

Better Brains for Babies

*...You can make
a difference!*



Georgia Division of
Family and Children Services

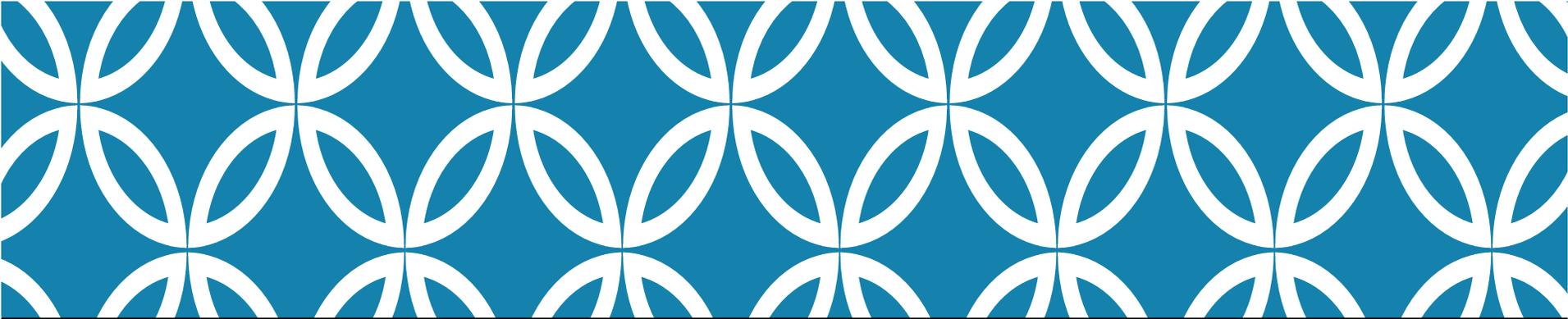
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INTRODUCTION

I.1



LIGHT UP YOUR BABY'S BRAIN

THROUGH LANGUAGE PLAY & ENGAGEMENT

Webinar Facilitator:

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Better Brains for Babies Community Outreach Educator

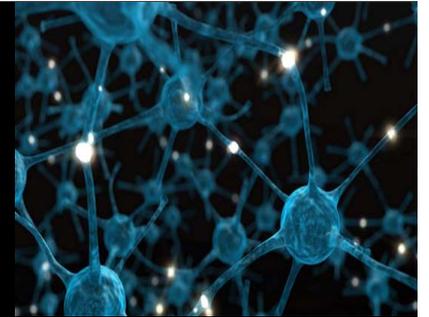


SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ❖ **Describe the relationship between brain development and language skill acquisition**
- ❖ **Explain how intentional language engagement supports infant's holistic development**
- ❖ **Explore strategies to actively engage infants in meaningful language experiences**

Brain Basic #1

MAKING CONNECTIONS



- A child is born with over 1 billion neurons (brains cells)
- The neurons make connections with each other to make up the wiring of the brain.
- These connections are created from **EXPERIENCE!**

Brain Basic #2

EARLY EXPERIENCES



- Have an impact on the architecture of brain
- Affect the way the brain is wired
- The human brain adapts to what it is exposed to
- “The brain is pattern-seeking” – Dr. Becky Bailey

Brain Basic #3

CONNECTIONS CREATE ABILITIES

- Connections frequently used are retained
- Other connections rarely used will be eliminated
- This process is called **PRUNING** or **REFINING CONNECTIONS**



USE IT
or LOSE
IT!





Pruning: Refining Connections

- ▶ **Necessary part of brain development**
- ▶ **Eliminates unused connections**
- ▶ **Helps the brain be more efficient**



Brain Basic #4

SUPPORTIVE INTERACTIONS

- Infants need parents and caregivers who intentionally go beyond meeting their basic care needs
- The interactions an infant receives have a great impact on later development and learning throughout life
- Early adult-child interactions form **ATTACHMENT**

Securely attached children tend to...



- ▶ **View the world as trustworthy**
- ▶ **Better regulate stress responses**
- ▶ **Be more independent at 18 months**
- ▶ **Be better problem solvers at age 2**
- ▶ **Be more successful with friendships**
- ▶ **Perform better academically**





*Language
Acquisition*

Language and the Brain

- ▶ **Learning language requires sensory input**
- ▶ **Listening develops before speaking**
- ▶ **Repetition forms language connections in the auditory cortex**



LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- Infants who are spoken to often, learn almost 300 more words by age two. (Source: Brain Insights)
- Research findings suggests that children should hear approximately 30,000 words a day. (Source: American Educator)
- These numbers are informative, but not the total picture. Think quality, not solely quantity!

*“Let’s talk
Strategy”*



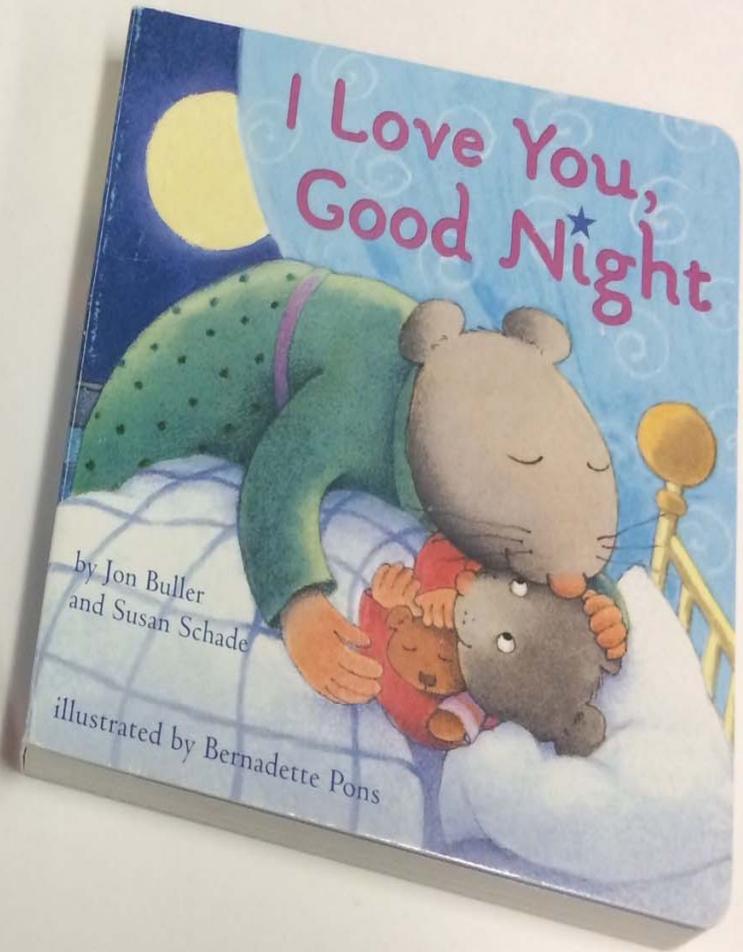
Helping Infants Learn Language

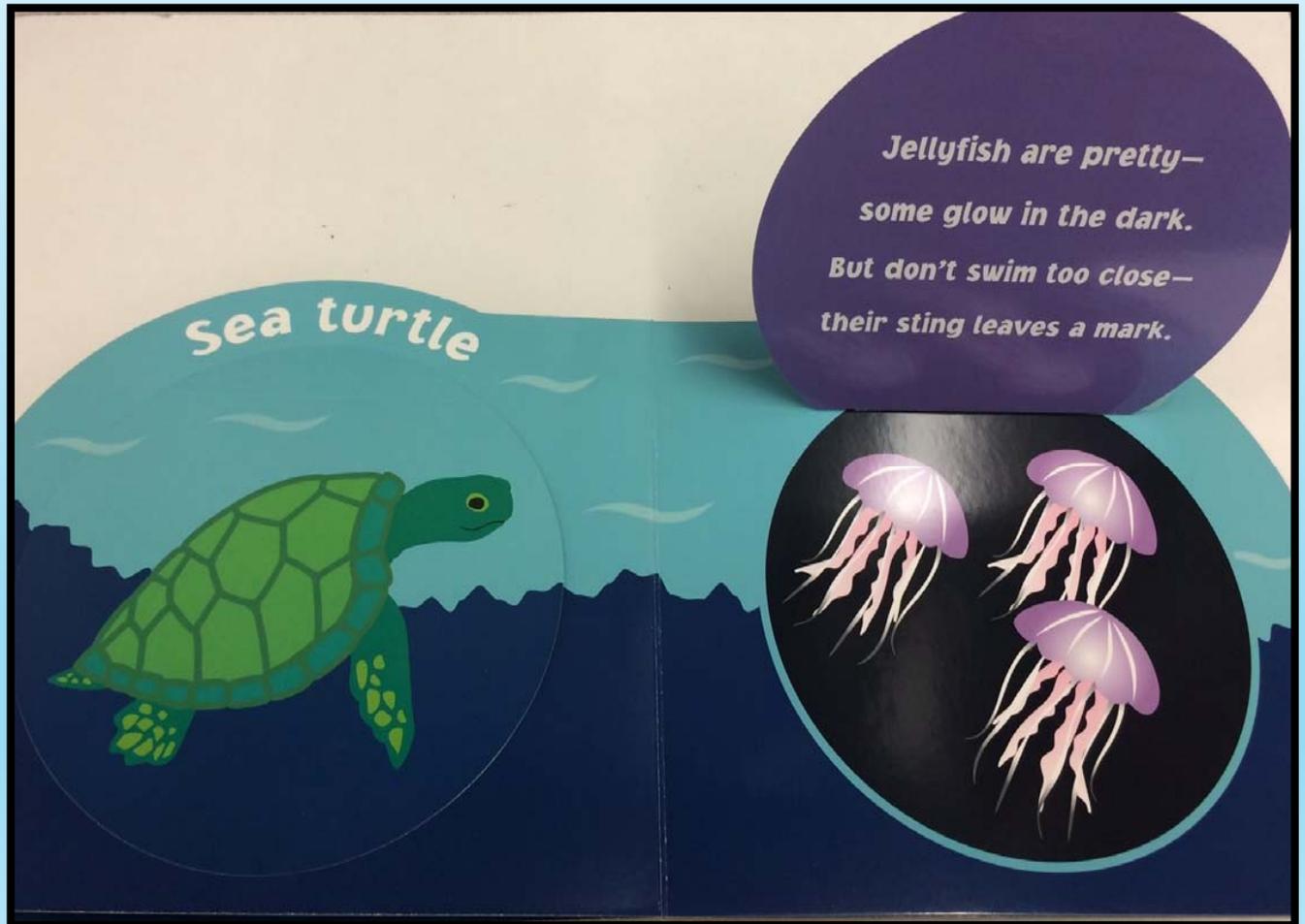
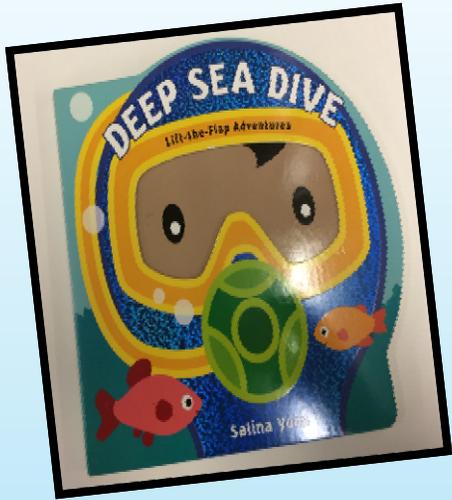
- ▶ **Infant-directed speech**
 - **Higher pitch**
 - **Longer vowel sounds**
 - **Exaggerated rhythms**
- ▶ **Repetition**
- ▶ **Turn-taking**



HIGH-QUALITY BOOKS

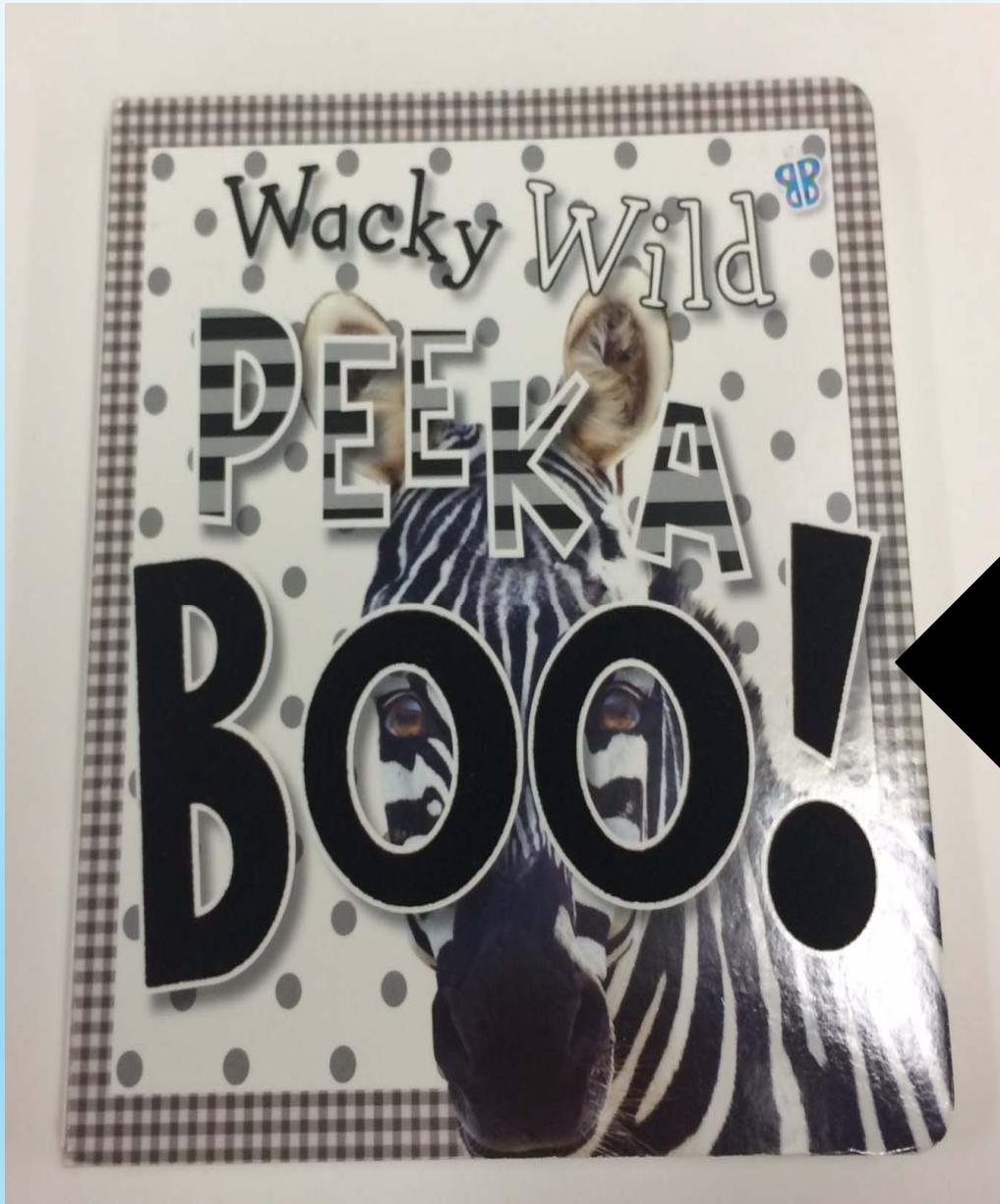
- Appropriate vocabulary
- Clear illustrations
- Text and Illustrations are synchronized
- Repetitive phrases
- Opportunities for sensory engagement





sea turtle

*Jellyfish are pretty—
some glow in the dark.
But don't swim too close—
their sting leaves a mark.*



VELVET LETTERS!

READING TO INFANTS

- Read when relaxed
- Use varied voices
- Exaggerate words and phrases
- Give infants a chance to respond

INFANT SIGNING

- Signing may spark critical thinking
- Research suggests a correlation between number of gestures and later vocabulary.

www.babysignlanguage.com

TALK TO ME!

Hold conversations with infants all day long.

Get in the habit of having a conversation!

How does this support brain and language development?

How does this support the holistic development of an infant?

Mirror, Mirror!

Make funny faces and sounds for infants to observe. Watch them as they try to imitate you. Be sure to let the infant lead the way too!

How does this support brain and language development?

How does this support the holistic development of an infant?

How I'm Feeling!

Match your reactions to the emotions the infant is expressing. It is important to tune into their feelings and be responsive.

How does this support brain and language development?

How does this support the holistic development of an infant?

TEXTURE TIME!

Provide lots of opportunity for infants to explore many different textures within various environments.

How does this support brain and language development?

How does this support the holistic development of an infant?

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- ❖ **Explore strategies to actively engage infants in meaningful language experiences**

Consistency



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THANK YOU!

Contact Us



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Better Brains for Babies at
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706-542-7566

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SOURCES

Better Brains for Babies: www.bbbgeorgia.org

Brain Insights: www.braininsightsonline.com

Mind in the Making: www.mindinthemaking.org

Conscious Discipline: www.lovingguidance.com

Baby Sign Language.com- [Find free printable sign cards here!](#)

Parenting Counts: www.parentingcounts.org

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