



## In sum

- Leisure reading and reading to children:
  - Overcoming socio-economic gaps
- Literary reading: Skills that any citizen, employee, manager can use, e.g.,
  - Enhanced critical thinking
  - Reduced need for cognitive closure
- Reading can be healthy
  - Interaction about reading may enhance well-being and sense of purpose
- Reading can enhance aspects of emotional intelligence
- Literature can stimulate moral reflection about leadership



2. Is reading to  
children  
important?

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And (3) Why do we need an  
early start?



Why is reading to children important?

- Learning through interaction
- Active involvement of parents
- Geborgenheid, tryghett
- Rewarding to concentrate



Wade & Moore 1998; McCain et al. 2007; Thiede in press

## Why is reading to children important?

- Book language more sophisticated and complex
- Opportunity to ask questions, explain, define, extend world knowledge, switch roles,
- Books are often reread: increasing learning



Wade & Moore 1998; McCain et al. 2007;  
Sénéchal et al. 2008 Thiede in press

# Effects



# Effects

Positive child-parent relation

Increased motivation to participate in literacy activities

Reading enjoyment

Reading at home more important for attainment than socio-economic variables

A head start is maintained and may even increase



## 4. Do book gifting programs work?

- Programs (see [eli-net.eu](http://eli-net.eu) for examples) stimulating parents to read to their children at an early age
- Free package: book, cd, library membership, information
- Collaboration with health clinics, libraries
- Started in UK, now all over the world.

# Impact of Book Gifting?

Three studies by Wade & Moore

After one year

Results

- Attitude toward books
- Library enrolment
- Book sharing with babies
- Book club membership
- Book purchase



# Impact of Book Gifting?

Two years later

Interviews (N=29): Effects still visible

Observations

- More interest and concentration
- More active involvement (e.g., pointing things out, turning pages)
- More verbal participation (making predictions, joining in in the reading, asking questions)

# Impact of Book Gifting?

Five years later

Standard testing

- English and Math (observations, and scores)
- Matched with control group (e.g., gender, age, ethnic group)

Results:

- Clearly better on speaking, listening, writing, but not significantly better
- Reading significantly better
- Overall scale for math also significantly better.



# Impact of Book Gifting?

Similar findings in The Netherlands

De Bondt & Bus, in press

What do we  
take away?

Upward spiral of causality

Pay-offs across curriculum

Increased attention and concentration

Reduce socio-economic gap

Cost-effective

# Remaining issues

Not only successful projects

Length of the interventions

Ceiling effects

Differential susceptibility (Van den Berg & Bus 2014)

Lack of standard implementation and assessment

Role of mediators (meta-analysis by Bus et al. in prep.)



## Conclusion

Yes, it is important to read.

Yes, it is important to start early, to give children a head start.

And yes, book gifting programs have an effect, even in the long term.

# Thanks

- Foreningen !les
- Sigrun Feiring
- Merel de Bondt
- Adriana Bus





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## References

- See for good practice: [www.eli-net.eu](http://www.eli-net.eu). following the link: Research >>> Country Reports as well as the link: Good Practice >>> Framework of Good Practice / Examples of Good Practice.