



The “Super Skill” for School Readiness

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When we think of the early skills that prepare young children for academic success, we often think of things like math or early literacy skills.

It's true that a child's preschool math skills predict their success in that subject later on, just as their early literacy skills predict their later reading ability [1]. But imagine a skill that affects much more than its own success. Imagine a “super skill” that sets the stage for young children to succeed in many different areas. Does such a skill exist? According to new research it does, and it's right under our noses – **language**.

New research proves that language doesn't just build on itself – it also plays a key role in the development of other important skills. It turns out that a child's level of language skills before entering school predicts their success in both math and in reading, and even has an effect on social skills development. [1]

How Does Language Affect Other Skills?

It's easy to see the connection between language skills and other areas of development if we consider language as a kind of “toolkit” for learning. For example, one part of language is comprehension, or the ability to understand spoken language. We use our comprehension skills to understand number concepts (which is key for learning math), as well as vocabulary concepts (which is key to literacy skills).

Another part of language is expression, or the ability to use spoken language. We use our expressive language skills to connect with others, which may explain why stronger language skills support social skills development.

Language learning is key!

This new research shows how important it is to make language a key focus when preparing young children for school. When we promote a strong foundation of language skills, we open the door for success in many different areas of children's lives.

References

Pace, A., et al. (2018). Measuring success: Within and cross-domain predictors of academic and social trajectories in elementary school. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*.



Build language and literacy every day

For tips to promote the language and literacy skills that prepare your child for school success, take a look at our [2019 Preschool Language and Literacy Calendar](#).

About The Hanen Centre

Founded in 1975, The Hanen Centre is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization with a global reach. Its mission is to provide parents, caregivers, early childhood educators and speech-language pathologists with the knowledge and training they need to help young children develop the best possible language, social and literacy skills. This includes children who have or are at risk for language delays, those with developmental challenges such as autism, and those who are developing typically.

For more information, please visit www.hanen.org.

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