“Nati per leggere”

www.natiperleggere.it

Barcelona, 26/05/2006

Stefania Manetti
Paediatrician
The beginning.....

In 1999 in Assisi, Italy:

A.C.P: “Associazione Culturale pediatri”
Cultural Association of Paediatricians

C.S.B: “Centro per la Salute del bambino”
Centre for Child’s Health

A.I.B: “Associazione Italiana Biblioteche”
Italian Library Association
The beginning.....

A.C.P: Cultural Association of Paediatricians

www.acp.it

3000 Paediatricians organized in local groups.
Activities:

Training, research, publishing, and support of national and regional health programmes.

ACP’s main mission is training paediatricians to:
- Know
- Know how
- Know how to be
The beginning.....

CSB: Child’s Health Centre:
www.csbonlus.org

Social organization founded in 1999 by a group of different professionals interested in the various fields of child’s health
The beginning.....

A.I.B: Italian Library Association

The professional association of Italian librarians. (4000 librarians). Founded in 1930, AIB is the only general library association in Italy, the only National Association Member of IFLA, and by far the oldest and largest association from this field in Italy.
The beginning:

the international context:

March 2004: "Children and Youth Unit, World Bank, Washington DC, USA:

**Literacy:**

- the ability to solve problems of increasing difficulties which imply the comprehension of a written text.

  or

- Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.

- Study on the association between literacy levels and economic growth measured in terms of GNP.

- 14 rich, industrialized OCSE countries (U.S.A, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Japan and Australia).
The International Context:

- March 2004: "Children and Youth Unit, World Bank, Washington DC, USA:

1. In the last 35 years the differences in literacy have been responsible for a 55% difference in the increase of GNP (Gross National Product).

2. These differences in literacy abilities are mainly due to differences in women's literacy levels.
The International Context:

- March 2004: "Children and Youth Unit, World Bank, Washington DC, USA:

  - These effects on literacy levels need about 30-40 years to emerge

  - What counts are the literacy levels of middle and lower classes of population.
The International Context:

- March 2004: "Children and Youth Unit, World Bank, Washington DC, USA:
  - Literacy influences productivity
  - The educational system is important
  - The ability to preserve one’s literacy levels is very important.
The context in Italy:

58.000.000 : Italian population (Istat 2001) :
8.000.000 under 15 years of age.

50% of children 6-10 years of age don't read books (non scholastic)

23% of Italians don't have books in their home

• 2.000.000 people are illiterate
% Population at first level of literacy abilities

SIALS: Seconda Indagine Internazionale sulle Competenze Alfabetiche degli Adulti
Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione e Centro Europeo dell'Educazione
Average literacy score of Population Aged 17-25

Figure 1: Average Literacy Score of Population Aged 17-25 Relative to the Cross-Section Mean
Is promoting literacy so important for health?

A problem in learning to read in a child implies automatically a learning problem in all other academic areas.

- Low self-esteem
- School drop outs
- Increase of a poverty cycle
- Unemployment
Is promoting literacy so important for health?

• Children are borned with all their neurones already formed.
• Connections in part are established and elaborated after birth, reaching a peak count by 3 years of age.
• Half of these synapses are lost by the age of 15. Unused neural connections are pruned while there is a selective strengthening of those that are used.
Is promoting literacy so important for health?

Recent evidence suggests that this sensory pruning is directed, in large part, by the child’s experience.

The child’s experience, like a sculptor carving a complex statue from a large block of stone, shapes the child’s brain.
Objectives of NPL

• Emergent literacy promotion through the promotion of reading aloud to children from the first year of life.
Implied professionals

• Primary care paediatricians
• Librarians
• Voluntary readers.
Implied professionals

• Primary care paediatricians:
  Give books or promote reading aloud to parents during well-child visits from 6 months to 5-6 years of age
Implied professionals

• **Librarians:** “if NPL would not have been born without paediatricians, it would not live without librarians”.

• **Organization of moments in libraries for parents and professionals regarding how, what and when to read aloud.**

• **Organization of appropriate spaces for little readers and their parents.**

• **Advices on good age appropriate books.**
Implied professionals

Voluntary readers:
Read aloud in waiting rooms, libraries, or other places, in order to:

• Show parents how even little children enjoy listening.
• Show that reading aloud is a very good way to spend time with children.
• Show parents how they can share books with their children.
• Make enjoyable even waiting for a doctor’s visit
# National and local structures:

| Region     | Altro | Altre strutture sanitarie | Associazioni | Biblioteche | Cooperative | Educatori | Genitori | Gruppi pediatri | Istituzioni | Lottatori | Librerie | Ospedali | Pediatri | Sistemi | Somma regionale |
|------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Abruzzo    | 1     | 1                          | 1            | 1           |             | 1         |           |                 |             |           |          |          |          |         | 4          |
| Basilicata |       | 1                          | 3            |             |             |           |           |                 |             |           |          |          |          |         | 4          |
| Calabria   | 2     | 1                          |             |             |             |           |           |                 |             |           |          |          |          |         | 3          |
| Campania   |       | 4                          | 1            | 1           |             | 1         |           |                 |             |           |          |          |          |         | 3          |
| E. Romagna | 2     | 1                          | 32           | 5           | 6           | 14        | 7         | 3               | 8           | 2         |          |          |          |         | 83        |
| FVG        | 1     | 17                         |              |             |             |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 23        |
| Lazio      | 3     | 1                          | 3            | 4           |             | 2         | 3         | 6               |             |           |          |          |          |         | 25        |
| Liguria    |       | 1                          |              |             |             |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 6          |
| Lombardia  | 5     | 2                          | 14           | 3           | 1           |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 53        |
| Marche     |       | 1                          | 1            | 1           | 1           |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 5          |
| Molise     |       | 1                          |              |             |             | 1         | 1         |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 3          |
| Piemonte   | 1     | 1                          | 20           | 1           | 2           |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 30        |
| Puglia     |       | 1                          | 3            | 2           |             | 1         | 2         |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 10        |
| Sardegna   | 1     | 1                          | 3            |             | 2           |           |           |                 |              |           |          | 8         | 33       | 3         |
| Sicilia    |       | 1                          | 1            | 2           |             | 2         | 2         |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 10        |
| Toscana    | 3     | 1                          | 4            | 2           | 2           | 1         |           |                 |              |           |          | 16        | 26       | 4         |
| Trentino   |       | 3                          |              |             |             |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 3         |
| Umbria     |       | 1                          | 1            | 1           |             |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 3         |
| Valle d’Aosta | 0   | 0                          |              |             |             |           |           |                 |              |           |          |          |          |         | 0         |
| Veneto     |       | 1                          | 4            | 11          | 2           | 6         | 5         | 1               | 3           | 1         |          | 4         | 38       | 38        |

| Somma adesioni | 16 | 2 | 18 | 119 | 8 | 28 | 28 | 2 | 28 | 18 | 13 | 2 | 29 | 21 | 332 | 520 |
## Financing (€)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>343,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>314,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>537,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>627,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2004</td>
<td>1,823,025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project’s Implementation

• October 2000:
  • ROR (Reach out and Read-USA)-Dr. Perry Klass participates at ACP’S national conference.
  • Beginning of a collaboration between the two projects both born within primary care health services.
Project’s Implementation

• May 2001:

National ROR conference in Boston NPL is presented as a newborn European project in paediatric primary care.
Project’s Implementation

• Dr. Perry Klass has been in Italy different times and in different regions with the aim of enforcing our project also through the scientific evidences accumulated in the last 16 years by R.O.R.
The first book for NPL:

[Image of a book titled "Guarda che faccia"]
The first book for NPL:
The first book for NPL:
The first book for NPL:

IU-HUU!
هاي!
YIPPEE!
J ЧПИ!
VIVA!
咿呀!
The first book for NPL:

UEH! UEH!
ووب!
VOO-HOO!
ШМРЦ!
BUU!
哇哇!
The first book for NPL:

UFF!
فوأ!
РООН!
ЧФ!
¡JOPE!!
呸!
The first book for NPL:

OOO! HOO!
هوو ألا!
UHH! UHH!
OX!
OOOOH!
吧嗒！
The first book for NPL:

ups!
وأ وأ!
У-У!
ЧПС!
о-о!
呀!
Implementation of NPL

24 / 36 mesi
- Ai bambini di questa età piace:
  - girare le pagine da soli
  - completare la frase di una storia che conoscono
  - indicare le figure e dire che cosa rappresentano
  - scegliere il libro che vuole tenere il libro in mano e raccontare la storia a modo proprio
  - ascoltare storie divertenti con voci buffe, rumori o versi di animali

12 / 24 mesi
- Ai bambini di questa età piace:
  - sentire leggere e rileggere lo stesso libro
  - la lettura all’ora della nanna
  - libri che parlano di animali, di bambini, delle cose di ogni giorno
  - storie corte, con poche parole

6 / 12 mesi
- Ai bambini di questa età piacciono:
  - libri che si possono manipolare
  - disegni con bambini e piccoli animali
  - rime e filastrocche
Implementation of NPL
Implementation of NPL

Special edition for NPL

Dormi tranquillo, piccolo coniglio
Una storia narrata da Stefan Gemmel
Illustrata da Marie-José Sacré
ad Hannah

è un libro bohem

Per maggiori informazioni vi invitiamo a consultare la pagina:
<http://www.als.it/adappling.htm>
Territorial distribution of local projects in Italy:

128 questionnaires:

• 97 from areas in Northern Italy
• 12 from areas in central Italy
• 19 from areas from southern Italy
Cooperation: a good way to optimize resources

- Libraries and provinces: Brescia, Ravenna, Trento, some libraries in Lumbardy and Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

- Regions: Basilicata, Sardinia, Piedmont.

- Health Districts: Ferrara, Asolo, Messina
How is the project structured:

Local Level:
- Depending on the human resources available (paediatricians, librarians, voluntary readers): promotion of reading aloud.
- Local project’s coordinators try to inform and involve local public or private institutions.

National Level:
- Project’s supervision (National Coordination of NPL)
- Information and supplier of material (CSB)
How is the project structured:

Actions of the National Coordination of NPL:

- Secretariat work and web site ([www.natiperleggere.it](http://www.natiperleggere.it))
- Training
- Sensitization
- Collaborations with others
- Research of the project’s effectiveness
- Monitoring of local projects
Recognitions:

NPL has been supported by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research.

NPL is part of the “6+1 Health promoting regional projects” in Piedmont, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Lazio and Basilicata in which 7 health priorities have been identified and supported:

1. Reduction of smoke in parents and pregnant women
2. Increase in the use of folic acid during the gestational and pre-gestational period
3. Increase in the prevalence of breast feeding in the first 6 months of life
4. Increase in the prevalence of “Back to sleep” position
5. Increase in the prevalence of vaccinations as measles
6. Increase in the use of appropriate safe belts or seats in cars
7. Increase in the prevalence of reading aloud starting from 6 months of age.
Coordination according to levels:

- Secure funding to institutionalize the programme
- Identify support for books for x n. of children
- Provide for ongoing staff training
- Identify literary resources in the community
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Research based on the survey model
Collaborations with publishers:

Discounts from 35% to 50% on books for NPL

Special edition catalogues for NPL
Significative experiences

• Little experiences of great social impact:
  • Sciacca, Sicily
  • Secondigliano and Scampia, Campania
  • Capodarco’s community, Campania
  • Single libraries or health districts in Piedmont and Veneto with a great continuity and effectiveness
### Subjects and structures involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paediatricians</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools (Kindergarten) (3-6 yrs.)</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery schools (6m.-3 yrs.)</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others: (health professionals, parents, school libraries, publishers, playing spaces)</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local project tend to involve different professionals or non professionals in the promotion of reading aloud.
## Areas involved by NPL:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provinces</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City or town councils</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others*</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totale</strong></td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 70% are the aggregations of more city councils.

15% of the Italian population lives in areas where NPL has been structured.
Monitoring of activities regarding reading aloud promotion in primary care settings

Data elaborated by:
Luca Ronfani
Centro per la Salute del Bambino/ONLUS e Epidemiology Unit, IRCCS Burlo Garofalo, Trieste
1. Objectives:

evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions for promoting reading aloud in families:
   a measure of the benefits.
Strategies’ evaluation:

2 modalities:

1) Demonstrate the effects of the intervention directly on the outcome:
   • Language development
   • School success
   • Development of emergent literacy abilities
   • Improvement of child/parent relation
Strict and complex study:

• 2 groups: intervention and control
• Randomized study (casual distribution in 2 groups of children and parents)
• High costs
• Elaborated tests for children
• Long period of study
• Not useful for monitoring
2) Demonstrate how the intervention modifies parents’ behaviour regarding reading aloud, hypothesizing that this change can modify the outcome:

- Reading aloud becomes a favourite activity for parents
- Increases the number of books for children in the home
- Increases the number of days of reading aloud.
- Increases the parents’ attitude regarding reading aloud in the home.
Measure of the changes in parents' attitude regarding reading aloud

Scientific evidences have already shown how parents' attitude is associated to language improvement in children and to the development of emergent literacy abilities.

• Simple design (before/after)
• Primary care setting with a simple survey submitted to parents by paediatricians
• Simple and low cost: good for resources available for NPL
• Useful in the project’s monitoring in time.
2. Materials and methods

• Questionnaire:

• Submitted by family paediatricians during well child visits.

• Submitted to all parents of children aged from 6 months to 6 years.

• Design before/after
The questionnaire is able to:

1. Evaluate parents’ attitude regarding reading aloud

2. Verify through a design before/after if the intervention:
   • increases the attitude towards reading aloud
   • increases the number of books in the home.
3) Verify how the attitude and its improvement are influenced by socio-economic and ethnic characteristics.

4) Verify how the family has been exposed to reading aloud activities (by paediatricians or others...) and to materials regarding NPL and if all this increases parents’ attitude.
Attitude towards reading aloud → present if:

Positive answer (names a book or reading) to at least one of these questions:

• What are the 3 things you prefer doing with your child in these days?

• Is there something you do now with your child which could help him/her have success in school?

• What do you do to help your child to sleep at night?

At least 5 days of reading aloud per week
3. Results

At the moment we have data regarding the “before” study in the following areas:

- Palermo (1999-2000)
- Napoli (2000)
- Cesena (2000)
- Sciacca (2001)
- Trieste (2001-2002)
- Terni (2003)
- Catanzaro (2004)
• 2961 questionnaires have been collected; 91 excluded as not completed as requested
The survey was carried out by family paediatricians, except in Ferrara (survey carried out by a researcher in a nursery school).

Medium age of children: 2.7 years
lower in Trieste (2.4)
higher in Cesena (3.5)

Interviewed: 92% mothers
Educational level of mothers (medium number of years)

The difference in the medium number of years of school between areas of Southern Italy and Centre-Northern Italy is statistically significant (medium 11.07 vs 12.6 years, p<0.001)
Attitude towards reading aloud

1) Names “reading a book” among the three things that:

- prefers doing with his child
- does to help his child to go to sleep
- does with the child to help him in school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Centre/North</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) Number of days per week when books are read:

- Read at least 5 days/week
  - South: 34%
  - Centre/North: 42%

- Reads 1-4 days per week
  - South: 37%
  - Centre/North: 35%

- Doesn't read
  - South: 50%
  - Centre/North: 20%
3) Attitude towards reading aloud:

South 12%
Centre/North 28%
Parents exposed to materials or information regarding the project

• 20% of the population interviewed had been encouraged in reading aloud by a health professional or others (friends, relatives and in less degree in nursery schools or newspapers)

• 7% of the population interviewed had been already informed regarding NPL (materials, information or the gift of a book.)
Analysis of the factors which influence reading aloud in parents

Reading aloud is more frequent in families:

- Interviewed in Centre-northern areas
- Encouraged by health professionals (paediatricians,..)
- With older children
- With one child
- Parents with higher educational levels.
6. Some conclusions:

- The attitude towards reading aloud in Italy is low (20%) and could and should be improved.
- There is an important difference between North (30%), Centre (20%) and Southern (10%) areas.
Some conclusions:

• The age of the child influences parents’ attitude towards reading aloud. This can be improved through a good information to parents.

• The paediatrician’s advice improves parents’ attitude to reading aloud.
The future of NPL...

- 11.7% of Italian families are poor; 25% in Southern Italy up to 40% in some southern areas (in 2003 the relative poverty index was of 21.6%) (Istat 2004).

- Immigrants present in Italy: 2,500,000 of which 21.3% are under 18 years of age (532,500). (Caritas, migrantes, 2004). These numbers double every 4 years.

- Interventions like NPL, of proven effectiveness, are very useful tools in parenting support.
The future of NPL:
“...so maybe we can say aloud to our governments that it is better to invest in education rather than in building bridges...”

Marzo 2004: “Children and Youth Unit, Banca Mondiale, Washington DC, USA”