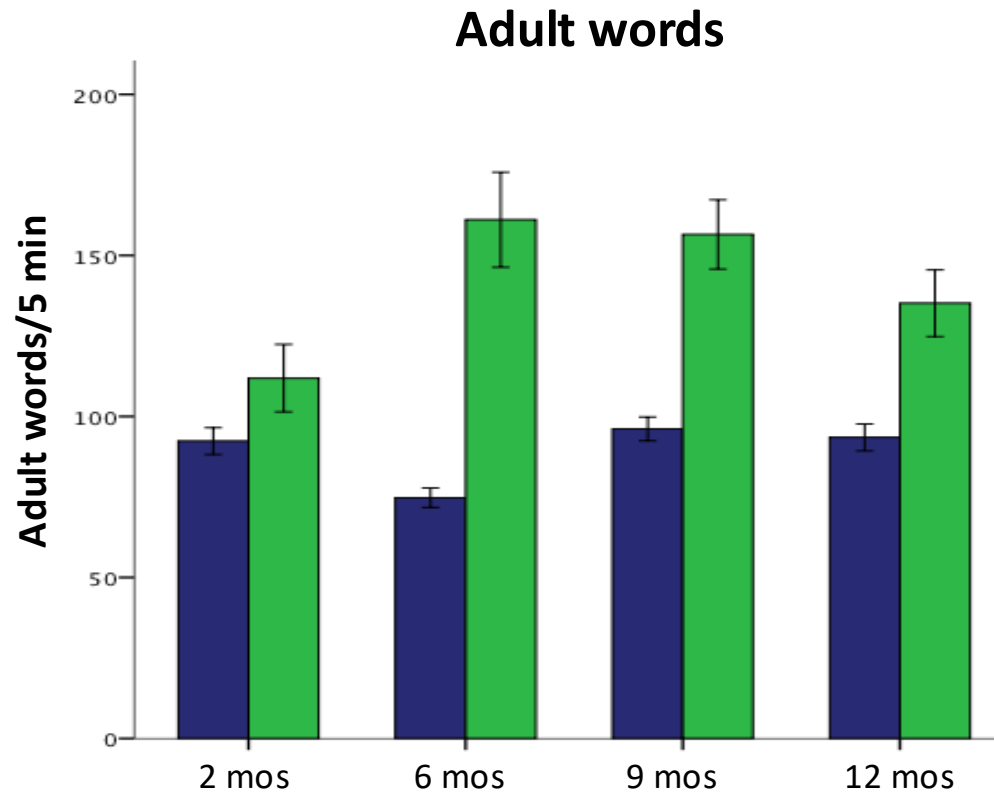


One day in the life of 4 different infants

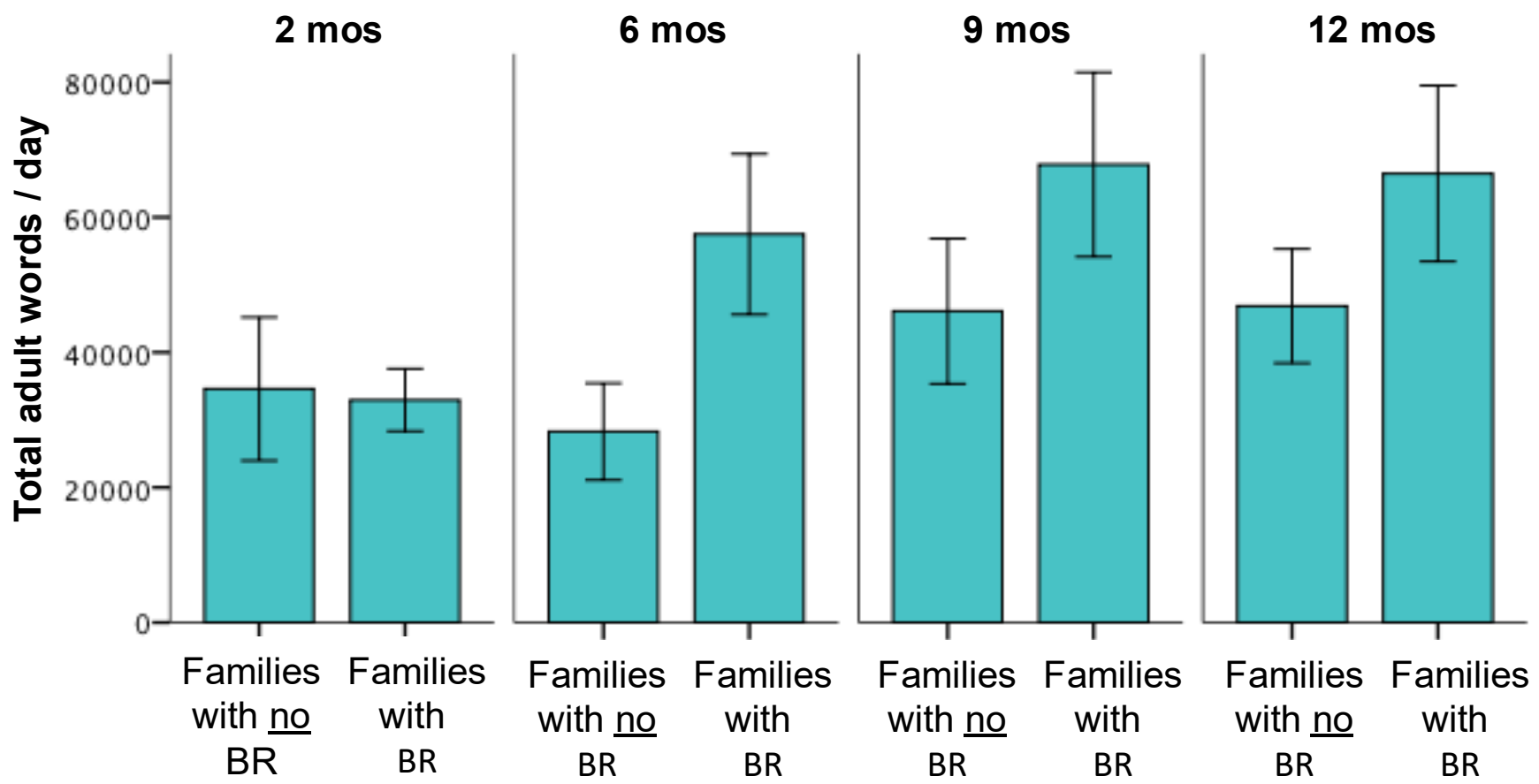


More language interactions in segments with bookreading

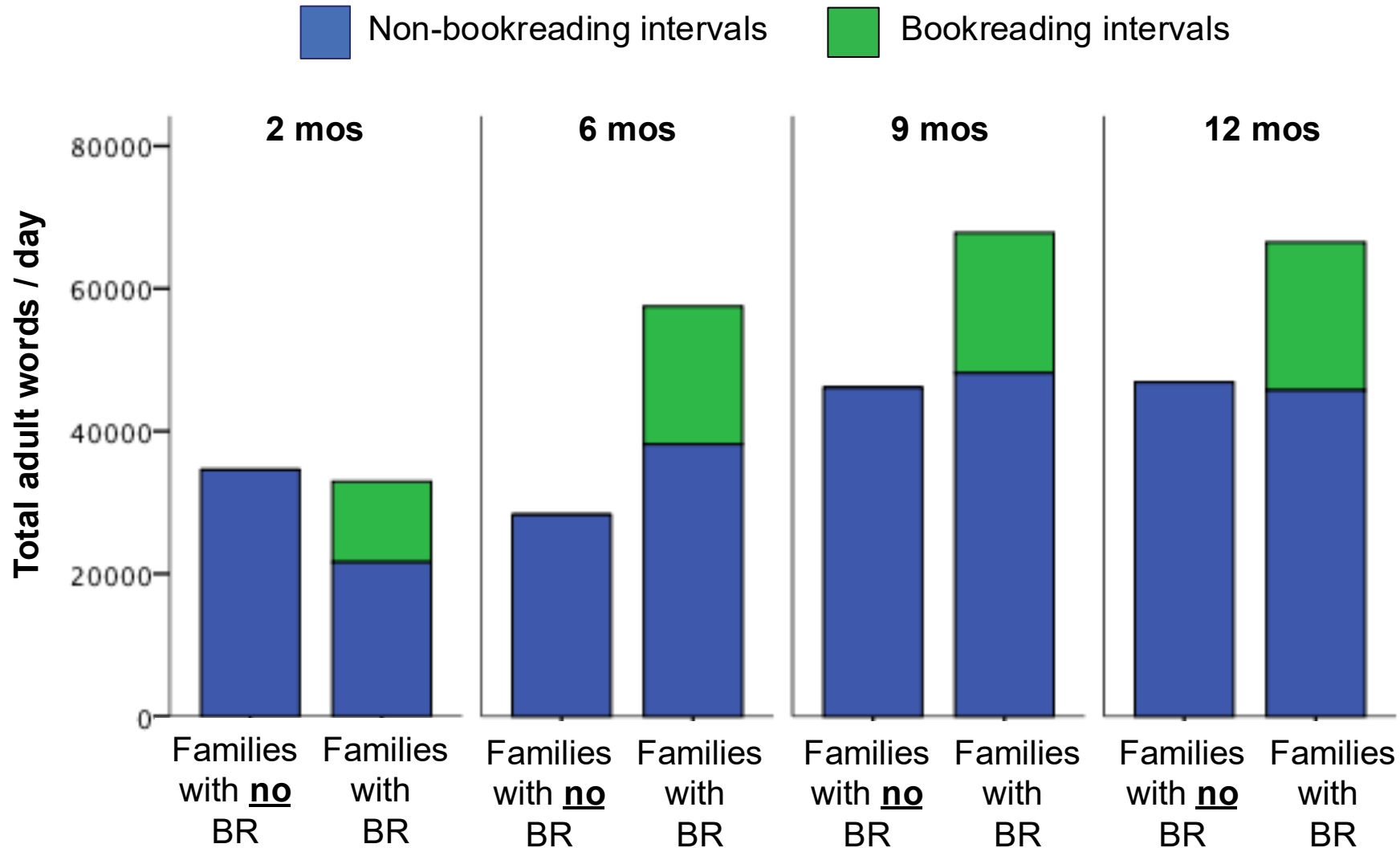
■ Non-bookreading intervals ■ Bookreading intervals



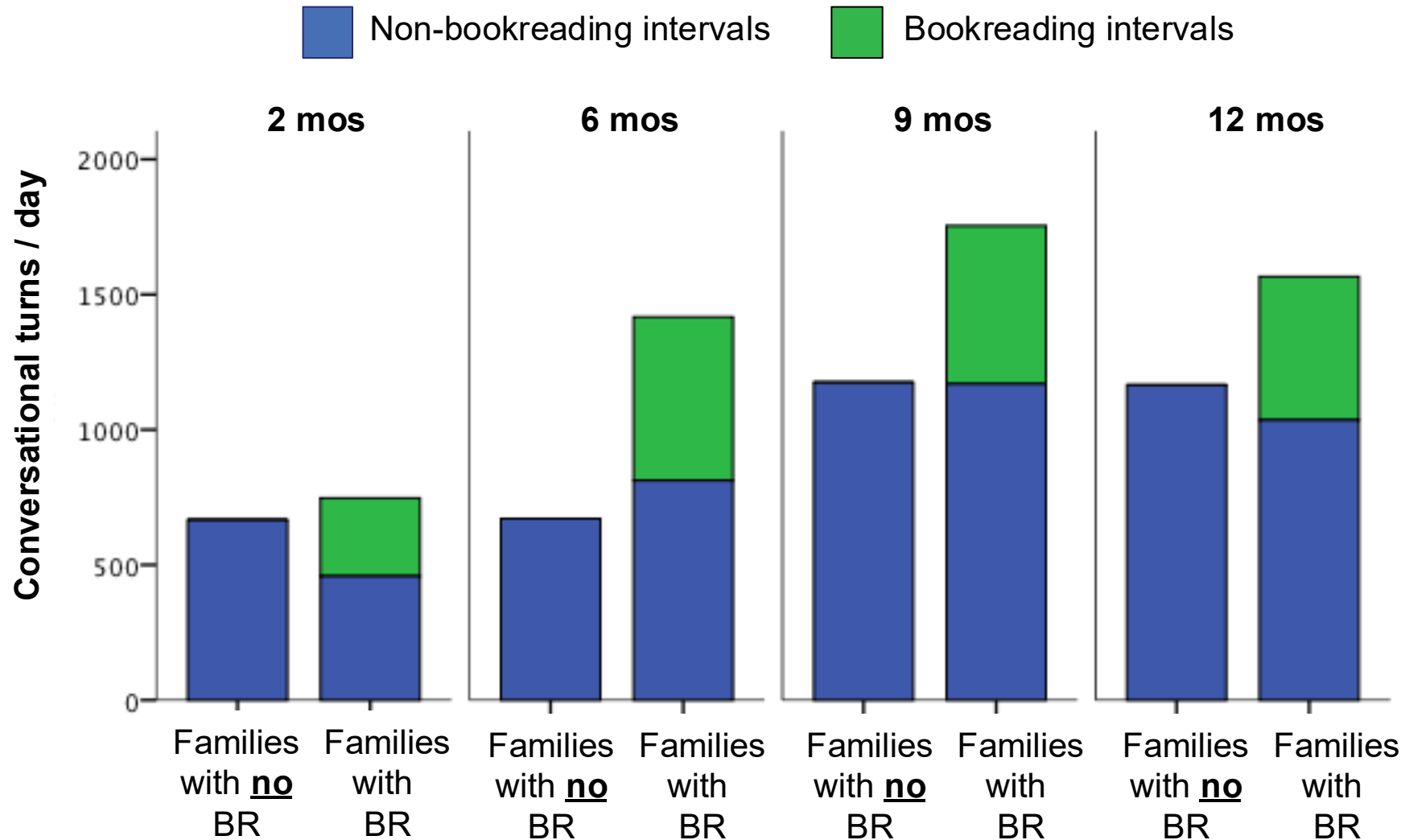
Language environment in families with and without bookreading



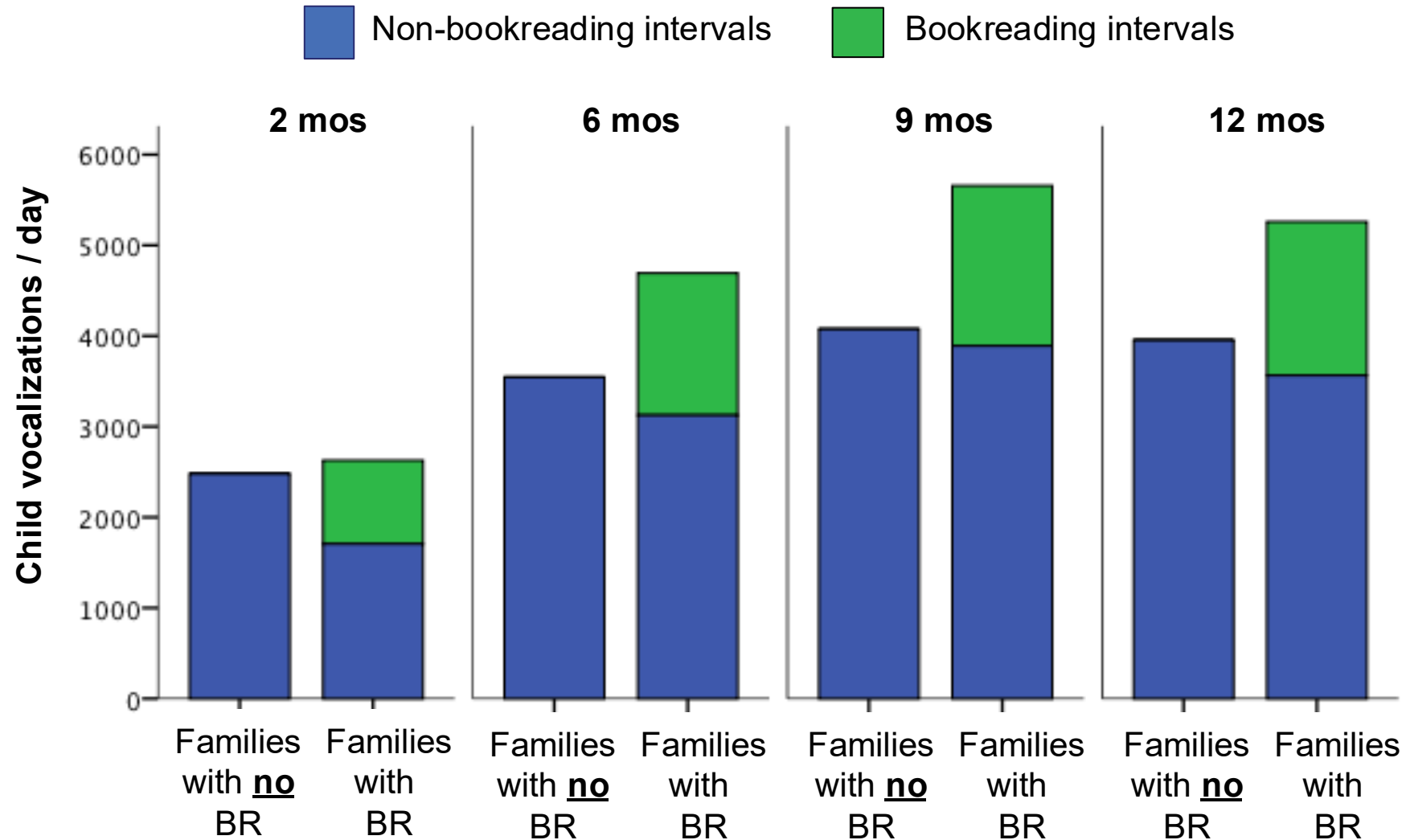
Language environment in families with and without bookreading



Language environment in families with and without bookreading

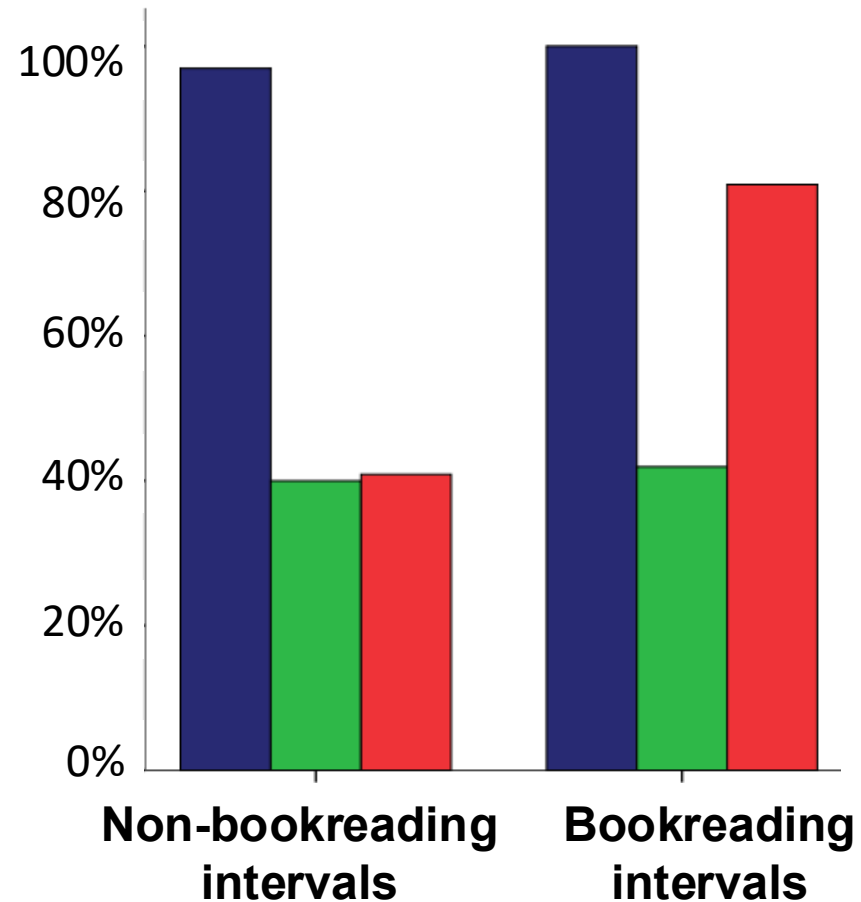


Language environment in families with and without bookreading

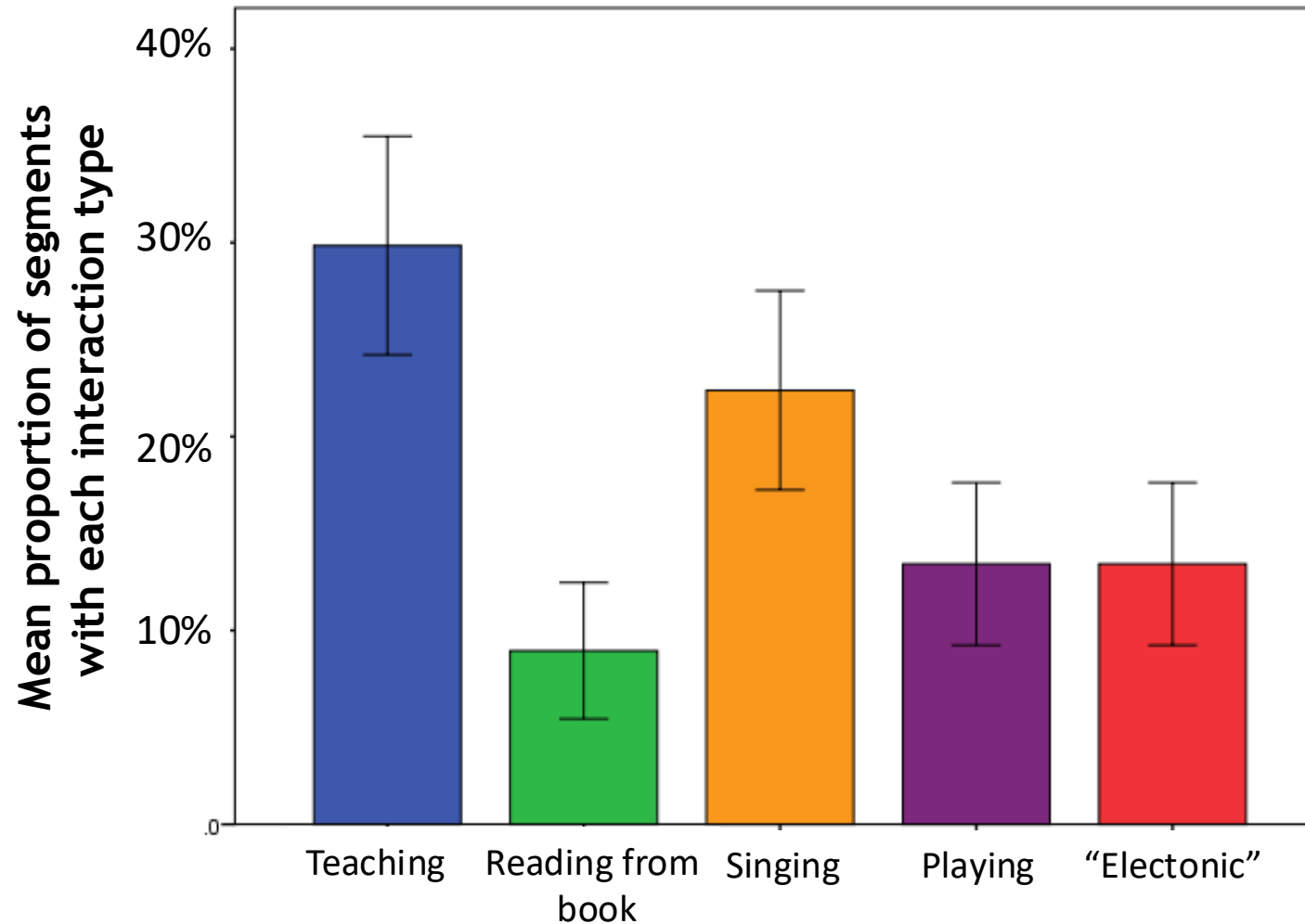


Who participates in bookreading interactions?

Mom present Dad present Siblings present



Different *types* of interactions during booksharing intervals



Summary

- As early as the first year of life, booksharing promotes engagement in language interactions
 - **Books → Babbles**
- Engagement with books facilitates multiple types of interactions, including but not limited to reading
- Engagement of multiple family members in booksharing may suggest additional opportunities for rich interactions

Today's talk

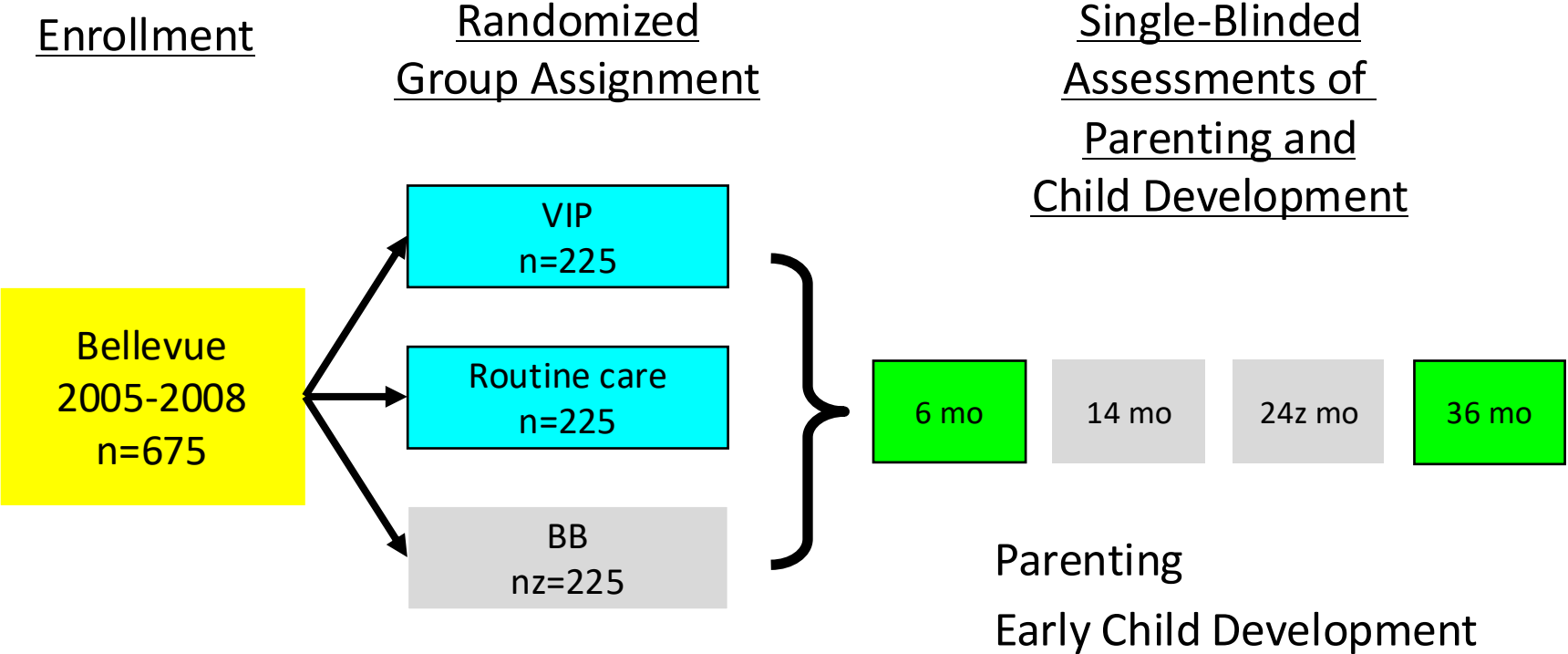
1. Why is shared bookreading special?
 - Promotes bonds and babbles
2. Evidence that books → babbles
3. **Evidence that books → bonds**



- Developed in Dr. Alan Mendelsohn's lab, builds on ROR
- Promotion of interactions in shared reading and play
- Relationship-based intervention delivered in pediatric primary care by a VIP Coach

www.playreadvip.org

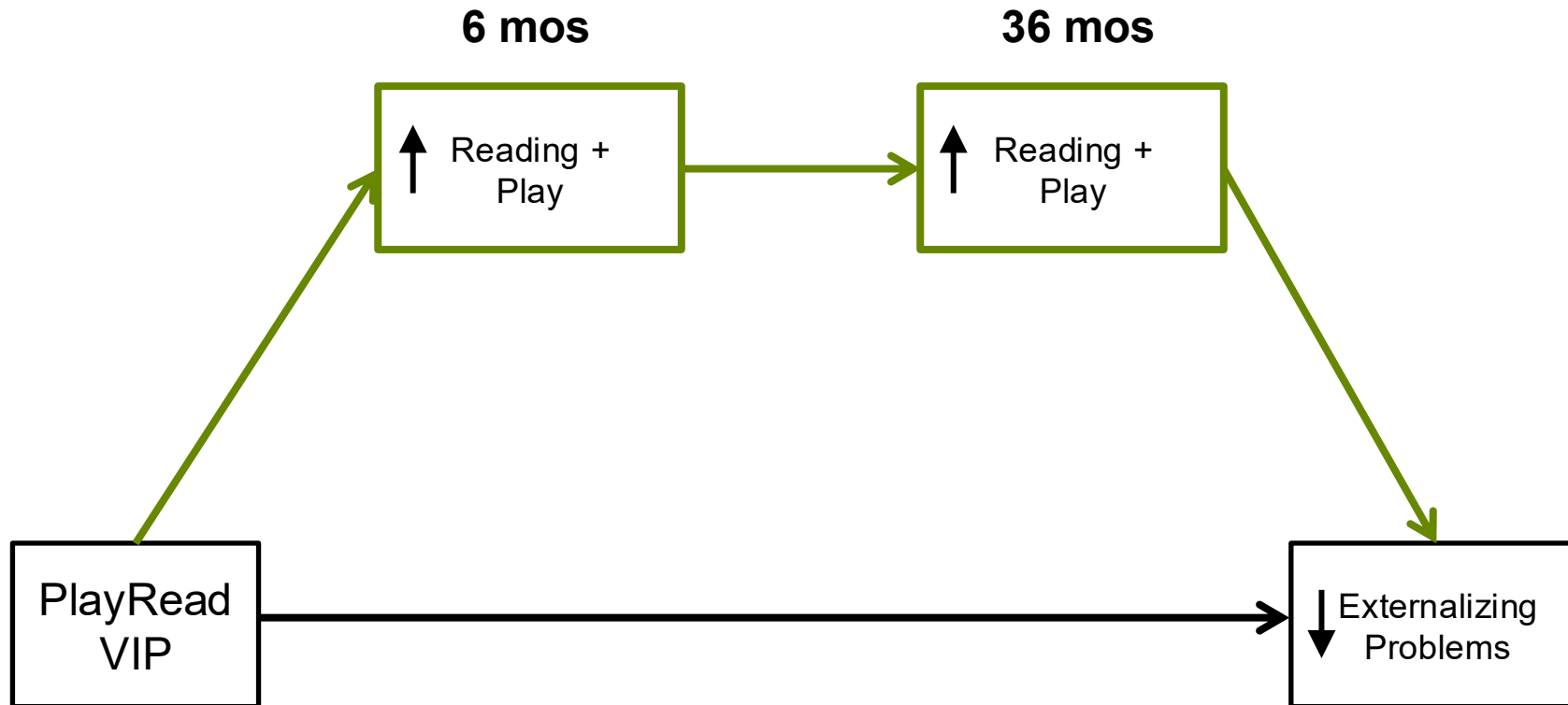
Randomized Controlled Trial of PlayReadVIP



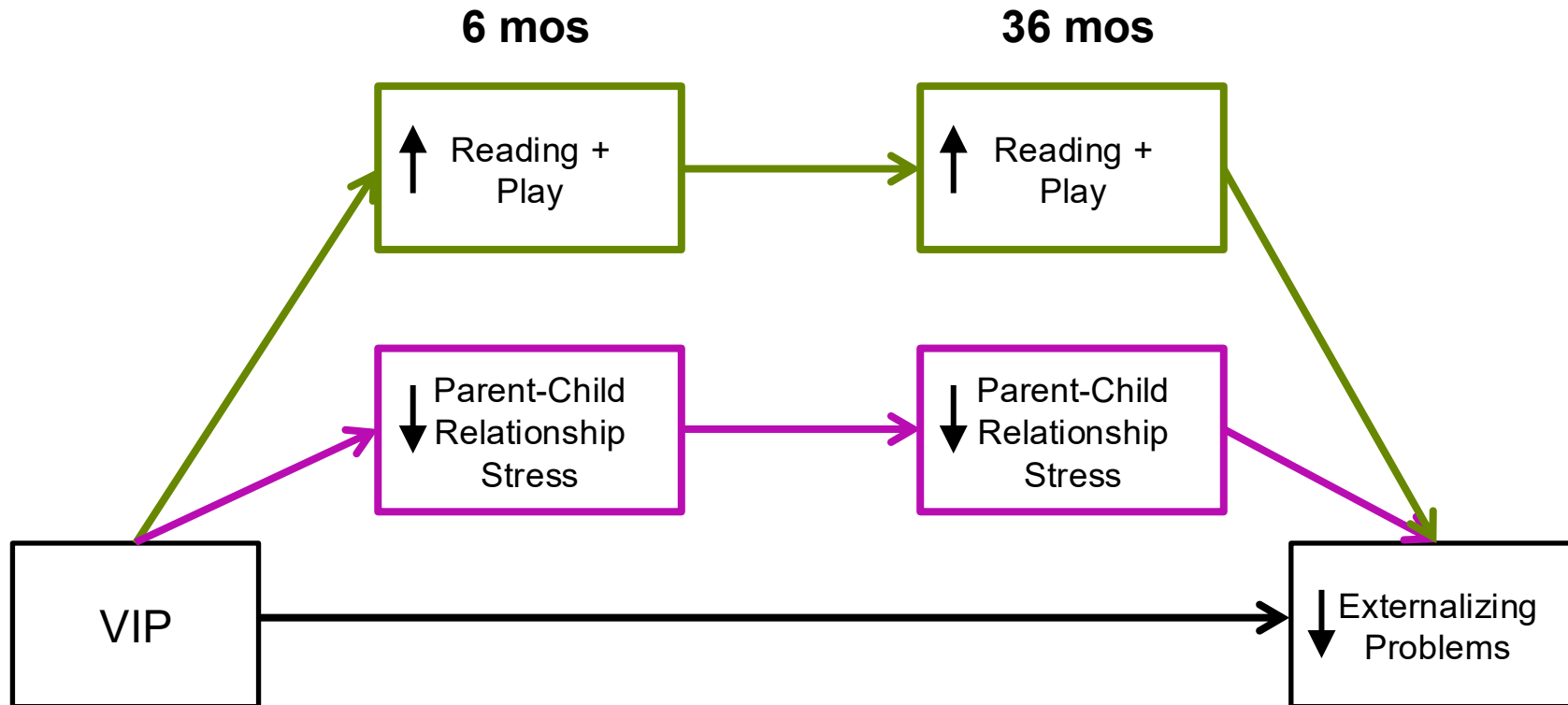
PlayReadVIP → Improved Social-Emotional Development, Reduced Hyperactivity + Aggression



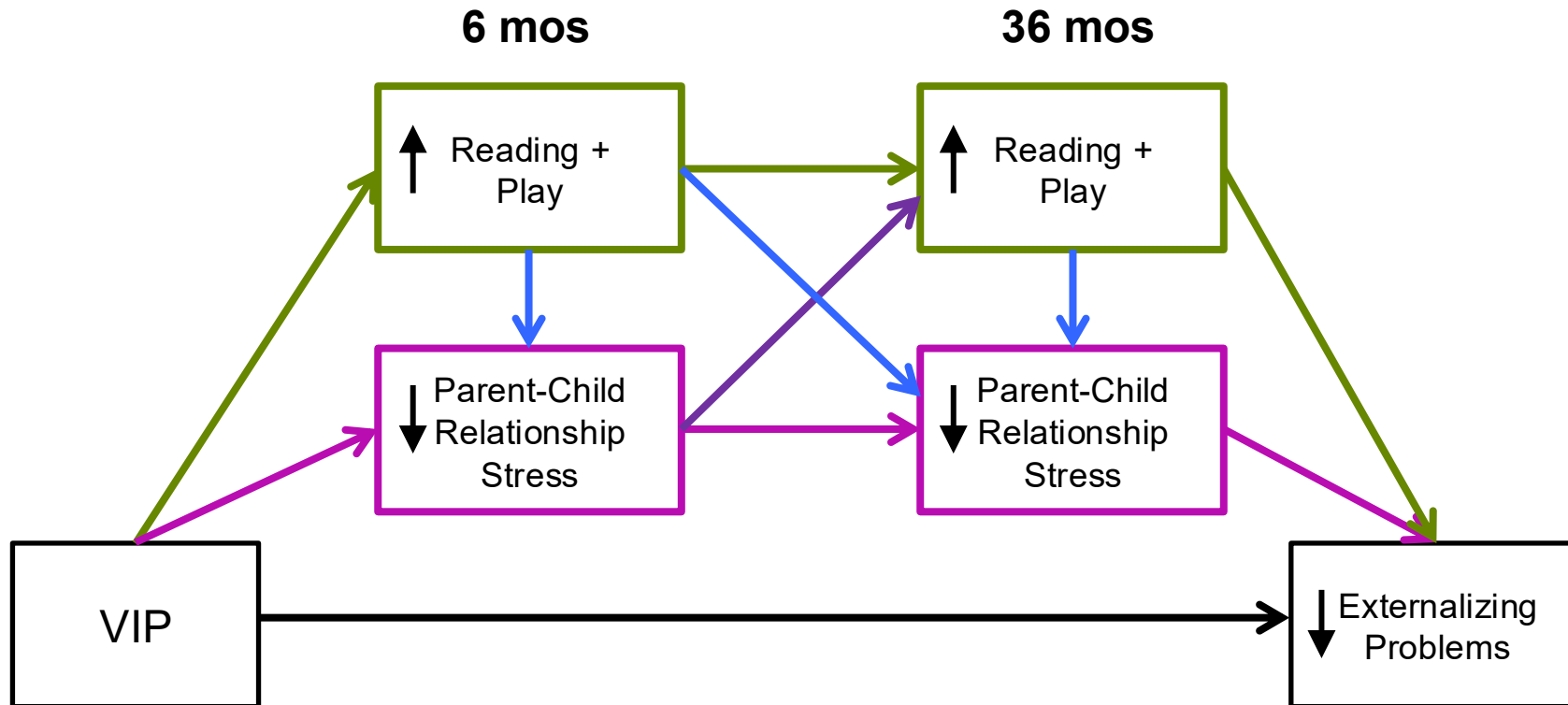
PlayReadVIP → More Reading + Play →
Reduced Hyperactivity + Aggression



PlayReadVIP → Reduced Parent-Child Relationship Stress →
Reduced Hyperactivity + Aggression



More Reading + Play → Reduced Parent-Child Relationship Stress → Reduced Hyperactivity + Aggression





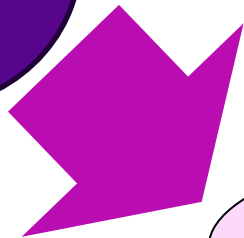
Books



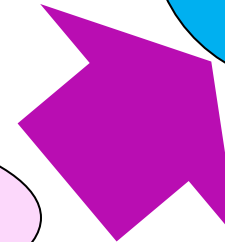
Babbles



Academic achievement

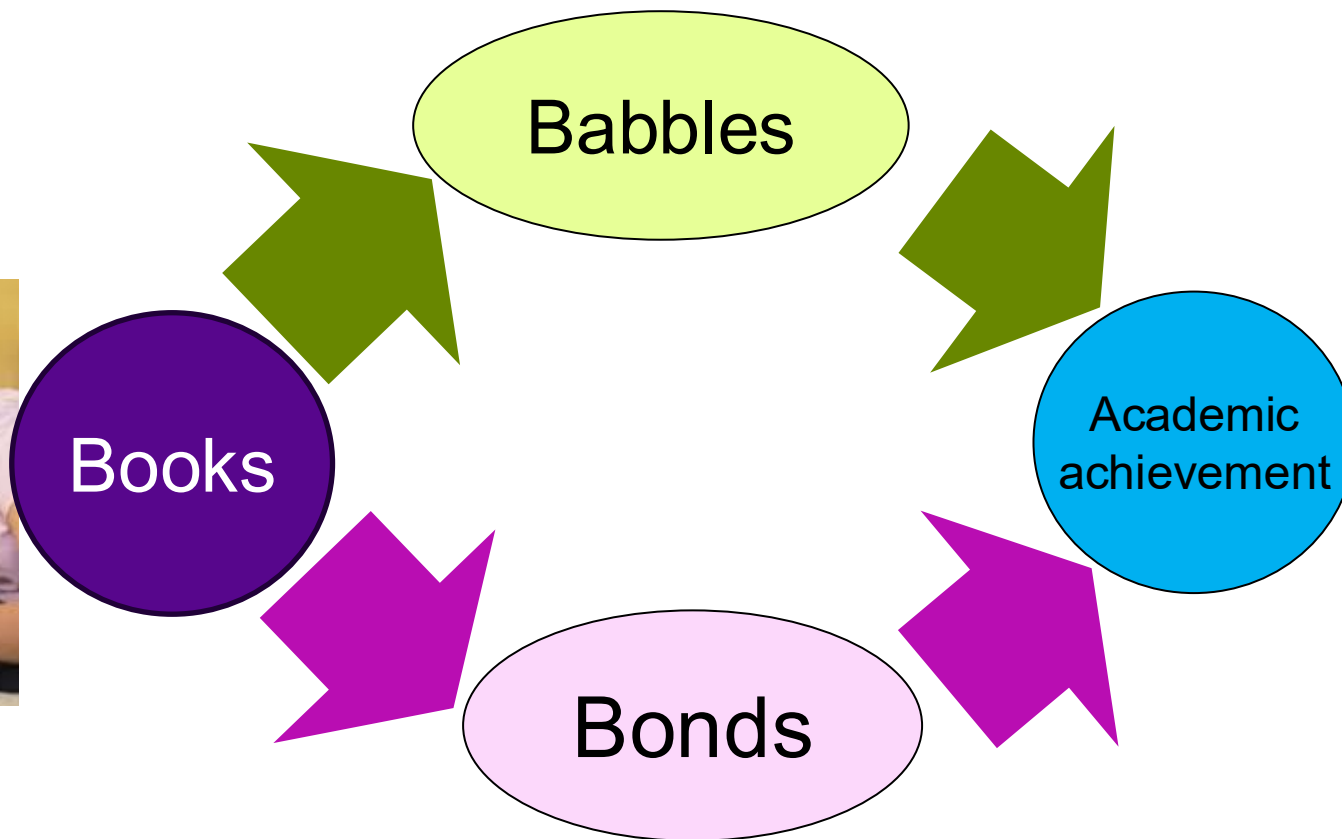


Bonds

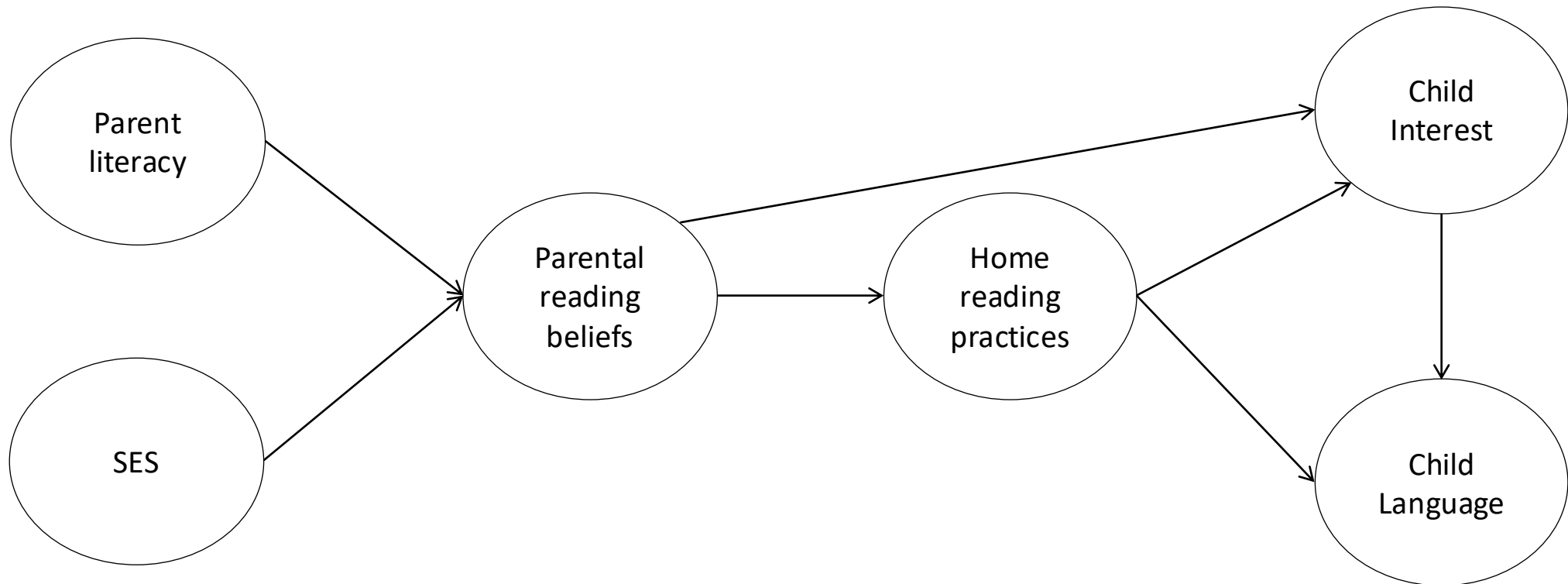


What motivates families to engage in bookreading?

What are barriers?
What helps?



Explanatory model of parent-child reading

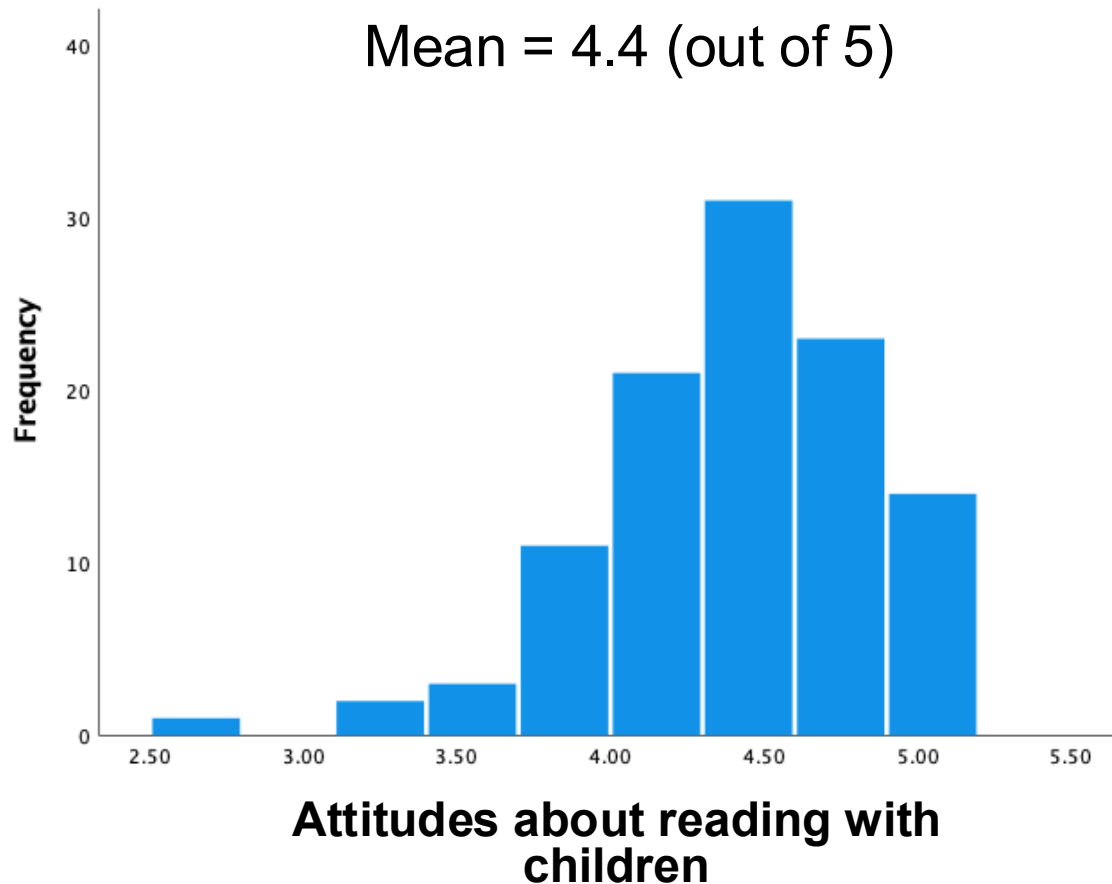


DeBaryshe, 1995. Maternal belief systems: Linchpin in the home reading process

Today's talk

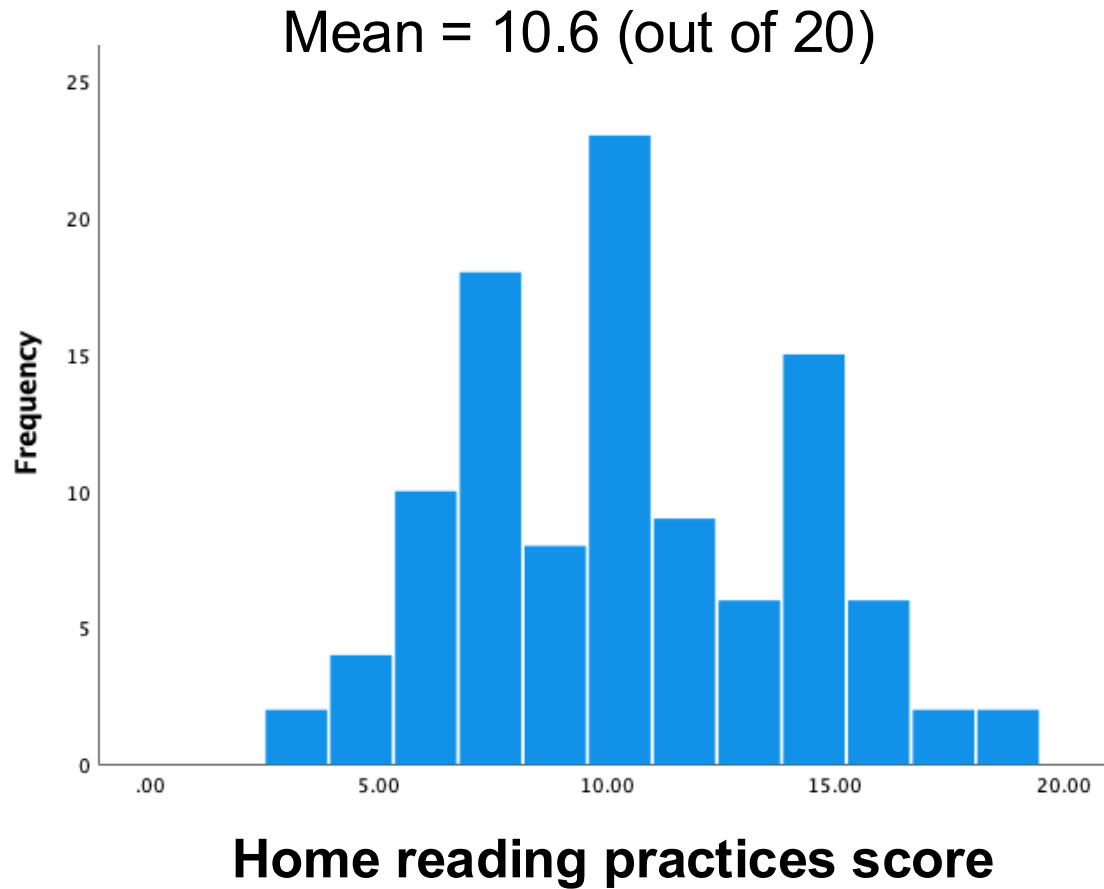
1. Why is shared bookreading special?
 - Promotes bonds and babbles
2. Evidence that books → babbles
3. Evidence that books → bonds
4. **Literacy practices in multilingual families**

Parent reading beliefs



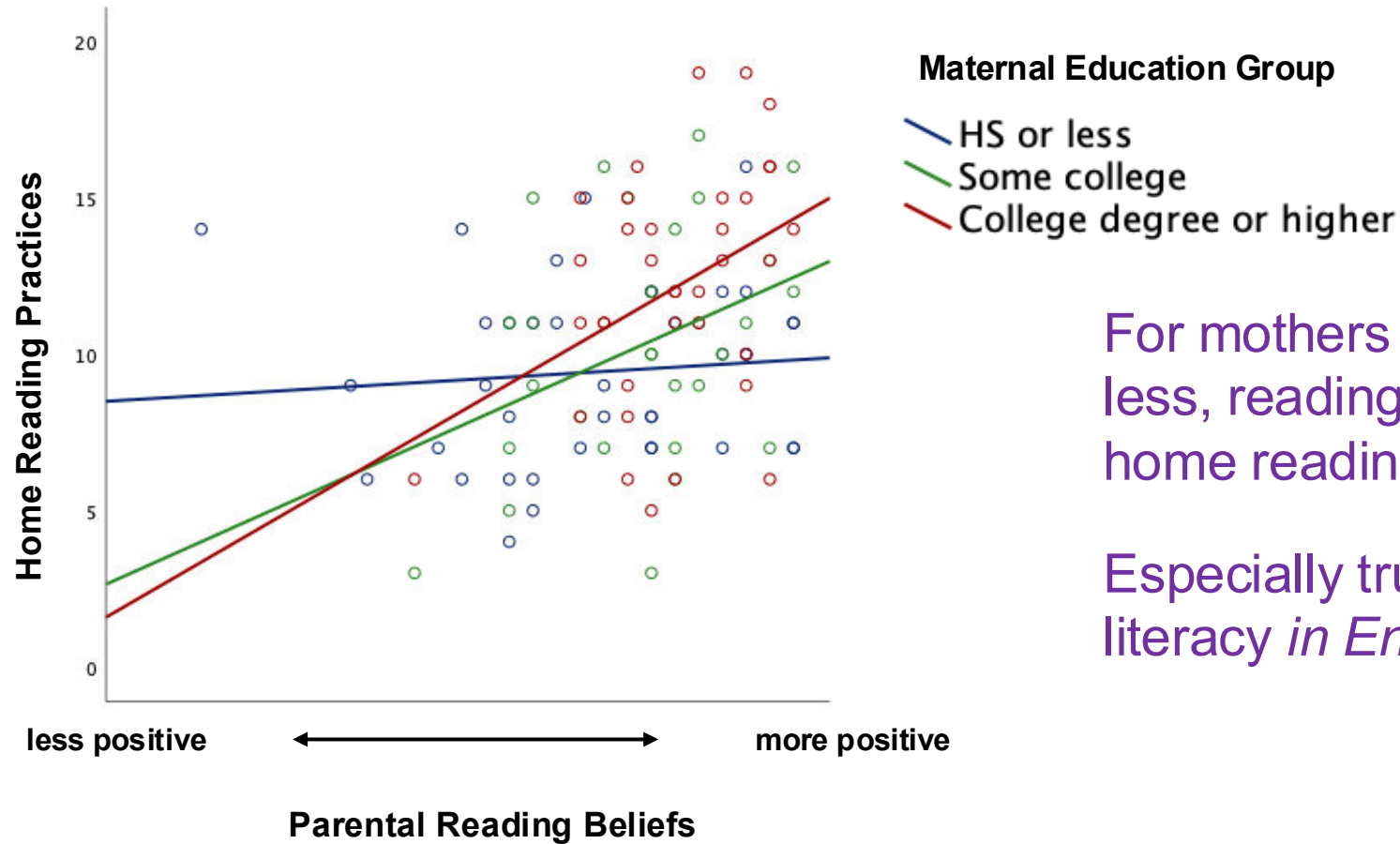
- Reading helps children be better talkers and better listeners: **100% agree**
- My child is too young to learn about reading: **94% disagree**
- Schools are responsible for teaching children, not parents: **85% disagree**

Home reading practices



- **100%** of parents had started to read with their child
- Number of books at home: **$M = 20$ (0-120)**
- Reading frequency:
 - 23% read 5-7 days/week
 - 30% read 3-4 days/week
 - 47% read 0-3 days/week

Do parental reading beliefs explain differences in reading practices?



For mothers with a high school degree or less, reading beliefs were not related to home reading practices.

Especially true for mothers with low literacy *in English*

Spanish and English Reading Questionnaire (SER-Q)



Demographics and Language Use at Home



Number and Types of Books at Home



Reading Beliefs



Reading in English



Reading in Spanish

Avelar et al., 2024



Number and Types of Books at Home

- How many children's books **in English** do you have at home?
- How many children's books **in Spanish** do you have at home?
- What types of children's books do you have at home?
- When you read these types of books, what language do you read them in?

Avelar et al., 2024



Reading Beliefs

- "I believe that reading **in English** at home will help my child be more successful in school"
- "I believe that reading **in Spanish** at home will help my child be more successful in school"



Reading in English

- How many days each week do you read to your child in English?
- When you read to your child in English:
 - How happy do you feel?
 - How difficult does it feel?
 - Do you teach your child letters and sounds?
 - Do you ask your child questions about the story?



Reading in Spanish

Same questions as English section

Avelar et al., 2024

Participants

- 125 Hispanic parents with children between 1-6 years

Maternal education

- Low maternal education (33%)
 - High school or less
- Medium education groups (27%)
 - College
- High maternal education (40%)
 - Graduate school

Parental language use

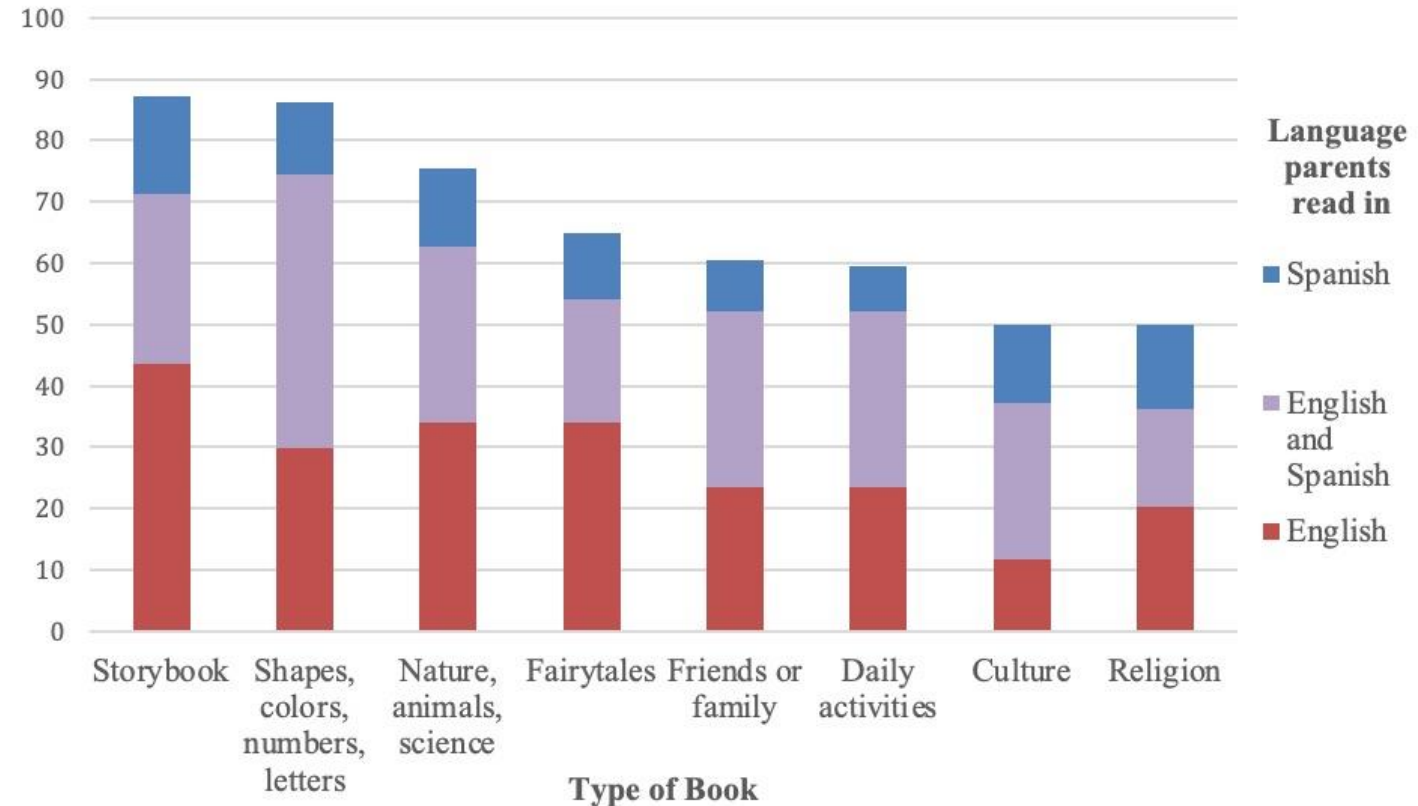
- Only or mostly Spanish (43%)
- English and Spanish (37%)
- Only or mostly English (20%)

Avelar et al., 2024



Number and Types of Books at Home

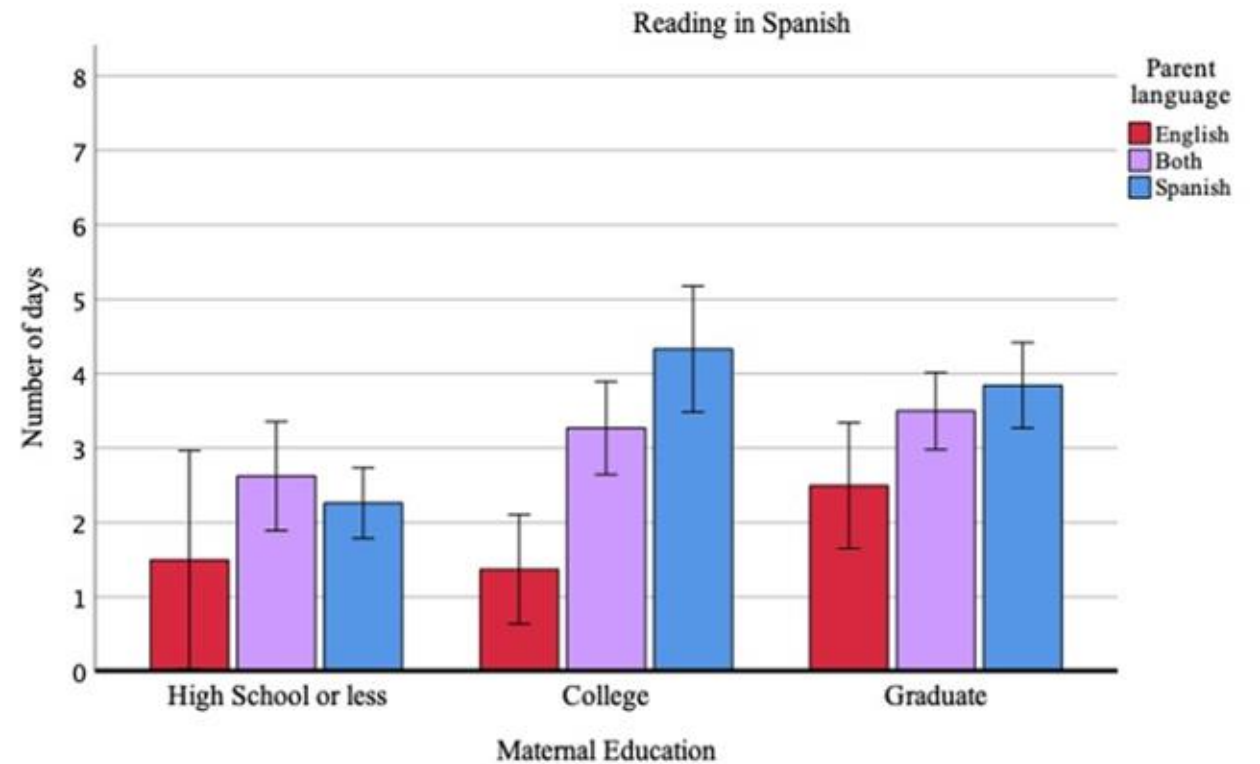
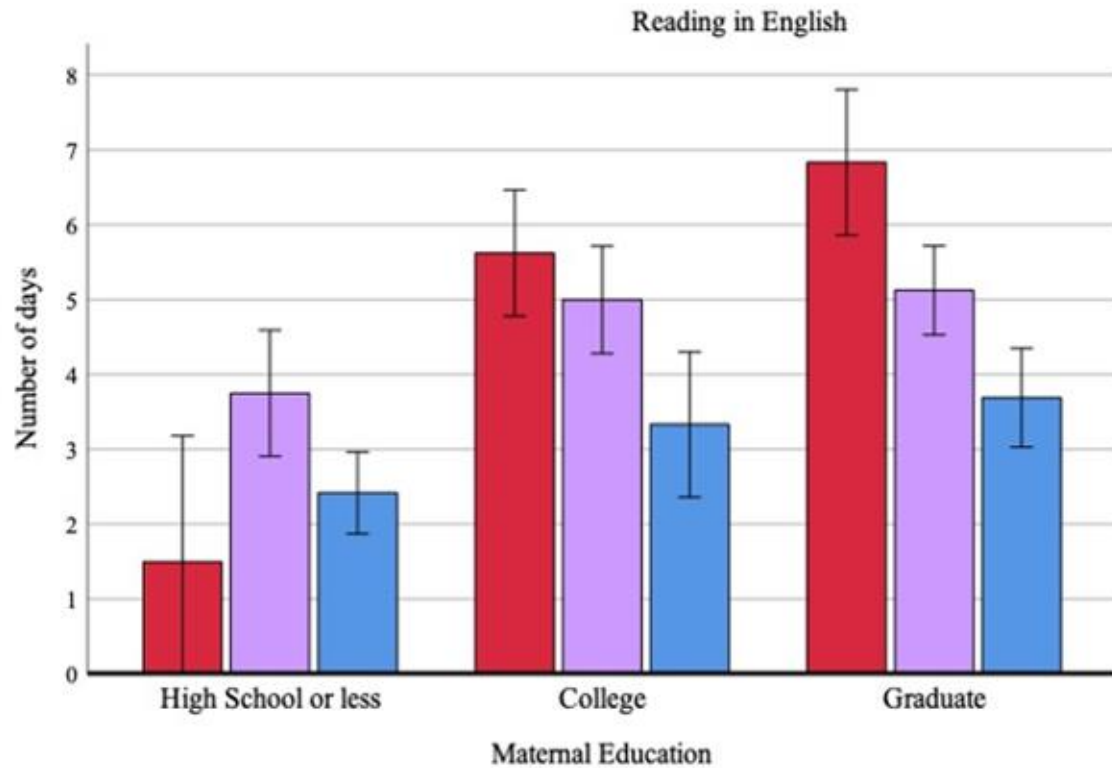
- Average number of books at home
 - 20 books in English
 - 6-10 books in Spanish
- 57% said finding children's books in Spanish is difficult or very difficult
- Only 2.7% said it was very difficult to find books in English



Avelar et al., 2024



Frequency of reading per week

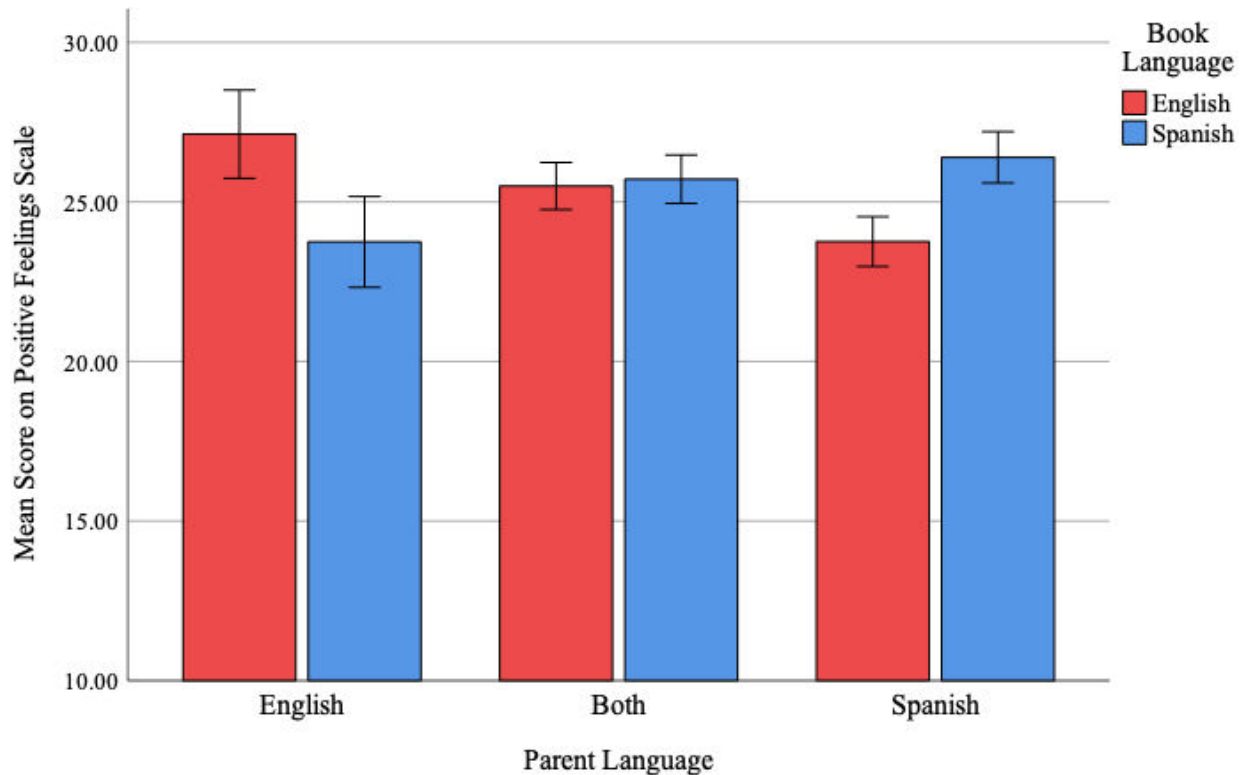


Parents read more in English than in Spanish overall
English-dominant and Balanced parents read more in English
Spanish-dominant parents read **equally** in English and in Spanish

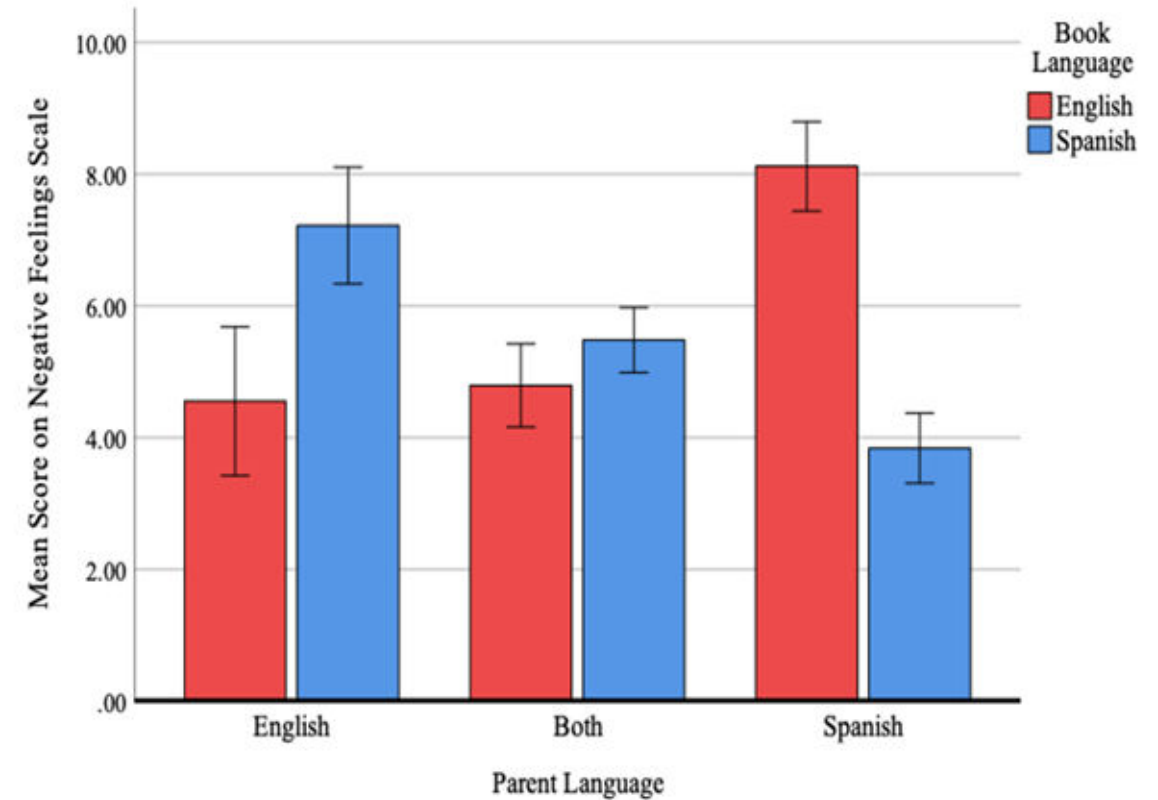
Avelar et al., 2024

How do you feel when reading with your child in English/Spanish?

Positive Feelings



Negative Feelings



Avelar et al., 2024

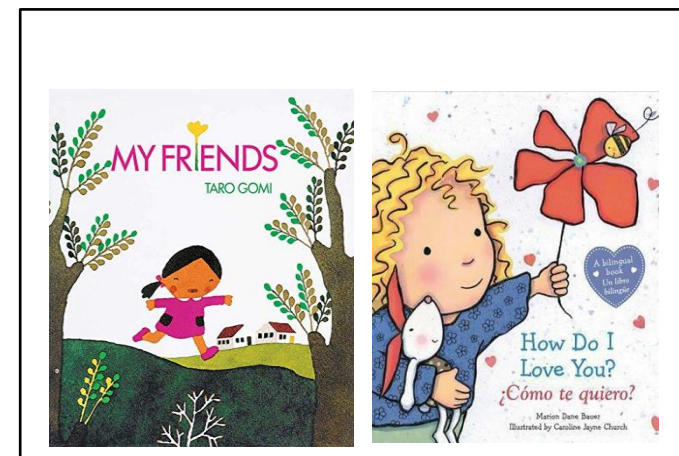
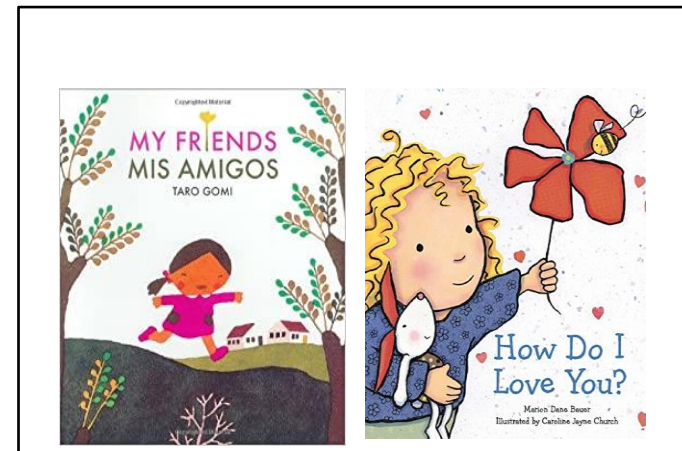
Implications

- Families had fewer books and read less frequently in Spanish than in English
 - Varied by maternal education and language preference
- Different barriers to reading in English and in Spanish
- Different feelings and teaching behaviors when reading in Spanish and English based on maternal education and language preference

What happens when parents have bilingual books?

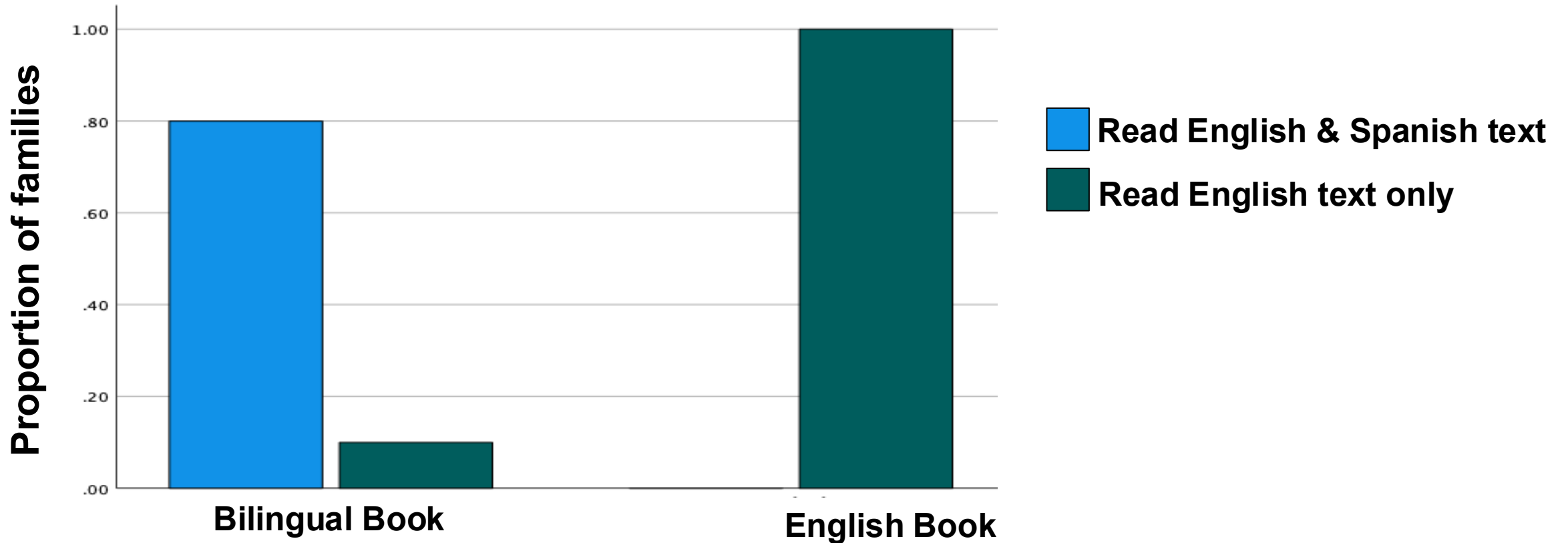
Study design

- Each parent-child dyad shared 2 books
 - 1 English-only book
 - 1 English-Spanish bilingual book



Language of reading

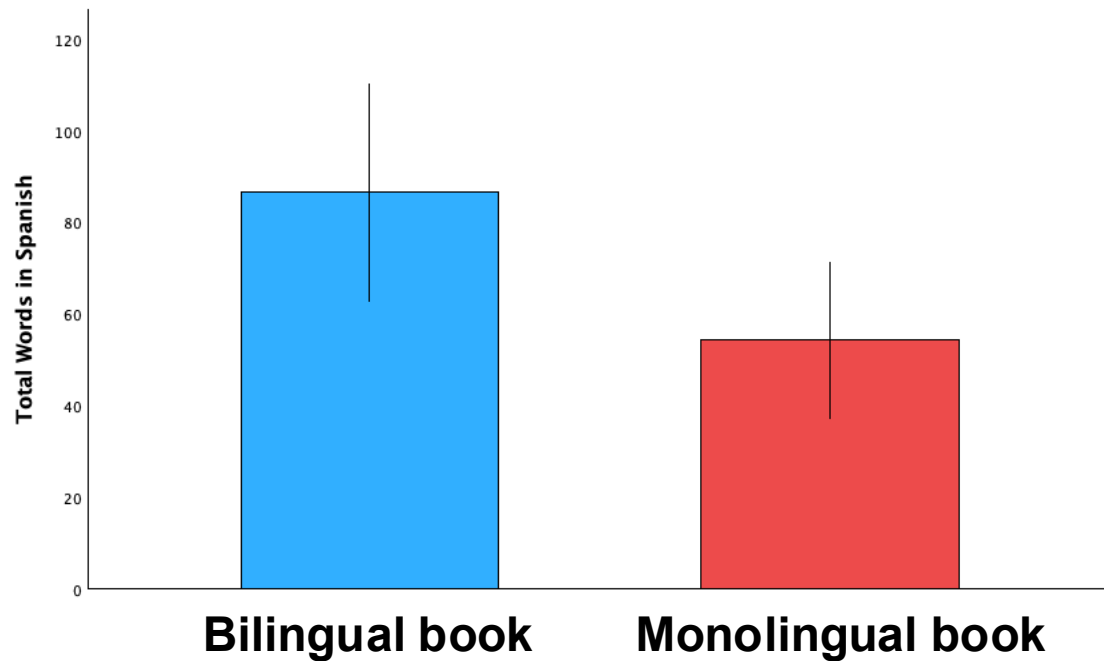
Language in which parent read book



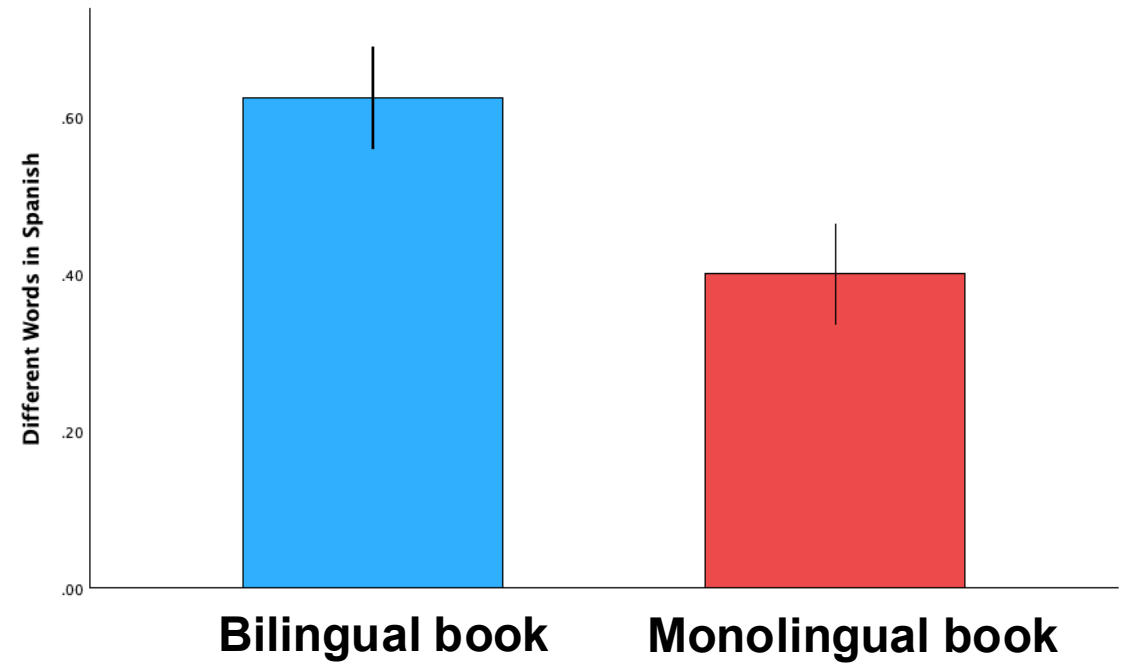
Reinoso et al., 2025

Parents use more Spanish when reading bilingual books than monolingual books

Number of total words



Number of different words



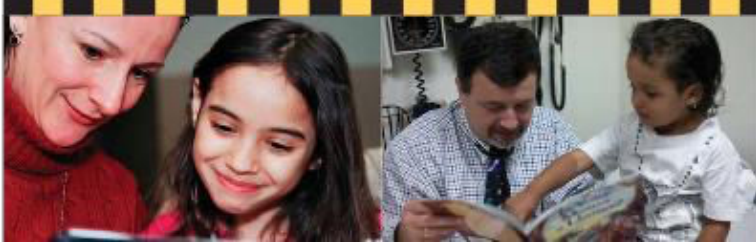
The amount of English doesn't change!

Reinoso et al., 2025

What role should pediatricians play?



Leyendo Juntos
Spanish Language Literacy
Promotion for
Primary Care Providers



Mariana Glusman, MD



Tina Chen, PhD



Milton Guendica



Anna Miller-Fitzwater, MD



Caitlin Canfield, PhD



Take-Away Points

- **Giving books in the home language is a big deal!**
 - Removes access barriers (books can be hard to find!)
 - Reinforces that reading/talking in home language is a good thing!
 - Helps dispel fears about bilingualism / using home language
 - Can lead to increased frequency of reading, more interactive behaviors during reading, and more positive feelings about reading
 - Can lead to greater use of the home language during reading (without necessarily reducing English – if bilingual books)

Take-Away Points

- **Talk to families about bilingualism**
 - Most families want to raise bilingual children but worry about compromising their child's academic success
 - Reassure parents that
 - Using their home language will not confuse or harm their child
 - The best way to support their child's language and literacy development is to use the language they are most comfortable in
 - But... using imperfect English will also not hurt their child
 - English exposure is good, but can happen outside the home

Take-Away Points

- **Use books to monitor development**

- Bilingualism does not cause language delays but bilingual children experience language delays/disorders at similar rates to monolinguals
- Observe how the child responds to the book
- Ask the parent about their child's understanding/learning from books
 - Have they learned any of the words in the books (in any language)?
 - Do they follow the story? Answer questions? Point to pictures? Use gestures?
 - Are they beginning to combine words?
 - Do they understand complex sentences from the book?



Books

Babbles

Bonds

Academic achievement



What motivates families to engage in bookreading?

What are barriers?
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Thank you!



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