

REVIEW ARTICLE

A literature review on the benefits of the use of Books in early child development: an alternative during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Una revisión bibliográfica sobre los beneficios del uso de libros en el desarrollo infantil temprano: una alternativa durante la pandemia del COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected early child development. Early child development is part of the transformative plan for 2030, where all children should have the opportunity to reach their full developmental potential. The use of books could have benefits in many areas of children's development, going further than the literacy-related ones, as shown in most studies. **Objective.** Explore the various areas of children's development, use of books and summarize the evidence. **Materials and Method.** This is a literature review. The following databases were used to capture the most important number of essential records: PubMed, Medline, Scielo, and Lilacs. Sources with critical documents of interest for this review were previously identified, influencing the option for a wide-ranging scoping literature review. **Results.** 468 eligible studies were identified after duplicates had been removed. Of these, 16 studies were selected for the final analysis. **Interpretation.** The use of books represents a tool rich in benefits to stimulate the correct development of children. It is a fundamental tool to be considered in contexts of mobility limitations and school closures imposed as protective measures during the pandemic. In both high- and middle-income countries, interventions focus on low- or middle-income groups, which is understood as a response to concerns about children's developmental delays. The use of books alone or in conjunction with other resources only benefits children; no adverse effect was reported in the literature. In a globalized world where technology is very important, printed books are still very important in places where technology hasn't caught up.

Keywords: Children, Books, Literature review, Education, COVID-19 pandemic.

RESUMEN

Introducción. La pandemia de COVID-19 ha afectado el desarrollo infantil temprano. El desarrollo de la primera infancia es parte del plan transformador para 2030, donde todos los niños deben tener la oportunidad de alcanzar su pleno potencial de desarrollo. El uso de libros podría tener beneficios en muchas áreas del desarrollo infantil, más allá de las relacionadas con la lectoescritura, como se muestra en la mayoría de los estudios. **Objetivo.** Explorar las diversas áreas del desarrollo de los niños, uso de libros y resumir la evidencia. **Materiales y método.** Esta es una revisión de la literatura. Se utilizaron las siguientes bases de datos para capturar el número más importante de registros esenciales: PubMed, Medline, Scielo y Lilacs. Las fuentes con documentos críticos de interés para esta revisión se identificaron previamente, lo que influyó en la opción de una revisión de la literatura de alcance amplio. **Resultados.** Se identificaron 468 estudios elegibles después de eliminar los duplicados. De estos, 16 estudios fueron seleccionados para el análisis final. **Interpretación.** El uso de los libros representa una herramienta rica en beneficios para estimular el correcto desarrollo de los niños. Es una herramienta fundamental a considerar en contextos de limitaciones de movilidad y cierre de escuelas impuestas como medidas de protección durante la pandemia. Tanto en los países de ingresos altos como medios, las intervenciones se centran en los grupos de ingresos bajos o medios, lo que se entiende como una respuesta a las preocupaciones sobre los retrasos en el desarrollo de los niños. El uso de libros solos o en conjunto con otros recursos beneficia a los niños; no se informó ningún efecto adverso en la literatura. En un mundo globalizado donde la tecnología es muy importante, los libros impresos siguen siendo muy importantes en lugares donde la tecnología no se ha puesto al día.

Palabras clave: Niños, Libros, Revisión de literatura, Educación, Pandemia COVID-19.

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INTRODUCTION

Since March 2020, when the WHO declared the coronavirus a pandemic, almost all countries began to implement lockdowns and social distancing, among other measures. Because of the control measures of the pandemic, children and young people have lost spaces of interaction, such as schools, among others, which has led to the detriment of their physical and mental well-being(1). Children and young are considered vulnerable populations, mainly in less favored countries(2)

Early child development is part of the Sustainable Development Goals transformative plan for 2030, where Goal 4 states that all children should have the opportunity to reach their full developmental potential(3) Some factors, such as lack of cognitive stimulation, harsh parenting practices, and aggression in early childhood, maybe the cause of developmental delay later on, and, for that reason, interventions to prevent or reduce their potential damage are essential to improve the children's chances to thrive throughout their lives. (4) We have evidence-based interventions to improve early child development, such as cognitive stimulation and books. (5–8) The importance of how the first years of life could play a fundamental role in a child's future life is well documented(4)(7-10). Thus, early childhood is the most effective and cost-efficient intervention time. (10)(11)

The early childhood development programs are recommended based on solid evidence of their effectiveness in preventing cognitive development delays and increasing readiness to learn. (12) Previous research has found a variety of advantages to reading to children in their developing languages. Book-sharing interventions, for example, can be equally effective when targeted at caregivers with low and high levels of education. (13) The stimulation and interaction

between parents and children using books can also affect how parents talk to their children and the frequency of naturally occurring categories of stimulation, improving their language development. (14) The effect of paternal and maternal education on early childhood development has been direct and indirect, mediated by paternal and maternal stimulation and the ownership of children's books in the household. (15) This evidence is significant in low-income countries, where the adverse effects of extreme poverty also constrain the caregiving process, making children and parents even more vulnerable and needing additional support for young children to reach their optimum developmental potential. (15)

The children are sensitive to social determinants in the early years. The dynamics of families' lives have changed compared to the past. Now parents work more hours, some more away from home, and some families have several children. (16) There are still questions about how books could improve children's relationship with the environment where they live, given that young children experience their world as an environment of relationships. These affect all aspects of their development. (17) Thus, books could benefit other dimensions of children's development, not only those related to language development. There are many creative ways in which books could be used to promote their benefits even more. Books, both printed and electronic, are a dynamic tool full of possibilities for promoting the development of children. At early ages, such as those addressed in this study, it is natural for parents, caregivers, and teachers to accompany children in the activities back to the books. Identify the potential benefits of using books for child development and their potential use

in times of pandemic where restrictions and limitations have been imposed.

That is why we are interested in conducting this scoping review of the use of books in randomized clinical trials (RCTs) or interventions that aim to improve early childhood development. This revision seeks to identify the benefits of such interventions by describing how the book was used, the target areas of action, and the specific characteristics of the participants. By doing so, we aim to summarize solid evidence about the use of books as an essential part of the action to promote the development of children. We structured our work into the following topics: methods, results, and discussion, keeping these objectives in mind.

Scoping reviews also matter because summarizing and disseminating research outcomes can inform policymakers and stakeholders about a particular area. (18) However, in our opinion, the most important advantage of doing a scoping review or a scoping study is the possibility of finding critical voids or gaps in the literature or research. (18) Nevertheless, we should be cautious because identifying gaps in the literature through a scoping study will not necessarily identify research. With all these ideas in mind, we propose doing a scoping review. This could be a first step towards researching the Impact of books on child development.

The methods section will discuss the scoping review, participants, outcomes, and types of interventions. We will also discuss the inclusion and exclusion criteria and explain the studies and data analysis process. In the results section, we present the scoping review results with a flowchart representing the included and excluded studies, and we explain how we have done this. We also summarize evidence based on the income level of countries, and we present a table about high-income countries and another about middle-income countries. We also discuss the book's context and the immediate effects of RCTs.

In the discussion section, we discussed the results presented in the previous area, and finally, we showed the strengths and limitations of this scoping review. We also reached some firm conclusions and advanced some suggestions for future research. The main objective of this study is to determine the benefits in child development of the use of books, in addition to showing the formats in which they can be used and the development areas that are favored, determining their valuable benefit in times of pandemic.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Studies, participants, outcome, and type of interventions

All methods and types of reviews have their flaws and advantages. There is no perfect literature review method; choosing the most suitable study for our working objectives is the best option. In this sense, we decided to

do a scoping review because we intended to "map the key concepts rapidly underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available."(18)

Some authors argue that we should do a scoping review to study the extent and amount of work done in a particular field. In

this case, we do not search for details, but we aim to visualize the dimension of research activity in the area. Besides that, by mapping the existing literature on a field, we know if a systematic review would be pertinent, relevant, or even appropriate. (18)

For this scoping review, child development is the primary outcome. We included randomized controlled trials that reported using books alone or as part of some intervention with caregivers, children, or teachers in early childhood development. Our population of interest was children aged 0-59 months, regardless of socioeconomic characteristics. We reported the effects of the interventions; the most common were book sharing, shared book reading, picture books, book distribution, and book reading. For this review, we focused on the developmental benefits of the interventions.

Information sources and search

We searched the following databases for the most relevant documents: PubMed, Medline Ovid, Scielo, and Lilacs, with no time limit until January 2021. We opted for a wide-ranging review of the literature.

SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) is an electronic library supported by CNPq (the National Council for Scientific Information) with a selected collection of Brazilian scientific journals. LILACS is a database that combines scientific literature from 26 American, Latin American, and Caribbean countries specializing in health sciences. By using SciELO and LILACS, we aimed to find scientific articles. Medline Ovid also

specializes in health sciences, providing scientific literature in both Spanish and English. Concerning PubMed, we used this research tool because it is one of the world's best resources in health and biomedicine.

The search terms used were:

"book," AND "child," AND "development."

We found studies using the previous terms. The filters "Randomized Controlled Trial" AND "Humans" were applied without regard for publication date or country, allowing many documents to be excluded. Duplicates were later removed, and banned articles were listed first by title, then by abstract. Finally, those studies oriented toward some physical or psychological disorder and those targeting children over 59 months were excluded. All the studies did respect the inclusion criteria presented below.

Inclusion criteria

Intervention studies that used printed or electronic books and reported practical early childhood development measures were included. Studies had to be aimed at children from zero to 59 months of age and their interactions with their caregivers, teachers, or others, regardless of the area of benefit development, country, or study date. No language limits were considered.

Exclusion criteria

Those who did not meet the above inclusion criteria were also excluded, as studied on physical disabilities or psychological disorders. Those who did not report any

effects of the books in any developmental domain and did not involve caregivers or teachers in the intervention were also excluded.

Analysis process

The list of articles to be assessed for the literature review was sent to the Mendeley reference manager. (19) All the full texts were reviewed by the reviewers to determine whether they fulfilled all the inclusion criteria; two reviewers evaluated each article, and the other two evaluated it in case of disagreement. We extracted from

these final documents aspects such as the year, type of study, country, characteristics of the participants, age of the children, main results (quantitative and qualitative), how the book was used in the intervention, and the development construct was affected. This study uses the Mendeley software to analyze documents, a handy tool for producing large-scale systematic reviews. (20)

RESULTS

The flowchart in Figure 1 shows the selection process for the studies for this review. Four hundred sixty-eight eligible studies were found in the database searches after removing duplicates (six papers). Of these 468 studies, 400 were excluded because they did not belong to the intervention studies mentioned in the inclusion criteria above. 39 of the 62 eligible studies were excluded

because the intervention was related to some health disorder or the book was used for purposes other than promoting early childhood development. Of the 23 studies chosen for synthesis, 7 were excluded because they referred to children older than 59 months. Finally, 16 studies were selected for the final analysis.

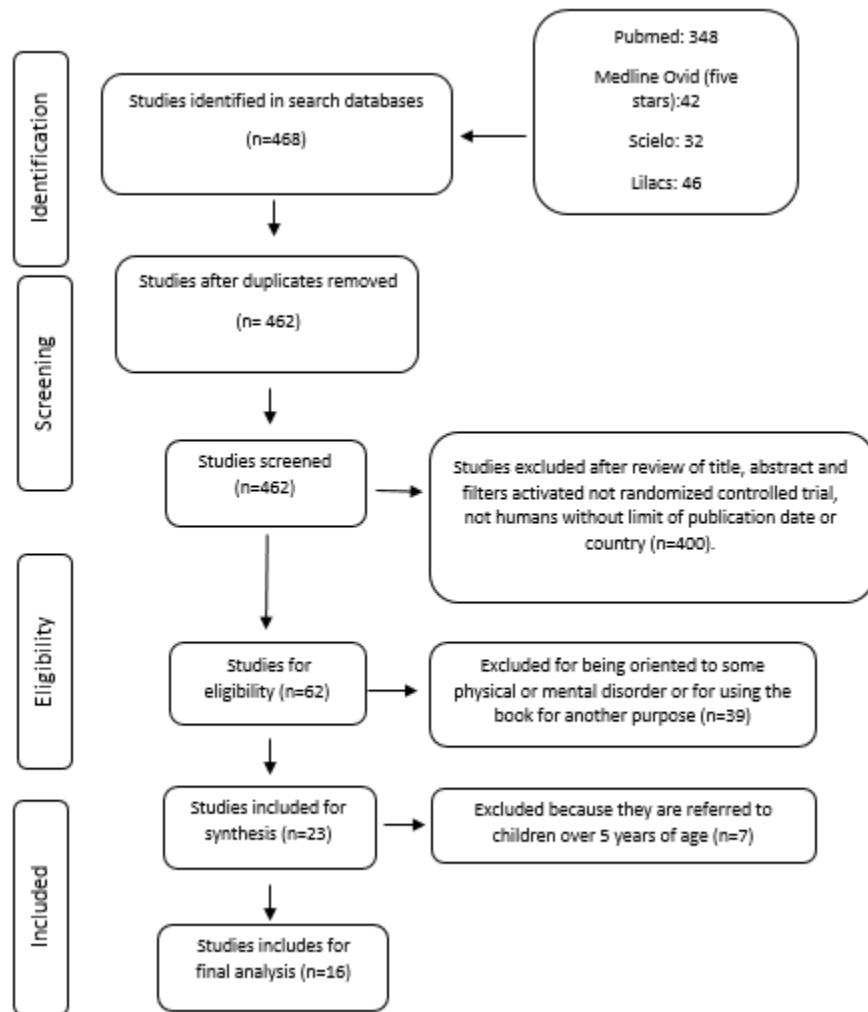


Figure 1. Flowchart of included and excluded studies

Study Characteristics

The general characteristics of the studies are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Six of the 16 studies were conducted in the USA, two in the United Kingdom, two in Canada, two in Australia, three in South Africa, and one in Brazil. The country's income level is presented according to the World Bank in countries with high income (Table 1) and medium or low income (Table 2). (21)

Evidence from high-income countries

In the studies carried out in high-income countries (table 1), the majority targeted those respective countries' low- and middle-income populations. Of the 12 studies, nine were randomized controlled trials, and the remaining three were interventions. The minimum age of the participating children was 6 months, and the maximum was 59 months. 11 of the studies were directed at and included parents and caregivers. Only

one study was addressed to educators. The books used in the interventions took several forms (book sharing, book reading, book distribution, and picture books), with book sharing being the most common. The developmental domains that benefited from the interventions were cognition, language, vocabulary, communication, and social and emotional interactions.

Except for the intervention conducted in Australia (where there were no clear benefits on whether or not books were used), the others demonstrated positive benefits in various areas of child development, particularly literacy, and reported physical and emotional gains.

Evidence from low- middle-income countries

Four studies in middle-income countries were conducted (table 2), one in Brazil and three in South Africa. All studies targeted the low- and middle-income populations of each country. The participants were mainly caregivers and children; the age range of the targeted children was from 14 to 48 months. Three studies were randomized controlled trials, and one was a cluster randomized controlled trial. The uses of the book were book lending, book sharing, and picture books. The children's main developmental gains were in language, concentration, cognitive, and socio-emotional development.

The findings show advantages in child-parent interactions, cognitive and socio-emotional

development, vocabulary gain, and promising future ideas to help middle-income children develop.

Context of book use at the Interventions

The different contexts in which the book is used in the interventions revealed that printed books are used in all of them, in 11 of them with the participation of the parents; in all, only the printed format is used, and in 9 of them, it is at home. The duration of the intervention was equitable between more and less than three months. Three interventions were aimed at educators, three were implemented in schools, and four were used in tandem with other resources; prevails in the findings, interventions were the use of the printed book, used only without additional tools, at home and with attendance of the parents (table 3).

Table 1. Included studies of high-income countries

Study and year	Country	Participants	Design	Children ages (M)	Main results	Book utilization	Outcome or construct measure
Murray et al., 2018(22)	UK	13 Children's Centers	Randomized controlled trial(RCT)	28-45	Parenting interventions of provision centers using books demonstrated benefits to child cognition, socio-emotional development, and behavior.	Book-sharing	Cognition, socio-emotional
Salo et al., 2016(23)	USA	38 fathers	RCT	Preschool	Fathers' speech that differed across contexts was positively associated with child vocabulary skills measured on the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory.	Book reading	Language
Namasivayam, 2015(24)	Canada	32 early childhood educators who worked in 31 licensed childcare centers	RCT	48-59	Children in the EG were more engaged in conversation about word meaning than comparison group children.	Shared book reading	Vocabulary
Rezzonico et al., 2015(25)	Canada	32 early childhood educators who worked in 31 licensed childcare centers and 129 children	RCT	48-59	Significant time Group interactions were observed for using educators' experiential reasoning questions, children's experiential reasoning responses, and the mean length of utterances of children's responses.	Book reading	Quality and complexity of language
Goldfeld et al., 2012(26)	Australia	630 parents and 563 children	RCT	48	The intervention and control G had similar outcomes at 4 years of age on all primary and secondary outcome measures.	Book distribution	(Intra syllabic, phonemic, and sound/letter knowledge, core, receptive, and expressive)
Piasta et al., 2012(27)	USA	Children enrolled in 85 preschool classrooms	RCT	Preschool	The long-term impacts of print referencing during preschool-shared reading indicated a sizeable, positive shift in the literacy trajectories of children for whom social and economic circumstances place.	Shared-book readings	Reading difficulties
Scott,2011(28)	USA	Parents and 51 infants	RCT	6	Labeling no-face objects individually in infancy facilitates discrimination and leads to the emergence of holistic neural representations that do not present with category-level labeling.	Picture book	Neural representations
Goldfeld et al., 2011(29)	Australia	Parents from 65 families of MCH clusters	RCT	24	Key messages and activities of an early literacy-promotion program relate to the number of literacy activities at home.	Book distribution	Language and communication

Tsybina et al., 2010(30)	USA	Twelve children were recruited from the waiting list of an organization coordinating preschool speech services.	RCT	22-41	The children's mothers confirmed the benefits of dialog book reading for learning target words.	Book-reading	Expressive vocabulary development
Bowyer,2008(31)	UK	152 children in 19 schools	RCT	56-57	Children showed an advantage over the O.L. group on literacy and phonological measures. In contrast, children in the O.L. group showed an edge over the P + R group on vocabulary and grammatical skills measures.	Book-reading	Oral language
Britto, 2001(32)	USA	126 African American mothers from the Newark site (NYFS)	RCT	27	The three dimensions of family literacy environment and preschoolers' emergent literacy skills. The relative importance of each size varied based on the skill being acquired.	Shared book reading	Receptive Vocabulary, Expressive Language, School Readiness
Jones,2000(33)	USA	Parents and children	RCT	2-24	The gift of a book during well-child visits increased the perception of parental receptiveness and physician helpfulness.	Book Distribution	Family literacy orientation

Table 2. Included studies of middle-income countries

Study and year	Country	Participants	Design	Children ages (M)	Main results	Book utilization	Outcome or construct measure
Weissler, et al, 2018(34)	Brazil	Parents and children part of the family program and childcare centers	RCT	24-48	Promoting parent-child reading benefits parent-child interactions and child language and cognitive development.	Book-lending	Language and cognitive
Dowdall et al., 2017(4)	South Africa	Caregivers of children from neighborhoods within the greater Khayelitsha region	RCT	23-27	Since the intervention is brief and modest levels of training, readily deliverable in LMIC contexts, a demonstration of benefit to the child's cognitive and socioemotional development would be significant.	Early Book Sharing, picture-book	Cognitive and socio-emotional
Murray et al., 2016(35)	South Africa	112 families identified in a defined area of Khayelitsha	RCT	14-16	Training in book sharing benefits infant cognitive development in low-middle-income countries.	Book-sharing	Cognitive and socioemotional
Vally et al, 2015(36)	South Africa	112 families were identified with a child of the appropriate age	RCT	14-16	On a standardized career report of infant vocabulary, compared to those in the control group, careers who received the intervention reported a significantly more significant increase in the number of words understood by their infants as well as a more significant increase in the number of words that their infant understood and could vocalize.	Book-sharing	Language and attention

Table 3. Context use of book

Study	Book at the intervention		Context			Intervention (Months)		Book Format		Interactions		
	Only book	Books with other tools	Home	School	Other	< 3	> 3	Printed	Electronic	Parents	Educators	Others
Murray et al., 2018	X				X		X	X		X		
Weisler et al., 2018	X		X				X	X		X		
Dowdall et al., 2017	X		X			X		X		X		
Murray et al., 2016	X		X			X		X		X		
Salo et al., 2016		X	X			X		X		X		
Namasivayam, 2015	X				X		X	X			X	
Rezzonico et al., 2015	X			X			X	X			X	
Vally et a, 2015	X		X			X		X		X		
Goldfeld et al., 2012		X	X				X	X				X
Piasta et al., 2012	X			X			X	X			X	
Scott,2011	X		X				X	X		X		
Goldfeld et al., 2011		X			X		X	X		X		
Tsybina et al., 2010	X		X			X		X		X		
Bowyer,2008		X		X		X		X				X
Britto, 2001	X		X				X	X		X		
Jones,2000	X				X		X	X		X		

Table 4. Main effects of RCT

Study	Influence in domains of development
Weisdeler et al., 2018	Children IG had higher receptive vocabulary scores (mean difference = 2.54, 95% CI: 1.10 - 3.97, P = .001
Murray et al., 2016	No training effect was found for either child Attention or Vocalizations during the book-sharing interaction 3.41 (0.99) vs. 3.62 (0.83).
Salo et al., 2016	Word types: Book sharing 9.78 IC 0.38-36.84 vs. Toy 4.61 IC 0.00-13.01.
Namasivayam, 2015	Children in EG were more engaged in conversation about word meaning than comparison group children—experimental group 13.80 SD (12.2) Comparison group 9.24 SD (7.3).
Vally et a, 2015	A significantly more significant number of words understood by their infant (post-intervention mean scores of 55.82, SD = 8.77 vs. 44.46, SD = 9.88.
Goldfeld et al., 2012	For language, the differences were 1.6 (95% CI, -1.1 to 4.3; P=.25) for core, 0.8 (95% CI, -2.0 to 3.7; P=.56) for receptive, and 1.4 (95% CI, -1.4 to 4.2; P=.32) for expressive scores.
Piasta et al., 2012	Children in the high-dose STAR condition had higher word reading, spelling, and comprehension outcomes than children in the comparison condition (p < .025).
Scott, 2011	For infants trained at the individual level, analyses of the peak P1 latency revealed a significant main effect of orientation (F (1, 11) = 6.67, p = .03, η^2 = .38).
Goldfeld et al., 2011	Similar vocabulary (adjusted mean difference: -2.0 [95% confidence interval: -6.2 to 2.2]; P= .36
Bowyer, 2008	The GF in Early Word Reading at t3 was significant (difference 0.262, 95% CI: lower 0.008, higher 0.517, p < .05).
Britto, 2001	Children's expressive language was associated with the language and verbal interactions dimension (F [5,103] = 26.18, p < .0001).

DISCUSSION

The pandemic has demanded great efforts from society to identify the great wealth of books for child development during the pandemic is important knowledge for parents, caregivers, and teachers.

The use of books in their different formats can contribute to counteracting the negative effects of the pandemic on children.

This scoping review identifies the benefits of using books in interventions that promote early childhood development. In both high- and middle-income countries, interventions

are focused on low- and middle-income groups; this is understood as a response to concerns about delays in the development of children. The use of books alone or in conjunction with other resources only benefits children; no adverse effect was reported in the literature. In the modern world, where technology plays a crucial role, printed books play a fundamental role in those communities where technological development is still lagging.

Interventions that use books bring benefits regardless of the children's socioeconomic

level or the country to which they belong. Still, it calls for attention as most studies are conducted in high-income countries, also showing the need to increase this type of intervention even more in low- and middle-income countries.

Regarding the age of the children receiving the interventions, we restricted it to 0-59 months. This is a critical period when important neuronal, physical, and cognitive processes develop, representing the future tools to be used in adulthood. (37)

Here we analyzed studies with designs that could verify with scientific rigor the benefits of books in child development. This analysis allowed us to highlight the fundamental role of the family when using books, reinforcing the importance of policies that favor those friendly family environments for the development of children. (38)(39)

The interventions analyzed showed a great variety of ways to use the book, from book-sharing to books with pictures to books to read; even just distributing books to the participants showed benefits for development.

It was interesting to learn about the wide range of benefits of the intervention's target development areas, from socio-emotional gains to neural representations, with most of them referring to literacy. Communication, vocabulary, attention, language quality, and complexity of language are all improved. The book showed benefits a few weeks after birth for both the child and the caregivers.

Aspects like poverty, low maternal education, and poor stimulation are essential determinants of poor development. Simple things like having a book and hearing a story from an adult are frequently lacking in the lives of many children, especially in poorer communities. (40) The evidence is strong on the importance of expanding investment in human development to include scalable interventions during the first and most sensitive years of life to have a positive return at later ages. (41–43) The studies reported that books are a practical tool, not expensive, that favors and stimulates multiple areas such as socio-emotional development, learning new words, vocalization, expression, neural connections, communication, and ,and family interaction.

One of the great benefits of using books is the enrichment of the interaction between children and caregivers, which brings cognitive benefits and reinforces socio-affective areas crucial for later adult life. Using books at home provides children with one of the most valuable tools for improving their school learning by expanding their vocabulary, information, comprehension skills, and imagination, broadening their horizons in history and geography, and understanding the significance of evidence. (44)

The closure of schools in most countries covers the elementary level, which means they have affected very young children. From the beginning of the pandemic, it was considered that schools could be places of

multiple infections and that the children could later transmit the virus to their relatives; but, review studies report that transmission from children to adults is lower than transmission from adults to children(45,46,55–58,47–54)Educational places are environments where children have more stimulation and develop essential skills. Hence, the use of the book significantly influences academic achievement, independently of other factors. (59) According to some studies, the most rigorous book-reading studies have been conducted in classroom settings with teachers and researchers implementing the book-reading program (60). But this isn't always true because the interventions done at home and in centers with children and their caregivers are very effective.

Strengths and Limitations of our Work

Some of the strengths and weaknesses of this review have to do with how it was done, while others have to do with how important the theme looked at is.

We want to point to the following strengths: a) the fact that we made a comprehensive identification of benefits from using books in interventions that aim to promote early childhood development; b) we identified book use diversity; c) we highlighted the importance of using books at home and not only at school and child care centers to

improve family/child interactions; d) we identified this type of intervention as a low-cost strategy with high potential to help overcome social, economic, political, and family iniquities.

Concerning the limitations of this review, we found that: a) most studies were done in high-income countries and focused on low- to middle-income groups, and b) our review only looked at the results of interventions and didn't look at other types of sources that could show how using books affects the development of children.

Based on the findings, we can infer that effective interventions that purport to use books for this age group should rely on the use of printed books since their low cost facilitates their use; there are still many regions where having access to electronic books is difficult and expensive; also, books with images, where the text is associated with the image, which favors the interaction and participation of parents or caregivers. The facilities must provide families with the necessary printed materials, since in many homes buying books is not a priority; and finally we reiterate the urgent need to increase the use of books in low-income countries, since studies of its benefits are predominantly in high- and middle-income countries.

CONCLUSION

The potential of using books in times of pandemic or mobility restrictions is large and rich in benefits to stimulate the correct development of children. It is a fundamental tool to consider for parents and caregivers in contexts of mobility limitations and school closures imposed as protective measures during the pandemic. Our work aimed to map existing literature on interventions with books towards child development.

Parents, teachers, and caregivers must recognize and use books in all their formats. We have found an important gap in the literature and suggest doing scientific research to fill it.

We consider that this work has paved the way for future research, and an essential next step if we want to take this work further would be to do a systematic review in this field.

Author Contributions

JC, RD, JO, and FM made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; the drafting of the work; its critical revision for important intellectual content; provided final approval of the version to be published.

Declaration of interests

We declare no competing interests.

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