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Reading: Good for the Brain, Good for the Heart

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Background

- Babies with congenital heart disease (CHD) are at increased risk for neurodevelopmental delays.
- Hospitalized infants face environmental stimuli, not all of which are positive.
- We aimed to identify opportunities for positive developmental stimulation and parent interaction.

PICOT Question

- How does reading to infants with CHD affect neurodevelopment and parental involvement compared to infants not exposed to reading?

Methods

- Assessed current state of patient environment and parental involvement via direct observation
- Conducted literature review over current evidence

Evidence

- Reading reduces the risk of future language delays and promotes cognitive development. (Boissel 2022 & Neri, 2021).
- Reading helps parents cope with the stress of hospitalization and promotes positive engagement with parents as the primary caregiver, encourages a positive method of bonding that can carry over after discharge (Boissel, 2022; Jain, 2021; McMahon, 2020; & Neri, 2021).
- NICUs that implemented a reading program/library saw an increase in number of parents reading to their infants (Jain, 2021 & McMahon, 2020).



Figure 1- Books collected during book drive

"Reading aloud with young children is one of the most effective ways to expose them to enriched language and to encourage specific early literacy skills needed to promote school readiness." - American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021



Figure 2- Educational bookmark given to families at the bedside

Interventions

February 2023: Heart Center Book Drive collection of over 200 books in different languages

March 2023: Developed a bilingual bookmark for families to understand benefits of reading to infants

April 2023: Conducted a 4-week pilot program providing patients under the age of one with books

May 2023: Collaborated with nursing students from Baylor University School of Nursing with their book drive and disseminated literature review findings on campus.

Figure 3- Timeline of EBP projects: Book drives, bookmark, and pilot program

Conclusion & Next Steps

- Reading to infants may improve parental attachment by increasing participation in and comfort with their child's care
- Create a reading program which includes parent education and a book for each infant admitted to the Heart Center
- Consider annual book drive or donor program sponsorship for sustainability

Figure 4- References

References: see QR code

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