

UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE of READING: *through Child-led play*

Learn how the Science of Reading applies to your work with children and the direct correlation between child-led play and literacy development.

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GET TO KNOW LAURA





with LAURA SHEA

LITTLE STORIES

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“
The role of play, seen in the context of the simple view of reading, is important primarily because it contributes to language skills that relate to linguistic comprehension and, secondarily, because it helps children develop the functional skills of working with print and texts.
”
(RAND & MORROW, 2021)

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WHAT YOU'LL LEAVE WITH

1
Knowledge of the Science of Reading

2
Understanding of the 5 components of literacy

3
Ways to leverage moments in child-led play for literacy skill development

4

THUMBS UP

THUMBS DOWN

- ★ early literacy
- ★ emergent literacy
- ★ explicit instruction
- ★ incidental teaching
- ★ phonemic awareness
- ★ phonics

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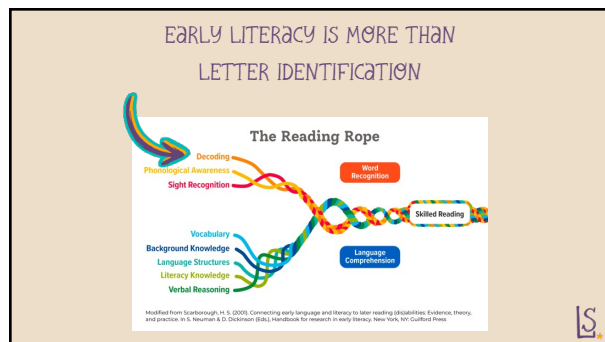
MOMENT OF REFLECTION

- ★ Write down everything you think of when you hear "Science of Reading."
- ★ Answer the poll questions with the main thing that comes to mind when you hear "Science of Reading"

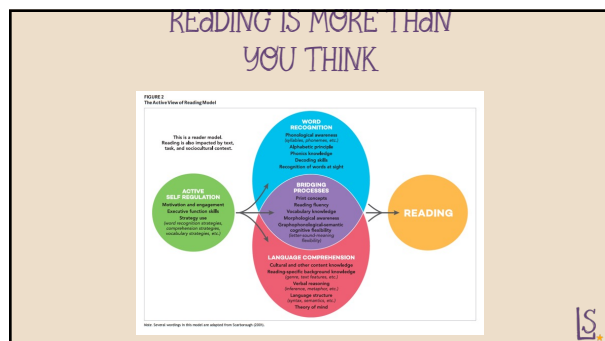
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- attention
- planning
- organization
- strategy
- flexible
- adaptable
- symbolic thinking
- working memory

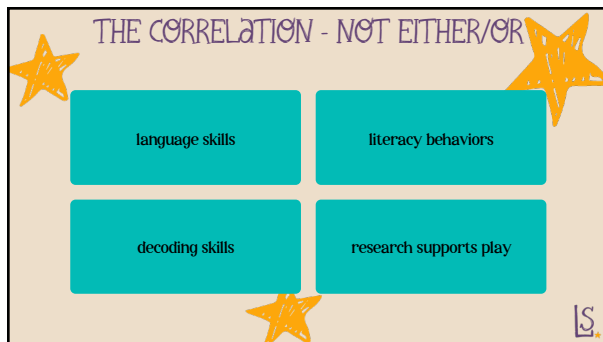
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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

Do you know how creating this pond and ocean out of blocks is an important aspect of early literacy development?

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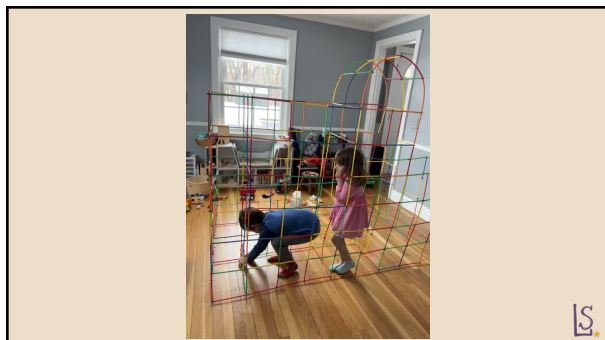
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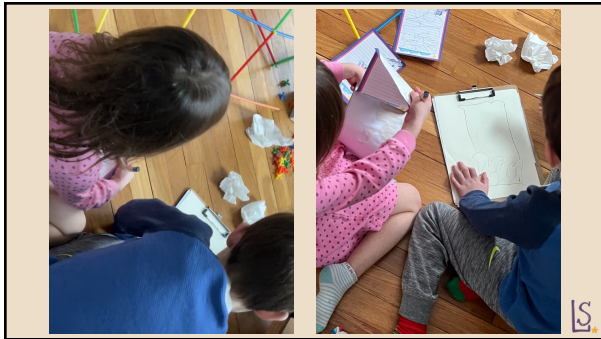
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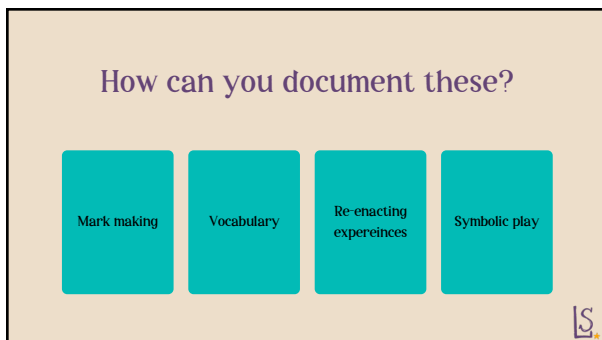
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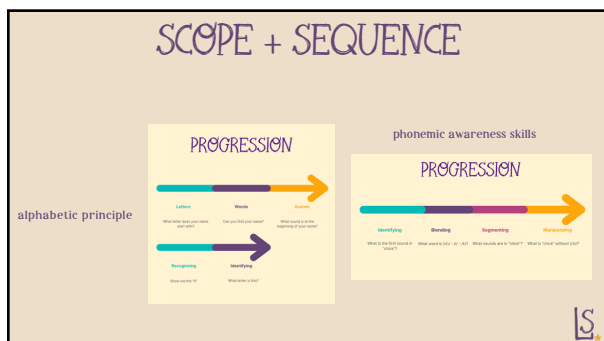
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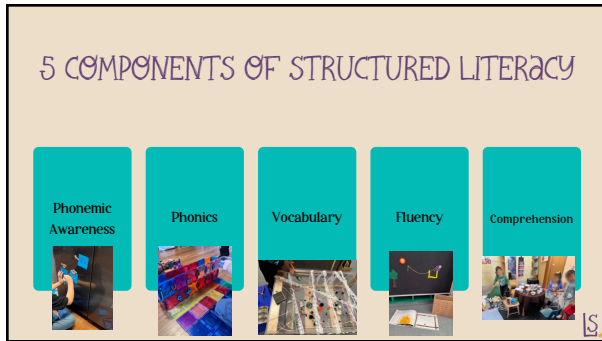
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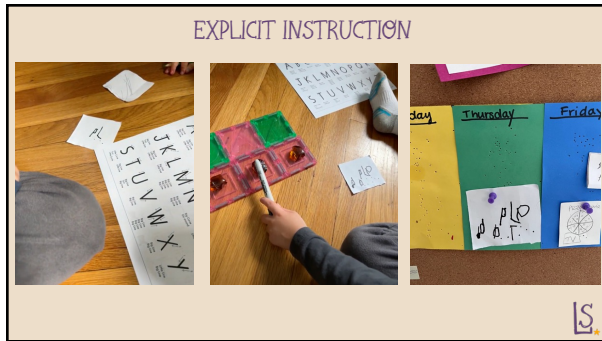
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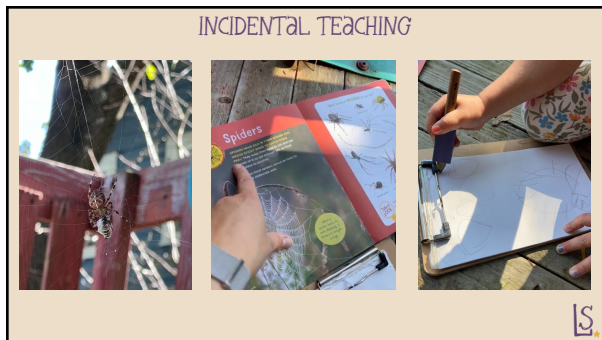
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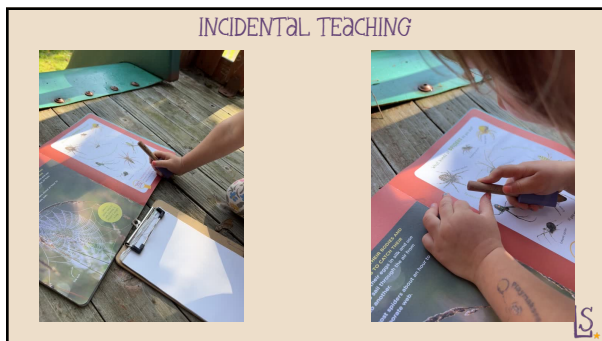
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Meet children where they are






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TO SUMMARIZE


1. Know the Research

2. Understand the Standards

3. Observe and Document

4. Leverage Play

5. Build Confidence and Trust



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TOOLS TO HELP








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MOMENT OF
REFLECTION

★ What has resonated? What are you already doing that you can build upon?

★ What can you try next?



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with ME!





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storieswithastick.com



Podcast
Stories That Stick



Thank you!



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5 STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT YOU IN BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN PLAY + LITERACY CONFIDENTLY

1 KNOW THE RESEARCH

Know the research behind play-based learning AND the science of reading.

Seek out information to understand how they support one another.

2 USE YOUR STANDARDS

Utilize and understand your early literacy standards, including language one.

Ensure they are not watered down 1st grade standards and seek out developmentally responsive ones if they are.

3 OBSERVE AND DOCUMENT

Actively listen to children as they play and look for literacy behaviors to document.

Specifically notice storytelling and symbolic play.

4 LEVERAGE PLAY

Use moments of child-led play for explicit and incidental teaching.

Utilize the 5 components of the Science of Reading when planning play invitations.

5 BUILD CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

Children learn when they play. Trust in this. Build your own confidence by finding others that are doing the same work as you.

Name:

Dates:

EARLY LITERACY IN PLAY



LITERACY BEHAVIORS

- ☐ Attempts to write or make letters, symbols, or marks
- ☐ Creates notes, lists, and/or signs during imaginative play
- ☐ Shows an interest in what adults are writing
- ☐ Demonstrates an understanding of stories/experiences by recreating or retelling them
- ☐ Asks and answers questions of others during play

CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT

- ☐ Shows interest in books and print
- ☐ Demonstrates awareness of book handling
- ☐ Notices print
- ☐ Pretends to read by imitating adult behavior
- ☐ Pretends to write for a purpose
- ☐ Makes marks
- ☐ Uses various print materials (books, magazines, lists, labels) for a purpose
- ☐ Demonstrates directionality when interacting with print or mark making

ORAL LANGUAGE

- ☐ Uses a variety of words and language structures to communicate ideas and concepts during play
- ☐ Attempts to use new vocabulary words
- ☐ Actively seeks clarification or additional information to enhance understanding of new words
- ☐ Engages in back and forth conversations
- ☐ Recognizes rhyming words
- ☐ Plays with sounds by creating alliterations or repeating words
- ☐ Segments and blends sounds of spoken words

STORYTELLING

- ☐ Engages in imaginative play scenarios
- ☐ Uses expressive language
- ☐ Demonstrates an understanding of story elements
- ☐ Uses "book language"
- ☐ Narrates own play or that of others

PRINT AND LETTERS

- ☐ Recognizes letters vs. numbers and pictures
- ☐ Identifies or names letters
- ☐ Recognizes familiar words in print
- ☐ Matches letters in play

THE SCIENCE OF READING

What is it?

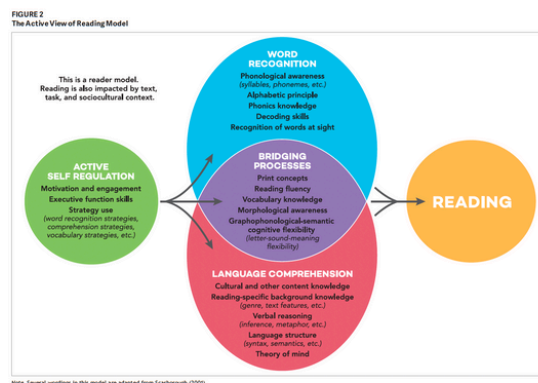
The Science of Reading is a comprehensive body of research that informs us about how reading develops, how it should be taught effectively, and how reading difficulties can be identified and addressed. This body of knowledge draws from various fields, including cognitive psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, and education, making it a multidisciplinary framework.

At its core, the Science of Reading emphasizes systematic and explicit instruction in key areas phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding skills.

These components are essential because they help children grasp the structure of language and the relationships between letters and sounds, which are crucial for reading development.

Additionally, the Science of Reading recognizes the importance of oral language development, comprehension strategies, and supportive environments.

Reading is not an innate skill like storytelling or learning to talk; it must be taught. While some children may learn to read with minimal instruction, most require systematic and explicit teaching. The Science of Reading encompasses five key components, which can be integrated into early literacy and play-based learning environments to foster development in young children.



(Duke, 2021). [**click to read more**](#)



PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS



What is it?

Phonological awareness is one's conscious awareness and ability to identify, think about, and manipulate the sounds in oral language. There are two skills within this, phonological sensitivity and phonemic awareness.

Phonological sensitivity refers to awareness of larger units of oral language (words, syllables, onset and rime), while phonemic awareness refers to the smallest units of oral language (individual phonemes/sounds).

There are skills to develop within each level: counting, identifying, isolating, blending, and manipulating.

Sound Discrimination: use musical instruments, think "guess this instrument"

☐

Nursery Rhymes: sing nursery rhymes and leave out rhyming words for children to fill in

☐

Sound Walk: take a walk and listen for different sounds, focus on different bird calls if possible.

☐

Guessing Game: hide an object, give clues about it relates to sounds of the word

☐

Sound Matching Game: put small collected items into containers, make 2 of each, invite children to find matches

☐

Rhyming Songs: sing "Down by the Bay" and other songs that invite children to join in with rhymes

☐

Sound Scavenger Hunt: invite children to find objects that start with the same sound

☐

Syllable Movements: invite children to move for each syllable they hear in words

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Alliterative Stories: tell stories with alliterative phrases (eg. "busy bees buzz behind...")

☐

Compound Word Riddles: give clues to invite children to guess compound words

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PHONICS



What is it?

Phonics involves matching the sounds of spoken English with individual letters or groups of letters. It explicitly makes the connection between letters and sounds, which is essential for learning to read and write.

There are 26 letters in the English language and 44 phonemes (sounds). Therefore, children need to be taught the relationship between these letters and sounds.

There is a scope and sequence of phonics rules and patterns that must be taught. This systematic approach supports children in developing their understanding of written language, enabling them to decode and encode words accurately.

Word Puzzles: Pick words of interest and provide visual models for children to build the words

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Create a visual of environmental print from items collected at home

☐

Create Letter Kits: invite children to find items that start with the sound of a target letter

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Loose Part Letters: write letters on loose parts and allow children to explore freely

☐

Letter Hopscotch: invite children to name the letter/sound when they hop on it

☐

Letter writing in various sensory materials

☐

Games: BINGO, Go Fish, and Memory

☐

ABC Hunt: hide letters around the space and invite children to match them to an alphabet arc

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Cut letters (or invite children to) from food boxes and allow children to collage with them

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Letter Construction: provide wikki sticks, playdough, clay, tooth picks, sticks, string, etc.

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FLUENCY



What is it?

Fluency in reading refers to the ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression. It is a crucial skill that bridges the gap between word recognition and comprehension.

In early childhood education, developing fluency means adults read aloud with expression, showing how fluent reading sounds, and they provide ample opportunities for children to hear oral stories.

SING SING SING!

☐

Poetry: incorporate children's poems and adult poetry

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Repetitive Texts: create books featuring children that follow repetitive patterns

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Role Playing: act out scenes from favorite texts

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Storytelling and Storyacting: scribe children's stories and act them out

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Interactive Read Alouds: read books with interactive components

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Listening Center: use CD players or a YotoPlayer for audio only stories

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Puppet Shows: add a puppet theatre to encourage puppet shows

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Read To Me Stuffedies: introduce stuffed animals into learning environment that children can "read" to

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Wordless Books: read wordless books and invite children to read them too

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VOCABULARY



What is it?

Vocabulary refers to the collection of words that a person knows and understands. Developing vocabulary involves introducing children to new words and their meanings, and encouraging them to use these words in various contexts.

Children learn vocabulary through PLAY &:

- Explicit Teaching: Direct instruction of new words and their meanings.
- Incidental Learning: Picking up new words from conversations, stories, and their environment.
- Contextual Learning: Understanding words through context and use in different situations.

Storytelling: tell stories and incorporate new vocabulary words

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Non-fiction book sets: create a collection of books around topics of interest

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Story retelling: provide props (stones, objects, puppets) and texts to invite children to retell stories

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Real Objects: include authentic objects for play

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Word Sorting: Use a collection of objects and invite children to sort them into categories

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Science Experiments: build scientific language through experimenting

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I-Spy: use descriptions that give definitions to newly introduce vocabulary words

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Follow Recipes: bake, cook, and make playdough/slime

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Thematic Play Centers: introduce new words and concepts through imaginative play and props

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Nature Walks: build nature vocabulary by describing and naming what you see

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COMPREHENSION



What is it?

Comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning of spoken or written language. It involves interpreting the information, ideas, and messages conveyed in a text, and connecting them with one's own knowledge and experiences.

Comprehension requires children to understand vocabulary, recognize structure, make inferences and predictions, connect ideas, synthesize information, and think critically.

Through play, children engage in activities that encourage them to think about, discuss, and interact with ideas, stories, and shared experiences in meaningful ways.

Prediction Games: while playing outside, invite children to predict what animals will do next

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Dramatic Play Scenes: invite children to act out scenarios

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Question of the Day: ask a question each day and invite children to explain their answer

☐

Story Chest: create small sets of props and pair with a story for retelling

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Visualizing: tell a story and invite children to create artwork as they listen

☐

Blank Books: provide blank books for children to illustrate and dictate their own stories

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Round Robin Storytelling: tell a story where everyone adds to it

☐

Play 'Would You Rather:' invite children to choose between 2 choices and explain their choice

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Free Play: JUST OBSERVE, settle in and notice the children's language and actions

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Free Play: PLAY with children that invite you in, don't ask questions, just join

☐



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

In conclusion...

Play IS research-based. Truly following the research means embracing all aspects of it. Understanding and using the science of reading in a play-based learning environment is not an either/or situation; it's a yes/and situation.

A new offering is coming to break all this down even more.

JOIN THE WAITLIST

“The science of reading has been narrowly defined in the media as explicit, systematic, and direct instruction of skills, especially phonemic awareness and phonics. Because play does not fit that categorization, it has not been promoted as a support for early literacy skills. However, the research reviewed in this article established a promising link between play experiences and literacy learning, particularly for language and vocabulary development. This is especially important because the role of language development in learning to read has been overlooked in the “science of reading” debate (Dickinson et al., 2010).

Given the wide range of research that has linked play and various aspects of literacy learning, teachers and policymakers should ensure that there is time in preschool and kindergarten for planned play experiences and games that are scaffolded by adult guidance.”

Rand, M. K., & Morrow, L. M. (2021). The Contribution of Play Experiences in Early Literacy: Expanding the Science of Reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56(1), S239–S248.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.383>

Accessible with paid access: <https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/rrq.383>