

A LITERATURE REVIEW ON BOOK-SHARING ACTIVITIES FOR PROMOTING EMERGENT LITERACY IN YOUNG CHILDREN

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Abstract: Emergent literacy is a foundational aspect for children as they progress toward the stage where they can read and write formally. Early literacy can be enhanced through various activities, one of which is book-sharing activities. This literature review aims to explore and examine findings from recent empirical studies regarding the role and effectiveness of book-sharing activities in promoting early literacy in young children. The review highlights components of book-sharing interventions such as interactive storytelling, adult involvement—either by teachers or parents—and the quality of adult-child interactions. The results of study show that children who are frequently exposed to book-sharing activities demonstrate improved vocabulary acquisition, phonological awareness, print awareness, storytelling skills, and emerging reading abilities. Based on these findings, the review emphasizes the importance of integrating book-sharing into early childhood education settings as a meaningful approach to support early literacy development.

Keywords: book-sharing activities; interactive story-reading; early literacy; vocabulary; phonological awareness; print awareness; early childhood education

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a sensitive period for acquiring high-quality learning experiences, including those that support the development of essential language and literacy skills, which serve as the foundation for future reading ability. Early literacy is a crucial foundation for children, as it can determine their future academic success (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). To reach the stage where children can formally read and write, they must acquire early literacy skills. Foundational abilities such as letter recognition, understanding the relationship between sounds and letters, print awareness, and developing an interest in reading are critical stages in a child's development (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). The ability to read and comprehend texts not only influences a child's cognitive development but also contributes to their social and emotional growth (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). One approach that has been proven effective in supporting early literacy development is book-sharing activities.

Book-sharing is an interactive activity in which adults and children engage in

shared reading experiences. Numerous opportunities to acquire foundational language and literacy skills arise during these shared reading sessions through interactive dialogue between teachers and children. Such interactive engagement is believed to have a positive impact on children's language development, vocabulary acquisition, story comprehension, and reading motivation (Bus, van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009). Through interactions between adults and children, social interaction skills can also be effectively stimulated (Sipe, 2008). Furthermore, when book-sharing is frequently practiced at home, children who listen to their mothers telling stories demonstrate greater neural activity in the frontal lobes—areas associated with language development—compared to children who watch videos (Oghi, Loo, & Mizuike, 2010).

In early childhood education, book-sharing activities can serve as an effective tool for creating a joyful, interactive, and meaningful learning environment. Through this approach, teachers and parents can foster a language-rich setting that supports children's social-emotional development and strengthens their connection with books (Wasik & Bond, 2001). Teachers can enhance the quality of shared reading sessions by incorporating extratextual conversations—utterances that go beyond simply reading the story text (Kaderavek et al., 2014). These extratextual interactions, such as questions or comments during reading, play a critical role in supporting language development. In addition to offering a range of benefits for children, book-sharing also provides advantages for teachers. It allows them to directly observe children's literacy development and offer constructive feedback (Morrow, 2009).

This literature review aims to summarize and analyze findings from various studies related to book-sharing activities in early childhood education, with a particular focus on their impact on the development of early literacy in young children. Through this synthesis of the literature, it is expected to provide a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the role of book-sharing as an effective strategy for stimulating early literacy in early childhood.

METHOD

This article employs a literature review method. This method was selected to provide a comprehensive overview of the concepts, benefits, and challenges associated with the implementation of book-sharing activities, based on previous research findings. In its implementation, several stages were undertaken by the researcher. The first step was to identify the topic of the review, namely the benefits of book-sharing activities in early childhood education. This topic was chosen based on the consideration that book-sharing has a significant impact on the learning process in early childhood, particularly in the development of literacy skills. The researcher also formulated several key questions that serve as the focus of this literature review, including:

- “To what extent do book-sharing activities influence early childhood literacy?”,
- “What are the strategies for implementing book-sharing activities?”,
- “What is the role of adults in book-sharing activities?”,
- “What are the challenges in implementing book-sharing activities?”.

The next step was to conduct a literature search from various relevant academic sources. The data collection process was carried out through online searches using appropriate keywords, including "book-sharing," "book reading," "interactive reading," "dialogical reading," "emergent literacy," "early literacy," and "shared reading." These keywords were used to search across multiple academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Springer, Emerald, EBSCO, ResearchGate, and Taylor & Francis. The articles selected for reference were based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) published within the last fifteen years (2010–2025), (2) relevant to the topic of book-sharing activities and early literacy in young children, (3) employed a clear and structured research design (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods), and (4) written in either Indonesian or English. After selection based on abstracts and relevance to the research topic, a total of 30 articles were identified as the most relevant for further analysis.

The collected data were then classified according to key themes aligned with the research questions. This step was carried out to facilitate the analysis and synthesis process in the subsequent stages. Once the data collection was completed, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of the findings from the selected studies. The analysis employed a qualitative approach, focusing on how various studies define and evaluate the benefits of book-sharing activities, including the strategies used to address challenges across different contexts. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to construct a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the benefits of book-sharing in early childhood education. This synthesis not only summarizes the key findings but also identifies the challenges and formulates recommendations derived from the reviewed studies. The aim of this synthesis is to provide a deeper understanding of the role of book-sharing activities in enhancing early literacy, as well as in addressing the obstacles encountered during their implementation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained from the literature review of various studies that examine the effectiveness of book-sharing activities in supporting early literacy development in young children. These findings are categorized and analyzed based on key themes, namely the benefits of book-sharing activities, the role of adults in their implementation, implementation strategies, and the various challenges encountered in practice.

Book-Sharing Activities for Child Development

Book-sharing activities in Early Childhood Education (ECE) are not only focused on the development of early literacy skills but also offer various other important benefits for children's overall development. One of the primary advantages of these activities is the enhancement of children's social and emotional skills. Through the interactions that occur during shared reading sessions, children learn to communicate, share, and collaborate with peers and adults. This is consistent with the findings of Galea et al. (2025), which indicate that shared book reading at home—both in terms of frequency and the quality of interaction—plays a significant role in supporting children's language and early literacy development, as well as broader social skills. In addition to the home

environment, a well-organized classroom fosters high-quality social interactions (Cabell et al., 2019). Reading with peers helps children satisfy their curiosity, engage in social interaction, and construct meaning that supports early literacy development (Lee, 2016).

Book-sharing activities can also enhance children's critical thinking and creativity. When children engage in discussions about the stories being read, they are encouraged to think more deeply about the characters, plot, and moral values presented. Improving the quality of teacher–child interactions during shared reading is essential. The use of open-ended questions, adequate wait time, and informative comments can encourage children to speak more actively and think critically, which in turn supports their vocabulary development (Hindman, 2019; Mascareño et al., 2017). This aligns with the research by Hidayatullah et al. (2023), which emphasizes the importance of collaboration between parents and teachers in creating a supportive learning environment that can stimulate children's critical thinking. Through the use of dialogic reading strategies, children are not merely passive listeners but are actively involved in the learning process, enriching their overall experience.

Book-sharing also contributes to the development of children's emotional skills. Through stories, children can identify and understand various emotions—both those experienced by the characters in the books and those they feel themselves. This is essential for fostering empathy and self-awareness. According to a study by Riordan et al. (2022), shared reading interventions can improve children's ability to comprehend and retell stories, including understanding emotions and the relationships between characters. As a result, children learn to better manage their own emotions and interact more effectively with others.

Finally, book-sharing activities can strengthen the bond between parents and children. Parental involvement in shared reading not only enhances the quality of interaction but also creates meaningful moments that foster emotional connection. Research by Demir-Lira et al. (2018) indicates that shared book reading is a key indicator of a rich language environment and a unique predictor of children's language and literacy development. Children who participated in the intervention showed significant improvements in word recognition, story comprehension, and letter knowledge, both in directly and indirectly targeted skills. Parents became more actively engaged in using dialogic reading strategies, which positively impacted children's engagement and vocabulary development (Dicataldo et al., 2022; Boit et al., 2024; Han & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2015). Thus, this activity benefits not only cognitive development but also helps establish a strong foundation for family relationships.

Overall, book-sharing activities in early childhood education offer broad and significant benefits for children's development, including social, emotional, and critical thinking skills, as well as the reinforcement of family bonds. Therefore, it is essential for educators and parents to continually promote and facilitate this activity in children's daily lives.

The Benefits of Book-Sharing Activities in Early Literacy

Book-sharing, or shared reading, plays a crucial role in supporting the development of early literacy in children. Engaging in shared reading activities at home, especially from an early age, significantly contributes to the development of children's language and reading skills. Lenhart et al. (2021) emphasize that a rich home literacy

environment, facilitated through shared reading practices, is a key factor in fostering early literacy development. Furthermore, research by Altinkaynak (2019) indicates that children who participate in interactive reading activities show significant improvements in print awareness and phonemic awareness—both of which are foundational components of reading proficiency.

Book-sharing activities not only strengthen the interaction between parents and children but also contribute significantly to the development of children's language skills. Hidayatullah et al. (2023) emphasize that collaboration between parents and teachers in creating a supportive learning environment is a crucial factor in promoting child development. Dicataldo et al. (2022) found that parents who actively implement dialogic reading strategies can enhance children's engagement and enrich their vocabulary. Furthermore, Deitcher et al. (2021) highlight the importance of using alphabet books and engaging interactions during shared reading sessions, which can strengthen children's motivation in the process of learning to read. In this context, book-sharing provides an enjoyable and interactive reading experience that can positively enhance children's involvement in the learning process (Satriana et al., 2021).

Galea et al. (2025) state that shared reading activities within the home environment play a significant role in facilitating children's readiness for formal education. Mastery of literacy skills from an early age can help children adapt more effectively to the school environment. López-Escribano et al. (2021) reveal that interventions using interactive e-books can significantly enhance children's phonological awareness and vocabulary, particularly among children from at-risk groups. Beyond supporting early literacy development, book-sharing activities also contribute to fostering a sustained interest in reading into adulthood. Demir-Lira et al. (2018) emphasize that shared reading is an indicator of a rich language environment and a unique predictor of children's language and literacy development.

Book-sharing offers a wide range of benefits in supporting early childhood literacy. From improving language and reading skills, fostering positive parent-child interactions, to enhancing school readiness, these aspects highlight the critical role of shared reading in building a strong foundation for children's literacy. Therefore, it is essential for parents and educators to actively promote and facilitate book-sharing activities to optimally support children's literacy development.

Effective Implementation Strategies for Book-Sharing Activities

Book-sharing, or shared reading, is a key strategy in supporting children's literacy development. Research has shown that the home literacy environment—particularly through shared reading—plays a crucial role in the development of early literacy skills. Initiating these activities at a very early age can yield significant benefits for children's language development and future reading abilities (Lenhart et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to design and implement effective strategies to maximize the impact of book-sharing activities.

One effective approach is the use of interactive and dialogic books. Hidayatullah et al. (2023) emphasize that dialogic reading interventions can enhance children's language and literacy skills, supported by active parental involvement and collaboration between teachers and families. Moreover, the frequency of shared reading at home is positively associated with children's early literacy skills (Anderson, 2018). This strategy

not only improves receptive and expressive vocabulary, but also children's print awareness and taxonomic abilities. By involving parents in the process, children can experience a richer and more enjoyable learning environment. Other studies also indicate that interactive e-books read with adults are more effective in enhancing early literacy compared to standalone e-books or printed books, although printed books still excel in promoting meaningful conversations when compared to standard e-books (Korat & Segal-Dori, 2015). In addition, the use of storybooks that encourage active interaction between parents and children is also highly important. Shared storybook reading, through strategies such as dialogic reading and print referencing, has been shown to be effective in enhancing early literacy skills in preschool children (Wanicharoen, 2024; Sim & Berthelsen, 2014). The interactions that occur during these activities form a critical foundation in early childhood education, with parents acting as facilitators who support children's comprehension of story content and printed text features.

The quality of interaction during book-sharing activities is also a key factor in their effectiveness. Research by Anderson et al. (2018) shows that while the frequency of shared reading at home is positively associated with children's early literacy skills, the quality of interaction—such as asking and answering questions during reading—has a greater impact on phonemic awareness. Therefore, training for parents and teachers in using more challenging and interactive questioning techniques is essential to maximize the potential of book-sharing in supporting children's language development (Deshmukh et al., 2019).

Thus, effective implementation strategies for book-sharing should involve the use of interactive books, dialogic approaches, and a strong focus on the quality of interaction between parents and children. Through this approach, children are expected to develop strong literacy skills and be better prepared to enter formal education.

The Role of Teachers and Parents in Book-Sharing Activities

Book-sharing, or shared reading, is one of the most effective methods for supporting children's literacy development. In this context, the roles of teachers and parents are crucial. Research indicates that the literacy environment at home—particularly through shared reading activities—plays a significant role in the development of early literacy skills in children. Introducing such activities at an early age can provide substantial benefits for children's language development and future reading skills (Lenhart et al., 2021). Parents who frequently engage their children in storybook activities and structured tasks significantly support the development of children's print awareness and vocabulary, with a strong positive correlation reported (KILIÇ & KARA, 2019; Kim & Riley, 2019).

Parents have a responsibility to create an environment that supports reading activities. Shared reading interactions between parents and children, especially when using alphabet books, can strengthen children's literacy skills. Parents' focus on aspects of the writing system during shared reading can offer additional benefits beyond simply motivating children to learn to read (Deitcher et al., 2021). Furthermore, research by Hidayatullah et al. (2023) shows that dialogic reading interventions that actively involve parents can improve children's language and literacy skills, including both receptive and expressive vocabulary. Children who are actively involved in shared reading with their parents demonstrate a better understanding of story structure, increased vocabulary, and

foundational reading skills. The quality of parent–child interaction during shared reading also plays a critical role in fostering children’s interest and literacy development (Saracho, 2016).

On the other hand, the role of teachers in book-sharing activities is equally important. Teachers serve as facilitators who can create enjoyable and interactive reading experiences. Research by Satriana et al. (2021) highlights that teachers play a critical role in facilitating these activities by using strategies such as open-ended questions and discussions to encourage children’s critical thinking and verbal expression. In addition, Neumann (2020) emphasizes that teachers need to apply different strategies when reading print and digital books to optimize support for children’s literacy development. The quality of interaction between teachers and children during shared reading also significantly influences learning outcomes. Hindman et al. (2019) stress the importance of enhancing interaction quality through the use of open-ended questions and sufficient wait time, allowing children to be more actively engaged in speaking and critical thinking. Therefore, collaboration between parents and teachers in book-sharing activities can create a supportive learning environment that fosters holistic literacy development in children.

Overall, both parents and teachers have complementary roles in book-sharing activities. Active involvement from both parties can enhance the effectiveness of these activities in supporting children’s language and literacy development, better preparing them for formal education (Galea et al., 2025; Kim & Riley, 2021). Therefore, it is essential for parents and teachers to work together in creating high-quality and enjoyable reading experiences for young children.

Challenges in Implementing Book-Sharing in Early Childhood Education

The implementation of book-sharing activities in Early Childhood Education (ECE) holds significant potential for supporting children’s early literacy development. However, several challenges must be addressed to ensure the effectiveness of this practice. One of the main challenges is the quality of interaction between parents and children during reading sessions. Research by Anderson et al. (2018) indicates that the frequency of shared reading at home is positively associated with children’s early literacy skills; however, the quality of interaction—such as engaging in question-and-answer exchanges during reading—has a greater impact on children’s phonemic skills. This suggests that simply reading together is not enough; high-quality interactions are also essential in supporting children’s language development.

Another challenge is the lack of training for educators in applying effective reading strategies. Weadman et al. (2023) observed that early childhood teachers often do not employ complex dialogic strategies or explicit techniques to support early literacy, resulting in missed opportunities to enhance children’s language skills. Teachers tend to ask simple questions more frequently during shared reading, while complex questions such as ‘why’ and ‘how’ are rarely used, even though they can elicit more extended and elaborated responses from children (Deshmukh et al., 2019). Although dialogic reading (DR) has been proven to enhance children’s language skills, its implementation remains varied and often inconsistent, particularly in the use of CROWD and PEER strategies (Towson et al., 2017). Improved and ongoing training for educators is needed to raise the quality of book-sharing sessions, ensuring that children can fully benefit from this

activity.

Limited access to quality books is also a significant challenge in the implementation of book-sharing in early childhood education settings. Adam and Barratt-Pugh (2023) found that most book-sharing sessions in childcare centers were brief and of low quality, particularly for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This highlights the need to improve educator practices, provide adequate training, and implement policies that support meaningful literacy interactions from an early age. By ensuring better access to quality books and sufficient training, book-sharing activities can be more effective in supporting children's literacy development.

Challenges in creating an environment that supports book-sharing activities must also be addressed. Galea et al. (2025) emphasized that shared reading at home, both in terms of frequency and the quality of interactions, plays a crucial role in supporting children's early language and literacy development. Therefore, creating a conducive environment for reading—both at home and in early childhood education settings—is essential to foster children's readiness for formal schooling. By addressing these challenges, the implementation of book-sharing in early childhood education can be optimized and have a significant positive impact on children's literacy development.

Finally, the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive support must not be overlooked. Boit et al. (2024) found that Burmese refugee mothers gradually adopted shared reading strategies that enriched their interactions with their children, particularly through the flexible use of both their native language and English. This highlights the need for book-sharing practices to take into account children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds in order to create more inclusive and effective reading experiences. Therefore, the challenges and opportunities in implementing book-sharing in early childhood education can be effectively addressed through appropriate training, the integration of technology, and attention to cultural diversity.

CONCLUSION

Book-sharing activities in the context of early childhood education have been shown to significantly influence the development of early literacy skills. Based on a review of the literature, it can be concluded that the interactions occurring during shared reading sessions not only support the improvement of children's reading abilities and text comprehension but also enrich their social and emotional experiences. Research indicates that the active participation of both parents and educators in these activities is crucial in creating a supportive learning environment, which ultimately strengthens children's literacy skills.

Furthermore, strategies such as dialogic reading and the use of interactive books have been proven effective in developing children's language and literacy skills. Book-sharing activities also contribute to enhancing critical thinking and creativity, while strengthening the emotional bond between parents and children. Thus, these activities serve not only as a means for literacy development but also as a medium for fostering stronger family connections and supporting holistic child development.

In this regard, educators and parents must continue to promote and facilitate book-sharing as part of children's daily routines. Further research is needed to explore various approaches and methods that can enhance the effectiveness of book-sharing in supporting both literacy and other areas of early childhood development.

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