

Screening for Emergent Literacy During Well Visits



American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends literacy promotion in primary care and emphasizes the role of pediatricians in school readiness.^{1,2} Pediatricians are well positioned to capture the state of emergent literacy skills in young children and leading up to their first year in school.³ Currently, literacy assessments are not well understood or integrated into pediatric care settings.⁴



The Reading House

To address this need, Hutton et al. (2019) developed a creative way to assess literacy skills with 'The Reading House' (TRH), a children's book designed to assess emergent literacy skills in 3- and 4-year-old children during pediatric wellness visits.⁵ Pediatricians read the book with children and use prompts and questions about the book as they move through TRH.



About TRH

TRH is a 14-page, full color book that includes diverse characters and uses a rhyming narrative. Pediatricians read the book with children and use scripts (prompts, questions about the book) as they move through TRH with children.

Sample TRH Items

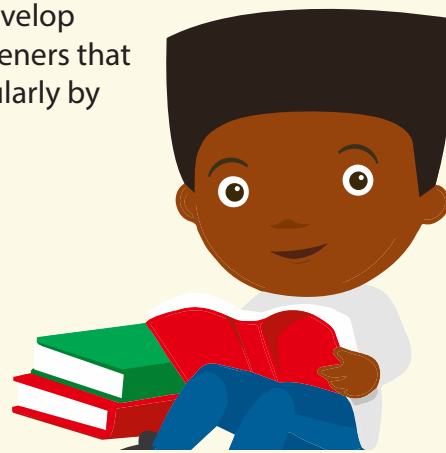
When looking at an image of a garden with all letters of alphabet visible, the pediatrician would ask the child: Name as many letters as you know.

When looking at an image of a playroom with a child playing with objects (truck, blocks), the pediatrician would ask the child: Which objects on this page rhyme with the toys the child is playing with?



Findings & Future Potential

TRH has potential to be an effective, valuable tool to equip pediatricians with a way to assess emergent literacy skills in young children, including those not enrolled in preschool. By identifying risk early and promoting support, such a tool may help reduce the disadvantages some students may demonstrate upon entry into the school system. As TRH and related preliminary tools continue development, they may help identify children at risk of literacy difficulties, including dyslexia risk, as they approach school age. However, more work is needed to develop effective screeners that are used regularly by pediatricians.



¹Council on Early Childhood. (2014). Literacy promotion: an essential component of primary care pediatric practice. *Pediatrics*, 134(2), 404-409.

²Donoghue, E. A., Lieser, D., DelConte, B., Donoghue, E., Earls, M., Glassy, D., ... & Williams, P. G. (2017). Quality early education and child care from birth to kindergarten. *Pediatrics*, 140(2).

³Horowitz, S. H., Rawe, J., & Whittaker, M. C. (2017). The state of learning disabilities: Understanding the 1 in 5. New York, NY: National Center for Learning Disabilities.

⁴Hutton, J. S., Justice, L., Huang, G., Kerr, A., DeWitt, T., & Ittenbach, R. F. (2019). The Reading House: a children's book for emergent literacy screening during well-child visits. *Pediatrics*, 143(6).

⁵Iyer, S. N., Dawson, M. Z., Sawyer, M. I., Abdullah, N., Saju, L., & Needman, R. D. (2017). Added value of early literacy screening in preschool children. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 56(10), 959-963.