

## #1

**HOW WE GATHERED DATA FOR OUR FIRST MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT ON BOOK-SHARING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

A book-sharing study with a group of carers (mainly mothers) in Cape Town surfaced several notable findings (Vally et al, 2015\*). This infographic explains how that study was conducted.

At Mikhulu Trust, 'carers' means any primary caregiver, and in this series of infographics, we refer to 'carers' throughout.

**The study on dialogic book-sharing used a randomised controlled trial.**

**WHAT IS DIALOGIC BOOK-SHARING?**

Dialogic book-sharing is an interactive exchange between a carer and a young child (under age-6). The carer shares a wordless picture book with the child, while following the child's interest, asking open-ended questions, following the child's answers with further questions, repeating and expanding on the child's responses, and providing praise and encouragement to the child for their participation.

**WHAT IS A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL (RCT)?**

A randomised controlled trial (RCT) is a scientific method to test the effect of an intervention or programme. RCTs compare a group of people who participated in the programme (an 'intervention' group, in this case called the 'book-sharing group') to a group who did not (a 'control' group). For the study, participants are randomly assigned to the intervention or control groups.

**91 pairs (carer + child) took part in the study.**

**91 PAIRS**

In total, 91 carer-child pairs took part.

**14 - 16 MONTHS**

The study included families with 14 to 16 month old children.



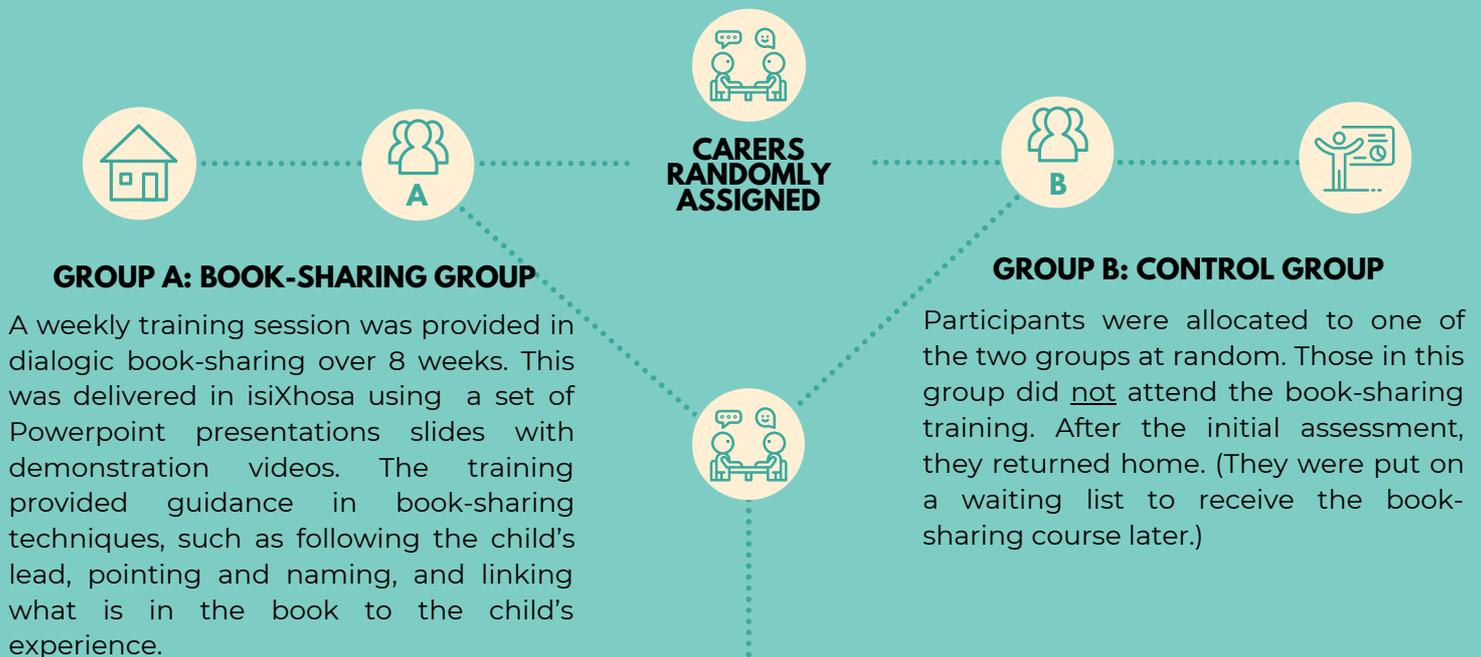
All participants were living in Khayelitsha, a peri-urban area about 30km from the centre of Cape Town.

\*The original article is: *The impact of dialogic book-sharing training on infant language and attention: A randomized controlled trial in a deprived South African community* by Zahir Vally, Lynne Murray, Mark Tomlinson and Peter Cooper. It was published in 2015, in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry.

# The study investigated the impact on children of training their carers in book-sharing

## ALL 91 PAIRS WERE ASSESSED BEFORE TRAINING IN BOOK-SHARING WAS PROVIDED

Children were assessed on their language skills, attention skills, and socio-emotional awareness. Carers were assessed on their book-sharing skills and carer-child harmony.



### GROUP A: BOOK-SHARING GROUP

A weekly training session was provided in dialogic book-sharing over 8 weeks. This was delivered in isiXhosa using a set of Powerpoint presentations slides with demonstration videos. The training provided guidance in book-sharing techniques, such as following the child's lead, pointing and naming, and linking what is in the book to the child's experience.

### GROUP B: CONTROL GROUP

Participants were allocated to one of the two groups at random. Those in this group did not attend the book-sharing training. After the initial assessment, they returned home. (They were put on a waiting list to receive the book-sharing course later.)

## ALL PAIRS WERE ASSESSED AGAIN

Pairs were assessed again after the programme using the same assessments as before. Assessments were made of child language, attention and socio-emotional function (see Infographic #5).

### ASSESSING LANGUAGE

To assess child language, the carer was asked questions on the child's language ability using an isiXhosa version of a well-established measure; the Communication Development Inventory (Fenson et al, 2000).

### ASSESSING ATTENTION

To assess attention, a standard measure was used of how long the child was able to sustain their focus of attention; the Early Child Vigilance Task (Goldman, Shairo & Nelson, 2010).



### DATA ANALYSIS

A special software then was used to analyse the data.

## About this series

The 'Making Sense at Mikhulu' infographic series includes a summary of the following research findings:

- #1** How we gathered data for our first major research project on book-sharing in South Africa
- #2** Book-sharing improves children's language skills
- #3** Book-sharing improves children's attention span
- #4** Book-sharing improves carer-child relationships
- #5** Book-sharing makes children more emotionally aware
- #6** Book-sharing has an especially large benefit for children with the lowest language and attention skills
- #7** Could book-sharing contribute to the challenge of reducing levels of violence?



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