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The Relation between Two Caregiver Questionnaires about Children's Early Literacy
Experiences

by

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THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

The Relation between Two Caregiver Questionnaires about Children's Early Literacy Experiences

I was in the first semester of my senior year and my future was perfectly planned. Soon, I would have my Bachelors of Arts, be working on my Master's Degree in Speech Language Pathology, and be on my way to becoming the speech-language clinician that I had imagined for the past three and a half years. I would work in a nice, quiet clinic and treat children every day, all day long. While sitting in my Pediatric Aural Rehabilitation class, a new dynamic of my future career was presented: the role of the family in speech language services. I knew that as a clinician, I would deal with families from time to time. I would update them on the client's progress, arrange payments, schedule appointments, and occasionally console an upset family member. I was not, however, aware of the extent to which I would deal with my clients' families. In Louisiana, it is mandatory that early intervention services (children from birth to three years of age) be implemented within the context of the family and in the child's natural environment. Speech-language clinicians are required to educate and mentor families on strategies and tools that will enrich their children's language environment. While the task, to become an intimate part of the family you serve, was at first an intimidating deed, I know now that I made the right career choice.

Since my revelation two years ago, I have concentrated on learning as much as I can about the role of the family in children's language and literacy development. It is for this reason that I decided to study caregiver's perceptions of their children's home literacy experiences. Many instruments such as the *MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventories* focus on caregivers' perceptions of their children because they know their children best. Caregivers often spend the most time with their children, are part of their children's most natural

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

environments, and pay the most attention to their children's behaviors, making caregivers the perfect reporters of their children's abilities.

To learn more about caregivers' perceptions of children's early literacy experiences, I reviewed the literature and found two areas of study relevant to my interests. In this chapter, I present each of these areas of research. The first section examines the significance of early home literacy practices and how caregivers' ideas and beliefs contribute to their home reading behaviors. It also includes research about demographic factors that relate to different types of family's literacy beliefs and habits. The second part of the literature review presents research on the use of self report and the limitations and advantages of using questionnaires as tools for speech-language clinicians. As part of my review of the literature, I also found two commonly cited questionnaires that focus on caregivers' perceptions of their children's home literacy experiences. The purpose of my study was to evaluate the utility of these two questionnaires for measuring caregivers' perceptions of their children's early literacy experiences.

Home Literacy Environment

Home literacy practices, also called *home experiences* or *literacy socialization* refer to the literacy experiences that a child encounters at home (Marvin & Wright, 1997). These experiences include activities and events with print and writing materials, models of reading and writing, access to books and materials, regular reading times, encouragement, and questions related to reading and writing (Boudreau, 2005). A rich home literacy environment fosters the development of emergent literacy. Emergent literacy "refers to the foundation upon which children's conventional reading and writing abilities are built" (Justice, Chow, Capellini, Flanigan, & Colton, 2003, p. 320).

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Teale and Sulzby (1986) outline four conclusions that can be drawn from literature on emerging literacy. First, it is a continuous process that begins at birth. Both child-directed experiences, such as reading out loud to the child, and incidental exposure, like seeing mom write a thank-you letter, are learning opportunities for the child. Second, reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities often develop simultaneously and in parallel. None of these skills can fully flourish without concurrent development of the others. Thirdly, literacy events must be deliberate, focused, useful, and natural. In other words, it is important that the home literacy environment support functional written language experience (Goodman & Goodman, 1979; Sonnenschein, Baker, Serpell, Scher, Truitt, & Munsterman, 1997; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006b). ‘Functional’ use of written language incorporates a variety of written language events and activities that demand and entice the child to read such as reading recipes to help mom cook, writing a wish list, and listening to stories. Lastly, active engagement is essential for nurturing development. Reading with a child requires active attention to the child, pointing to pictures, asking questions related to the story, and showing enthusiasm about reading (Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman, & Yoder, 1991; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991).

Home is, for most children, the first place language and literacy are encountered (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett 2006a). DeBaryshe, Binder, and Buell (2000) reported that the home environment is an important setting for learning literacy because children have the opportunity to:

- 1) “become familiar with literacy artifacts, 2) observe the literacy activities of others, 3) independently explore literature behaviors, 4) engage in joint reading and writing activities with other people, 5) benefit from the teaching strategies that family members use when engaging in joint literacy tasks” (pp. 119-120).

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Caregivers' beliefs about literacy influence their home practices with literacy (DeBaryshe, 1995; Weigel et al., 2006b). For example, Sonnenschein et al. (1997) examined caregivers' beliefs about the best way to teach their children to read. The researchers coded the caregivers' beliefs as either 'entertainment-orientated' or 'skill-oriented' toward literacy development. Caregivers whose beliefs were coded as entertainment-oriented actively engaged in play activities that incorporated printed materials and storybook reading in order to capture their children's interest. Responses coded as 'skill-oriented' reflected a caregiver's belief system in which literacy acquisition requires direct teaching through the use of activities such as flashcards and worksheets. Results showed that home literacy practices that encouraged an entertainment approach were positively related to the development of emergent literacy skills, while home practices that encouraged a skill-orientation approach were not positively related to emergent literacy skills.

Some socio-demographic factors also appear related to caregivers' literacy beliefs and habits (Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, 2002). Weigel et al. (2006b) examined mothers' styles in relation to fostering literacy development in a study with 79 mothers and their children. Using the *Parental Reading Belief Inventory* (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994), mother's literacy beliefs were assessed, and researchers found two profiles of parental literacy beliefs: 'Facilitative' and 'Conventional.' Facilitative mothers were more likely to enjoy reading, reported reading to their children more often, and believed that it was their role to teach literacy at home. Conventional mothers reported less positive educational experiences than Facilitative, spent less time reading with their children, and believed that schools were responsible for teaching literacy.

Membership to each literacy belief group was predicted by maternal education. Facilitative mothers had gone further in school and reported higher grades in school than

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Conventional mothers. Further findings indicated that children whose mothers were classified as Facilitative made significant gains in print knowledge and reading compared to children whose mothers were labeled Conventional.

Research also shows that low-income caregivers tend to view literacy as a skill that needs to be consciously fostered while middle-income caregivers tend to uphold the idea that literacy is a source of enjoyment (Sonnenschein et al., 1997). Thus, family income plays a role in the literacy habits and beliefs of caregivers. Wasik and Herrmann (2004) reported the following:

“According to the 1991 Carnegie Foundation Report, *Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation*, 35% of children in the United States enter public schools with such low levels of the skills and motivation that are needed as starting points in our current educational system that there is a significant mismatch between what many children bring to their first school experience and what schools expect of them if they are to succeed. This problem, often called *school readiness*, is strongly linked to family income. When schools are ranked by the median socioeconomic status (SES) of their students’ families, SES correlates .68 with academic achievement (White, 1982)... SES is also one of the strongest predictors of performance differences in children at the beginning of first grade (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988, p. 99)” (pp. 65).

In addition to socio-economic status, race and ethnicity have been studied as potential factors contributing to the individual differences between caregivers. Stevenson, Chuansheng, and Uttal (1990) found that the beliefs of caregivers from minority backgrounds are similar to the beliefs of white caregivers--- beliefs associated with high levels of achievement. However, differences among children from minority backgrounds and white children’s academic performance appear in elementary school and continue throughout the school years. The researchers also found that when education level and income were controlled, levels of achievement in mathematics did not differ significantly between children from minority backgrounds and white children. Children of poorly educated mothers, regardless of ethnicity, performed less well than children whose mothers had a higher level of education. However, this was not the case in reading performance. After mother’s education and income were controlled, ethnic differences were statistically

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

significant, with children from minority backgrounds performing below the reading achievement levels of white children. It is difficult to interpret these findings Perhaps beliefs among caregivers are similar but vast differences exist in home practices. Also the reading materials and tests are often based on situations that exist in the mainstream culture and therefore, children from minority backgrounds may be at a disadvantage if they have less exposure to this content outside of school than white children. This lack of coherence between school-based expectations and home-based experiences is thought to be the cause of some of the differences in the academic achievement between children from minority and majority backgrounds.

Finally, the developmental status of a child influences the home literacy beliefs and behaviors of caregivers. Boudreau (2005) investigated the assessment of emergent literacy skills by caregivers of children with and without language impairments. Her purpose was to evaluate the relationship between caregiver report, through the use of the *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire*, and standardized measures of early literacy, as well as to compare the two groups' home literacy practices. The results of the study indicated that there was a strong correlation between caregiver report of literacy skills and formal, examiner-administered assessment of early literacy for the children with language impairments, but a weak relationship between these two instruments for the typically developing children. There are a number of reasons for these findings. Boudreau suggests that one possibility is caregivers of typically developing children may not be as "in tune" with their children's abilities as caregivers with children who have language impairments. The caregivers of language impaired children have most likely been asked to discuss their child's development and abilities more often than caregivers of typically developing children. Boudreau also hypothesizes that because children

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

with language impairments are developing more slowly and have fewer skills than typically developing children, it may be easier for their caregivers to report on their literacy skills.

The Use of Self-Report

Miller (1988) explains that caregivers have a complex belief system about how their children develop. The difficulty for clinicians and researchers lies in finding a way to extract these beliefs from caregivers. Caregiver questionnaires are commonly used to do this; however, there are disadvantages and advantages to these tools. According to Miller, questionnaires constrain caregivers' answers due to their inflexibility in both questions and mode of response. A question may be irrelevant or misunderstood by the person completing the questionnaire, and unlike in an interview, an item of a questionnaire cannot be recast or explained. Also, a response may not include an answer that is sufficient for the participant to accurately report.

Miller also warns that questionnaires may elicit caregivers' answers "formulated on the spot" (p. 265), forcing caregivers to recall events that they had never thought about before, such as a child's development of the concept of time. Caregivers may also encounter difficulties recalling the frequencies of behaviors and the times of occurrences (Weigel et al., 2006a). Other factors that may cause spurious responses include the misunderstanding of a researcher's questions and the compulsion to respond in a socially desirable manner.

While questionnaires pose some limits to investigating caregivers' beliefs, they also present some advantages. Assessing young children can be difficult and stressful for the child and family. The child may be unwilling to participate with the formal test administered in an unfamiliar environment and therefore may not perform to his or her best ability. Caregivers may also be nervous about the child's performance and show anxiety, exacerbating the child's fear in a foreign situation (Tyler & Tolbert, 2002). In these cases, supplementing the assessment process

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

with a questionnaire can prove to be a valuable tool. A questionnaire may give the clinician better insight into the family's concerns and the child's abilities than simply a standardized test. Using a caregiver questionnaire is time effective as well. Questionnaires can be mailed to caregivers and sent back to the clinic prior to an appointment so that the clinician can be briefed on the situation and prepared for the type of standardized assessment or therapy that is to follow. Questionnaires also validate the family's expertise about the child and instill a sense of responsibility in the caregivers for their child's development.

Purpose of Study

Speech language clinicians need a quick, easy, and reliable way to gauge a child's literacy experiences. Because a child's home environment is so influential in early development, evaluation of caregivers' literacy beliefs and habits is necessary before proper intervention can be provided. Families of children with language impairments or developmental delays especially need a rich language and literacy environment in order to help mitigate the impairment or delay.

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the consistency of the results of two caregiver report questionnaires. I also wanted to determine if scores on these questionnaires vary as a function of a caregiver's race, age, and level of education, or by a child's developmental status. Questions guiding my research were:

1. Do caregiver's scores on Boudreau's (2005) *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire* relate to their scores on DeBaryshe and Binder's (1994) *Parent Reading Belief Inventory*?
2. How do caregivers' beliefs about reading vary as a function of their race, age, and level of education?
3. How do caregivers' beliefs about reading vary as a function of their children's developmental status?

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Based on Boudreau's research as well as DeBaryshe and Binder's work, both tools have been shown to be reliable measures of caregivers' beliefs and behaviors. Given this, I predicted that the caregivers' scores on the two questionnaires would relate to each other.

Method

Participants

Research participants were 20 caregivers of three to five-year-old children who received services from the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic at Louisiana State University (LSU), the Child Care Center at LSU, and the Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation. In order to understand family demographics, each participant completed a background information form (see Appendix A). Questions on this form included race or ethnicity, age of the caregiver, caregiver-child relations (mother, father, etc.), and the participant's highest level of education. Other items on the form inquired about the age and developmental status (typically developing versus developmentally delayed) of the target child.

Of the 20 caregivers who participated, 17 of the caregivers were mothers and three were fathers. As shown in Table 1, 15 caregivers identified themselves as White, two identified themselves as Black or African American, and one identified as Biracial (White/Hispanic). The caregivers' ages were divided into ranges, with the majority of the caregivers' ages between 30 and 39, the youngest caregiver age 25, and oldest age 41. Caregivers also reported their highest level of education, and all except one had additional training after high school, and the majority had completed a master's or professional degree. These results indicate that the caregivers reflected a homogeneous group in terms of their race, age, and educational level.

Most caregivers reported having two or three children in the family, and one caregiver reported having one child, and one caregiver reported having five children. Most of the target

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

children were between 48 and 71 months (4-5;11), and only a few of the children were between 36 and 47 months (3-3;11). Eleven of the children were typically developing and nine presented a speech and/or language delay.

Table 1

Descriptions of Participants

Participant's Number	Caregiver			Child	
	Age (years)	Highest Level of Education*	Number of Kids	Age (months)	Developmental Status**
19	25	2	2	48	DD
10	28	4	1	48	DD
12	31	5	2	48	TD
15	32	5	3	60	TD
16	32	5	3	60	TD
3	33	3	3	36	DD
8	33	4	3	60	TD
1	34	4	2	42	DD
6	34	5	2	48	TD
14	34	5	2	48	TD
20	34	4	2	70	TD
9	35	5	2	55	TD
11	35	5	1	59	TD
2	36	6	3	60	DD
7	37	3	3	48	TD
13	37	5	3	48	TD
5	39	4	2	36	DD
18	40	5	3	48	DD
4	40	5	2	60	DD
17	41	4	5	60	DD

*1= some high school, 2= high school degree, 3= some college, 4= college degree, 5= graduate or professional degree, 6= medical doctor.

**TD= typical development, DD= delayed development

Given that there were relatively equal numbers of children with typical development and delayed development, I also examined the participants as a function of their children's developmental status (see Table 2). As can be seen, the two groups did not differ in their children's ages, $t(18) = 1.52, p = .15$, caregivers' ages, $t(9.5) = -.56, p = .59$, number of kids in the family, $t(18) = -.47, p = .64$, or caregivers' level of education, $t(18) = 1.26, p = .223$.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 2

Description of Participants' Developmental Status

Group	Child Age (in months)	Caregiver Age (in years)	Caregiver Level of Education*	Number of Kids in Family
Typical	54.0	34.0	4.6	2.4
Development	5.91	1.95	0.67	0.70
	(48 -60)	(31-37)	(3-5)	(1-3)
Delayed	48.7	35.1	4.1	2.6
Development	9.70	5.67	1.17	1.13
	(36-60)	(25-41)	(2-6)	(1-5)

*1= some high school, 2= high school degree, 3= some college, 4= college degree, 5= graduate or professional degree, 6= medical doctor.

Materials

As shown in Tables 3 and 5, the two questionnaires address similar domains of literacy, but from different perspectives. Boudreau's (2005) *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire* (see Appendix B) focuses on the home literacy experiences whereas DeBaryshe and Binder's (1994) *Parent Reading Belief Inventory* (see Appendix D) addresses caregivers' beliefs about literacy development.

The two questionnaires used of this research were adapted versions. For Boudreau's (2005) 60-item questionnaire, I eliminated 24 open-ended questions that appeared on the original questionnaire (see Appendix C). I also adjusted question number 32 so that the caregivers responses could be quantified by a Likert scale. Similar to the original inventory, the adjusted 32-item questionnaire included questions which spanned seven areas of early literacy as shown in Table 3. Items were written as questions concerning the caregiver's various interactions with the child as well as the frequency with which the child displayed certain behaviors and actions.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 3

Boudreau's Seven Areas of Early Literacy and Additional Interests

Literacy Domains	Questionnaire Item Numbers
<i>Interactions with books:</i> behaviors during shared book reading	3-7
<i>Response to environmental print:</i> child's response to logos, signs, and words in his surroundings	13 & 14
<i>Phonological awareness:</i> child's ability to notice and produce rhymes	16- 20
<i>Alphabet knowledge:</i> child's ability to identify letters and sounds	21- 23
<i>Writing:</i> child's interest in drawing	24- 28
<i>Orientation toward literacy:</i> child's interest in reading	1, 9, 11, 12, & 26
<i>Parent behaviors:</i> parent's frequency of reading, pointing out print in environment, teaching letters, and playing rhyming games.	2, 8, 10, & 15
<i>Additional interests:</i> frequency of visits to the library, time spent watching television, and use of a home computer	29-32

The frequencies of these behaviors were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (see Table 4). High scores indicated practices that are most ideal for a strong home literacy environment. Such rich environments are created by a number of tenets: children should be active participants, caregivers' instruction is ideal, the environment influences language, limited resources should not hinder the amount or quality of reading time, and the purpose of reading is to gain knowledge, language development, and for entertainment and pleasure.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 4

Boudreau's Points on Likert Scale

Questionnaire Responses	Points
never/ rarely/ not currently	1
on occasion/ have seen but rarely/ every few months	2
weekly/ occasionally/ monthly	3
daily/ weekly/ frequently/ bimonthly	4
several times per day/ daily/ very frequently	5

DeBaryshe and Binder's (1994) questionnaire originally included 55 items. As shown in Appendix D, the number of items was reduced to a total of 15 questions in order to minimize the amount of time required for caregivers to complete it. Fourteen of these questions were included in DeBaryshe and Binder's 1994 article, *Development of an instrument for measuring parental beliefs about reading aloud to young children*, and item number 13 was inserted in order to gain insight into the caregiver's ideas about the school's role in literacy. Consistent with the original questionnaire, the adapted questionnaire spans seven areas of literacy (see Table 5).

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 5

DeBaryshe and Binder's Seven Areas of Literacy Interest

Domains of Interest	Questionnaire Item Numbers
<i>Affect</i> : parent's feelings about reading to child	1 & 2
<i>Participation</i> : how frequently the child talks during reading time	3 & 4
<i>Resources</i> : the amount of living space, finances, energy, and time available to parents for reading with child	5 & 6
<i>Efficacy</i> : how important the parent views his or her role in teaching child to read	7 & 8
<i>Knowledge</i> : parent's perspective on whether the child acquires practical knowledge and moral points of reference from books	9 & 10
<i>Environment</i> : how the parent's view inherit or genetic factors versus parental influences	11 & 12
<i>Reading Instruction</i> : the appropriateness of the parents' instruction	13, 14, & 15

Also consistent with the original questionnaire, the participants rated the items according to the extent to which he or she endorsed the content on a 4-point Likert scale as shown in Table 6. Items were written using both positive wording ("Reading aloud is a special time we love to share") and negative wording ("I find it boring or difficult to read to my child"). High scores reflect caregivers' opinions which are in agreement with the current research and data that outline best practices for child development.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 6

DeBaryshe and Binder's Points on Likert Scale

Questionnaire Response	Points
Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	4

Procedure

First, a letter about the research, the background information form, the two questionnaires, and instructions concerning the return of the information were distributed to caregivers via their children's school cubby or their children's speech-language clinician. The order in which the questionnaires were placed in the packet was counter-balanced. The purpose of this was to encourage caregivers to give an equal amount of time and consideration to both questionnaires.

After completed questionnaires were received, inter-rater reliability was examined. Twenty percent of the questionnaires were independently entered into SPSS by a graduate student for analysis. A 98% agreement was found between the scoring of the original questionnaires and those used for reliability.

Results

After the items were totaled from Boudreau's questionnaire and totaled from DeBaryshe and Binder's questionnaire, a Pearson correlation revealed a low but not statistically significant correlation between the caregivers' scores on Boudreau's questionnaire and their scores on DeBaryshe and Binder's questionnaire, $r = .37, p = .111$. To further explore this relationship, I

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

selected items that addressed the frequency of parent behaviors from Boudreau's questionnaire. These items included numbers 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 31, and 32. A Pearson correlation revealed a statistically significant correlation between the total scores of these items and the total scores of DeBaryshe and Binder's items, $r = .45$, $p = .04$.

I then examined the correlation between each item of the questionnaires and variables such as age of caregiver, age of child, and caregivers' level of education. For the Boudreau questionnaire, the caregivers' total scores were positively correlated to the target child's age, $r = .52$, $p = .018$. For the DeBaryshe and Binder questionnaire, the caregivers' total scores were positively correlated to the caregivers' ages, $r = .76$, $p < .001$.

To further explore relationships between the caregivers' total scores and their family variables, additional correlations were run for each item on the questionnaires. As shown in Table 7, on Boudreau's questionnaire, eight of the 32 items showed a positive correlation between the age of the child and the caregiver's score.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 7

Boudreau's Questionnaire Related to Child Age

Item	Pearson Correlation
#6. Does your child make up stories and tell them?	$r = .54, p = .014$
#15. Do you play rhyming games with your child?	$r = .56, p = .011$
#22. Does your child attempt to make sounds for alphabet letters?	$r = .60, p = .005$
#23. Can your child identify some letters of the alphabet?	$r = .49, p = .028$
#24. Does your child draw?	$r = .54, p = .014$
#25. Does your child write letters?	$r = .70, p = .001$
#28. Does your child write words?	$r = .65, p = .002$
#31. Does your child go to the library to select books?	$r = .57, p = .009$

*Scores range from 1-5 with scores of 5 reflecting

As shown in Table 8, four of the 15 items in DeBaryshe and Binder's questionnaire showed positive correlation between the age of the caregiver and the caregiver's score. On two of the questions, item #7 ("As a parent, I play an important role in my child's development") and item #8 ("When my child goes to school, the teacher will teach my child everything my child needs to know so I don't need to worry"), all of the participants gave the same response, that they strongly agreed to item #7 and strongly disagreed to item #8.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 8

DeBaryshe and Binder's Questionnaire Related to Caregiver Age

Item	Pearson Correlation
#10. My child learns lessons and morals from the stories we read.	$r = .51, p = .023$
#12. Children inherit their language ability from their parents, it's in their genes.	$r = .50, p = .026$
#13. Schools are responsible for teaching children, not parents.	$r = .49, p = .028$
#14. I read to my child so he/she will learn the letters and how to read simple sentences.	$r = .45, p = .048$

In Table 9 and 10, the mean scores of each subtest are listed as a function of the children's developmental status. Of the eight subtests on Boudreau's questionnaire, four showed statistically significant differences between the scores of the caregivers' of children with developmental delays and those of children without. Caregivers of children with typical development scored higher on four of the subtests than the caregivers of children with developmental delays. Those four subtests include interactions with books, $t(11.2) = 3.16, p = .01$, phonological awareness, $t(19) = 3.76, p < .001$, writing, $t(18) = 4.10, p < .001$, and orientation toward literacy, $t(18) = 2.69, p = .02$.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Table 9

Caregivers' Scores on Boudreau's Questionnaire

Subtests	Typical Development	Delayed Development
Interactions with books	4.07 .57 (2.8-4.8)	2.73* 1.16 (1.6-4.6)
Response to environmental print	3.13 1.03 (2.0-5.0)	2.89 1.22 (1.0-4.5)
Phonological awareness	3.5 1.17 (1.0-5.0)	1.78* .79 (1.0-3.25)
Alphabet knowledge	4.42 .50 (3.3-5.0)	3.52 1.56 (1.3-5.0)
Writing	3.87 .84 (2.2-5.0)	2.11* 1.09 (1.2-4.4)
Orientation toward literacy	3.35 .78 (2.0-4.2)	2.4* .79 (1.4-3.8)
Parent behaviors	4.11 .49 (3.5-5.0)	3.56 .77 (2.5-4.8)
Additional interests	2.75 .54 (1.75-3.25)	2.44 .62 (1.50-3.50)

Scores range from 1-5 with scores of 5 reflecting increased literacy experience or abilities.

On DeBaryshe and Binder's questionnaire, the scores of caregivers of children with and without developmental delays differed in two of the seven subtests. For affect, $t(11.6) = 2.34$, $p = .04$, caregivers of children with typical development scored higher than caregivers of children with delayed development. For the environment subtest, caregivers of children with delayed development scored higher, $t(18) = -3.75$, $p < .001$. Items included in the affect subtest relate to the caregiver's feelings about reading with his or her child. Questions included, "I find it boring or difficult to read to my child" and, "Reading aloud is a special time we love to share" (DeBaryshe & Binder, 1994, p. 1306). Items included in the environment subtests pertained to the

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

caregiver's beliefs about genetic and environmental influences on language and literacy.

Questions included, "Some children are natural talkers, others are silent. Parents do not have much influence over this," and, "Children inherit their ability from their parents, it's in their genes."

Table 10

Caregivers' Scores on DeBaryshe and Binder's Questionnaire

Subtests	Typical Development	Delayed Development
Affect	3.86 .32 (3.0-4.0)	3.33* .61 (2.5-4.0)
Participation	3.14 .90 (1.0-4.0)	3.39 .70 (2.0-4.0)
Resources	3.82 .40 (3.0-4.0)	3.61 .70 (2.0-4.0)
Efficacy	4.0 .00 (4.0-4.0)	4.0 .00 (4.0-4.0)
Knowledge	3.77 .41 (3.0-4.0)	3.61 .55 (2.5-4.0)
Environment	2.82 .60 (2.0-4.0)	3.72* .44 (3.0-4.0)
Reading Instruction	3.64 .46 (3.0-4.0)	3.85 .44 (2.67-4.0)

Scores range from 1-4 with high scores reflecting caregivers' opinions which are in agreement with the current research and data that outline best practices for child development.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to assess the utility of Boudreau's (2005) *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire* and DeBaryshe and Binder's (1994) *Parent Reading Belief Inventory* for measuring caregivers' perceptions of their children's early literacy experiences. The results of

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

this study will be discussed in terms of the two main research questions. The first question was “Do caregiver’s scores on Boudreau’s (2005) *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire* relate to their scores on DeBaryshe and Binder’s (1994) *Parent Reading Belief Inventory*?” Results revealed that the scores have a low correlation. The most probable explanation for this low correlation is due to the fact that the questionnaires ultimately assess different aspects of literacy. Boudreau’s items address the child’s behaviors in home literacy practices, whereas DeBaryshe and Binder’s inventory deals with the caregiver’s beliefs about the importance of early literacy practices.

In order to better understand the relation between these two questionnaires, I selected items from Boudreau’s questionnaire that included the frequency with which caregivers performed certain behaviors. These items were numbers 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 31, and 32, and included questions such as, “How often do you read with your child” and, “Do you play rhyming games with your child?” A Pearson correlation revealed a statistically significant relation between the caregivers’ scores on these items and their total scores on DeBaryshe and Binder’s items. This indicates that these caregivers probably practice some of the beliefs that they hold about early literacy practices.

The second question was “How caregivers’ beliefs about reading vary as a function of their race, age, and level of education?” The correlation results for race and level of education were inconclusive because the population sample was homogeneous. However, the caregiver’s age and the child’s age were correlated to the caregivers’ responses. On Boudreau’s questionnaire, high scores on eight of the 32 items were positively correlated with the children’s ages, and on DeBaryshe and Binder’s questionnaire, high scores on four out of 15 of the items were positively correlation with the caregivers’ ages.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

There are several explanations for these results. Boudreau's questionnaire included items about children's home literacy practices and abilities, and it is expected that older children engage in certain literacy practices (i.e., making up stories, playing rhyming games, writing letters) more often than younger children. DeBaryshe and Binder's questionnaire about caregivers' beliefs showed that an increase in caregivers' ages correlated with an increase in caregivers' scores (high scores reflect agreement with current theories of emergent literacy). These results were surprising given the homogeneity of the participants. Numerous studies have concluded that children of teen caregivers have disadvantaged home literacy environments (Burgess, 2004), but recall that the current study's participants were all over the age of 25 and had at least a high school degree. While the current study's participants did not fit the criterion of teen caregivers, it is interesting that an increase in caregivers' ages correlated with scores that reflect beliefs that are associated with better literacy environments. These findings indicate that it is possible for caregivers' beliefs to evolve and change over time. The reason for this change is not known, but perhaps the caregivers' beliefs change as they gain more experience with children or as they interact more with children or as they cognitively learn more.

The third question was "How do caregivers' beliefs about reading vary as a function of their children's developmental status?" Results of the group comparison showed that the caregivers' scores on both questionnaires were related to their children's developmental status. On Boudreau's questionnaire, in four of the eight areas (interactions with books, phonological awareness, writing, orientation toward literacy), caregivers of children with typical development scored significantly higher than the caregivers of children with developmental delays. Because this questionnaire concentrates on the child's literacy experiences and abilities, it is not surprising that caregivers of children with typical development scored higher in these four

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

subtests. Children with delayed development often display less engaged behaviors during reading time, do not produce rhyme at the typical age mark, learn to write later, and show less interest in reading than their typically developing peers.

On DeBaryshe and Binder's questionnaire, the scores of caregivers of children with and without developmental delays differed in two of the seven subtests (affect and environment). This questionnaire focuses the caregivers' beliefs about literacy, and it is possible that the caregivers of children with developmental delays regard literacy as less important than the caregivers of children without delays because these caregivers may deal with physical and behavioral problems that compete with needs for literacy acquisition. A possible explanation for the results of the affect subtest is that caregivers of children with typical development scored higher because it is easier for them to engage their children in reading, and therefore the experience is also more enjoyable. An explanation for the higher scores that caregivers of children with developmental delays earned in the environment subtest is that these caregivers consider their child's inherent disability as a more influential factor in language and literacy than the role that he or she plays in facilitating language and literacy.

Comparison of Current Findings to Previous Studies

I was unable to find a study that examines caregivers' scores in relation to caregivers' ages, children's ages, or children's developmental status using DeBaryshe and Binder's (1994) questionnaire, and I was therefore unable to compare my results to other findings. However, Boudreau's (2005) questionnaire has been studied in relation to children's development status. Results of her study showed that on Boudreau's questionnaire, scores of caregivers' with children who do not have a language impairment (LI) are higher than the scores of parents with children who have LI (Boudreau, 2005). The results from Boudreau's 2005 study are

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

consistent with the results of this study despite small sample size of both studies (n= 37 in Boudreau's study, n= 20 in this study).

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, the sample size was small and homogeneous in race, level of education, and caregiver age. Second, although an attempt was made to counterbalance the order in which caregivers completed the questionnaires, it is possible that caregivers did not complete the questionnaires in the order in which they were placed in the packets. This could affect scores because parents may have spent unequal amounts of time and consideration on the two questionnaires due to time constraints or fatigue. Finally, the caregivers reported the developmental status of their children. The absence or presence of a diagnosis was not evaluated nor was the type of diagnosis (i.e., whether the developmental delays in speech, language, or other developmental areas). Future research should include questions on medical diagnoses.

Clinical Implications

Both questionnaires are practical tools for clinicians. It is important for clinicians to assess caregivers' beliefs because it gives insight into the families' knowledge of language and literacy approaches and can aid clinicians in determining the level of family training that needs to be in place. It is also essential to know the clients' home experiences because an environment that is rich or poor in language and literacy can contribute to a positive or negative prognosis.

Clinicians could incorporate the recommended questionnaire (see Appendix E) in their collection of background information. The questionnaire has a total of 20 items, 13 from Boudreau's (2005) inventory and seven from DeBaryshe and Binder's (1994) questionnaire. Questions with ceiling and basal scores were not included, and the items were divided into three

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

subtests based on content. Items in the first subtest gave insight into the caregivers' beliefs about early literacy; items in the second subtest disclosed some of the caregivers' home literacy practices; and items in the third subtest indicated the children's literacy abilities and experience. Before this questionnaire could be used reliability and validity need to be examined. A test-retest reliability check would require participants to complete the questionnaire on two different occasions and then check the consistency of results, and appraisal of content validity would involve consulting with experts in the field of language development about the appropriateness of the questions. If the questionnaire proves to be reliable and valid, this questionnaire would be a valuable tool for clinicians in both the assessment process and a guide for intervention.

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

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THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

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THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Appendix A: Background Information Form

Child's Age: _____

Your Age: _____

How are you related to the child to whom you referred on questionnaires?

How many children do you have in your family? _____

What is your race or ethnicity?

☐ Alaska Native☐ American Indian☐ Asian☐ Black or African American☐ Hawaiian & Pacific Islander☐ Hispanic or Latino☐ Bi or Multiracial☐ White

Other (please specify) _____

What is your highest level of education?

☐ Some High School☐ High School☐ Some College☐ College Degree☐ Graduate/ Professional (Master's or Doctorate Degree)

Other (please specify) _____

Is your child ___ typically developing or does your child have ___ developmental delays?

Who has been the most influential in shaping your ideas about being a parent?

☐ Mother/ Father☐ Grandparent☐ Spouse/ Partner☐ Friends/ Neighbors☐ Teachers/ Professors

Other (please specify) _____

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Appendix B

Boudreau's *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire* (2005), original

Reading Books

1. Does your child ask you to read?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

2. How often do you read to your child?

On occasion Once a month Weekly Several times per week Daily

On average, how many times per week?

Do you have a designated time for reading?

How many books do you typically read at one sitting?

3. Does your child independently point to or talk about pictures when you read stories?

Not currently Has but rarely Occasionally A few times per story Very frequently during story

4. Does your child ask questions about characters or events during story reading?

Not currently Has but rarely Occasionally A few times per story Very frequently during story

5. Does your child pretend to read the story in a book?

Never Has but rarely Weekly Several times per week Daily

Are there specific books she/he will typically do with this?

What are some of your child's favorite books?

6. Does your child make up stories and tell them?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

7. Does your child fill in words or lines from a story when reading with you?

Not currently Has but rarely Occasionally A few times per story Very frequently during story

8. Do you attempt to teach the names of the letters in the alphabet and/or alphabet sounds when reading?

Not currently Have but rarely Occasionally A few times per story Very frequently during story

9. In comparison to other activities, how would you rate your child's interest in books?

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

1	2	3	4	5
Activity liked the least			Favorite activity	

Response to Print

10. Do you point out signs and words such as restaurant names or street signs to your child?

Not currently Have but rarely Occasionally Weekly Daily

11. Does your child show interest in adult reading materials (newspaper, magazines, etc.)?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

12. Does your child ask for help in reading words such as signs on the street or words on food packages?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

13. Does your child identify words in the environment (food packaging, signs of stores, etc.)?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

When does this occur?

Which signs or words does your child know?

14. Does your child read any words by sight (or common words they have memorized and can identify, like cat or mom)?

Not currently On occasion Knows a word Knows several words
Knows many words

Language Awareness

15. Do you play rhyming games with your child?

Not currently Have but rarely Occasionally Weekly Daily

Can your child rhyme words?

16. Does your child try and play rhyming games with you or others?

Not currently Has but rarely Occasionally Weekly Daily

17. Does your child produce rhymes by him or herself?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

18. Does your child notice and say something when he/she hears words that rhyme? (i.e., That rhymes!)

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Not currently	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly	Daily
---------------	----------------	--------------	--------	-------

19. Does your child tell nursery rhymes? (such as Jake and Jill and Little Bo Peep)

Not currently	Have but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly	Daily
---------------	-----------------	--------------	--------	-------

Which ones does he/she know?

20. Does your child sing simple songs?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

Which ones does he/she know?

Interest in Letters

21. Does your child name letters of the alphabet?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

How many letters does he/she know?

22. Does your child attempt to make sounds for alphabet letters?

Not currently	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very
---------------	----------------	--------------	------------	------

How many does he/she know?

23. Can your child identify some letters of the alphabet?

Not currently	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very
---------------	----------------	--------------	------------	------

Which letters does he/she know?

Writing

24. Does your child draw?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

25. Does your child write letters?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

26. Does your child ask you to write for him/her?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

27. Does your child ask you how to spell items?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

28. Does your child write words?

Not currently Has but rarely Occasionally Weekly Daily

Additional interests

29. Does your child watch video stories on VCR or DVD (ie Lion King or other stories)?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

How many hours per week does he/she watch them?

Does your child own any stories on video, and if so, which ones?

30. Does your child watch TV?

Never/rarely On occasion Weekly Daily Several times per day

How many hours per day?

What is the show watched most frequently?

31. Does your child go to the library to select books?

Rarely Every few months Monthly Bimonthly
Weekly

32. Do you have a computer at home? Yes No

If so, does your child use it?

Average number of hours per week?

What programs does he/she enjoy?

Additional Questions

33. At what age did you begin reading to your child?

34. How many books does your child own?

35. How many books do you own?

36. Do you receive any published reading materials at home, such as newspaper, magazines, and so forth? Which ones?

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Appendix C

Boudreau's *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire* (2005), adapted

1. Does your child ask you to read?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

2. How often do you read to your child?

On occasion	Once a month	Weekly	Several times per week
Daily			

3. Does your child independently point to or talk about pictures when you read stories?

Not currently during story	Has but rarely	Occasionally	A few times per story	Very frequently
----------------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------	-----------------

4. Does your child ask questions about characters or events during story reading?

Not currently during story	Has but rarely	Occasionally	A few times per story	Very frequently
----------------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------	-----------------

5. Does your child pretend to read the story in a book?

Never	Has but rarely	Weekly	Several times per week
Daily			

6. Does your child make up stories and tell them?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
--------------	-------------	--------	-------	-----------------------

7. Does your child fill in words or lines from a story when reading with you?

Not currently during story	Has but rarely	Occasionally	A few times per story	Very frequently
----------------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------------	-----------------

8. Do you attempt to teach the names of the letters in the alphabet and/or alphabet sounds when reading?

Not currently during story	Have but rarely	Occasionally	A few times per story	Very frequently
----------------------------	-----------------	--------------	-----------------------	-----------------

9. In comparison to other activities, how would you rate your child's interest in books?

1	2	3	4	5
Activity liked the least activity			Favorite	

10. Do you point out signs and words such as restaurant names or street signs to your child?

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Not currently Daily	Have but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly
------------------------	-----------------	--------------	--------

11. Does your child show interest in adult reading materials (newspaper, magazines, etc.)?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

12. Does your child ask for help in reading words such as signs on the street or words on food packages?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

13. Does your child identify words in the environment (food packaging, signs of stores, etc.)?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

14. Does your child read any words by sight (or common words they have memorized and can identify, like cat or mom)?

Not currently Knows many words	On occasion	Knows a word	Knows several words
-----------------------------------	-------------	--------------	---------------------

15. Do you play rhyming games with your child?

Not currently Daily	Have but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly
------------------------	-----------------	--------------	--------

16. Does your child try and play rhyming games with you or others?

Not currently Daily	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly
------------------------	----------------	--------------	--------

17. Does your child produce rhymes by him or herself?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

18. Does your child notice and say something when he/she hears words that rhyme?

Not currently Daily	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly
------------------------	----------------	--------------	--------

19. Does your child tell nursery rhymes?

Not currently Daily	Have but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly
------------------------	-----------------	--------------	--------

20. Does your child sing simple songs?

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

21. Does your child name letters of the alphabet?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

22. Does your child attempt to make sounds for alphabet letters?

Not currently Frequently	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very
-----------------------------	----------------	--------------	------------	------

23. Can your child identify some letters of the alphabet?

Not currently Frequently	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very
-----------------------------	----------------	--------------	------------	------

24. Does your child draw?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

25. Does your child write letters?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

26. Does your child ask you to write for him/her?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

27. Does your child ask you how to spell items?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

28. Does your child write words?

Not currently Daily	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly
------------------------	----------------	--------------	--------

29. Does your child watch video stories on VCR or DVD (ie Lion King or other stories)?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

30. Does your child watch TV?

Never/rarely day	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
---------------------	-------------	--------	-------	-------------------

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

31. Does your child go to the library to select books?

Rarely	Every few months	Monthly	Bimonthly
Weekly			

32. If you have a computer at home, how often does your child use it?

Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per
day				

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Appendix D

DeBaryshe and Binder's *Parent Reading Belief Inventory* (1994), adapted

1. I find it boring or difficult to read to my child.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

2. Reading aloud is a special time we love to share.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

3. When we read, I want my child to help me tell the story.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

4. When we read, we talk about the pictures as much as we tell the story.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

5. Even if I would like to, I'm just too busy and too tired to read to my child.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

6. I don't read to my child because there is no room and no quiet place in the house.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

7. As a parent, I play an important role in my child's development.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

8. When my child goes to school, the teacher will teach my child everything my child needs to know so I don't need to worry.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

9. Reading helps children learn about things they never see in real life.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

10. My child learns lessons and morals from the stories we read.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

11. Some children are natural talkers, others are silent. Parents do not have much influence over this.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

12. Children inherit their language ability from their parents, it's in their genes.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

13. Schools are responsible for teaching children, not parents.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

14. I read to my child so he/she will learn the letters and how to read simple sentences.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

15. My child is too young to learn about reading.

No	Almost No	Almost Yes	Yes
----	-----------	------------	-----

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Appendix E

Recommended Questionnaire for Clinical Use

Adapted from Boudreau's *Early Literacy Parent Questionnaire* (2005) and DeBaryshe and Binder's *Parent Reading Belief Inventory* (1994)

Subtest 1	Response				
I find it boring or difficult to read to my child.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Reading aloud is a special time we like to share.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Some children are natural talkers, others are silent. Parents do not have much influence over this.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Children inherit their language ability from their parents, it's in their genes.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
When we read, I want my child to help me tell the story.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
When we read, we talk about the pictures as much as we tell the story.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
I read to my child so he/she will learn the letters and how to read simple sentences.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Subtest 2	Response				
Does your child ask you to read?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
In comparison to other activities, how would you rate your child's interest in books?	1 Activity liked the least	2	3	4	5 Activity liked the most
Do you point out signs and words such as restaurant names or street signs to your child?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
Does your child show interest in adult reading materials (newspaper, magazines, etc.)?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day

THE RELATION BETWEEN TWO CAREGIVER REPORTS

Do you play rhyming games with your child?	Not currently	Have but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly	Daily
Subtest 3			Response		
Does your child ask questions about characters or events during story reading?	Not currently	Has but rarely	Occasionally	A few times per story	Very frequently during story
Does your child make up stories and tell them?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
Does your child ask for help in reading words such as signs on the street or words on food packages?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
Does your child read any words by sight (or common words they have memorized and can identify, like cat or mom)?	Not currently	On occasion	Knows a word	Knows several words	Knows many words
Does your child produce rhymes by himself or herself?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
Does your child write letters?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day
Does your child write words?	Not currently	Has but rarely	Occasionally	Weekly	Daily
Does your child ask you how to spell items?	Never/rarely	On occasion	Weekly	Daily	Several times per day