Early Literacy Promotion Using Automated Hovering Among Young Minority Children

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OBJECTIVE: To determine feasibility, acceptability, and explore outcomes of behavioral economic (BE) strategies to increase parent-child shared reading within a Reach Out and Read program. METHODS: We conducted rapid-cycle interviews with 10 parents to assess text messages followed by an 8-week randomized controlled trial of 3 BE strategies at 2 urban primary care practices: daily text messages (texting); daily text messages and regret messaging (regret); or daily text messages, regret messaging, and lottery participation (lottery). Parent-child dyads were eligible if children were <24 months old, Medicaid-eligible, and had access to phones capable of receiving and sending text messages. Parents completed the Read Subscale of the StimQ and Parenting Stress Index-short form (PSI-SF) pre- and postintervention, MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory (CDI), Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), and a satisfaction measure postintervention. Differences between groups were assessed using intention-to-treat analysis. RESULTS: Of 45 dyads randomized, 41 (91%) completed the study. Most participants were Black with incomes <$55,000. Parents reported reading on average 4 d/wk with no change in the reading frequency over time. StimQ scores increased over time, but there were no significant differences in StimQ, PSI-SF, CDI, and DECA scores between groups. Parents in all 3 groups reported satisfaction (3.8/5.0) with the intervention. CONCLUSIONS: Implementation of BE strategies in 2 Reach Out and Read programs was feasible, near acceptable, and improved home reading environment scores. Future study should investigate BE strategies vis-à-vis usual care and be of sufficient duration and intensity to engage participants to assess its impact on patient and parent outcomes.

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