

Long-term benefits of boosting vocabulary through reading and play

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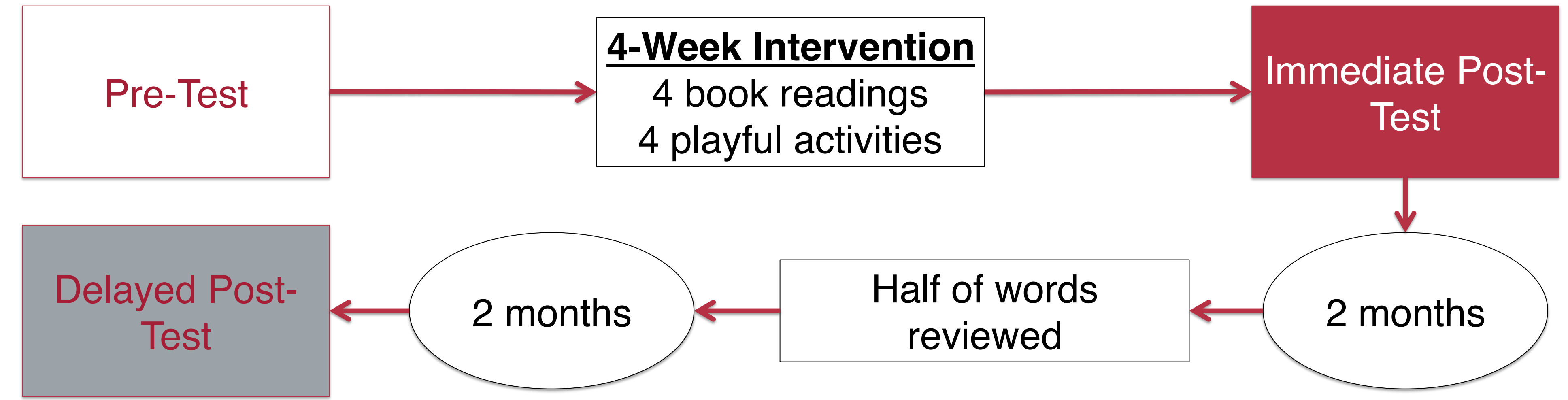


Background

- Early language and vocabulary is critical for later reading success (Dickinson, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2010).
- Low-income children in particular tend to lag behind in terms of vocabulary learning (Hart & Risley, 1995).
- Book reading and play are effective ways to teach in preschool; they are engaging, and motivating for children (Hadley et al., 2016; NELP, 2008; Weisberg et al., 2013).
- **Objective: Test a reading and play curriculum for teaching vocabulary in low-income preschools. Assess retention of learned words after a delay.**

Method

- Location: Head Start preschool in Philadelphia, Public preschools for low-income families in Nashville
- $N = 135$ children (58 in Philadelphia, 77 in Nashville) in 10 classrooms
- Mean age at start of year = 52.3 months; Range = 37.4 – 60.5 months
- Teachers trained in interactive book-reading techniques and playful activities
- Taught 20 difficult target words; Each word taught in four sessions
- Children tested on vocabulary before and after intervention and after 4 month delay
- Half of words reviewed between immediate and delayed post-test by repeating playful activity twice



Receptive Vocabulary



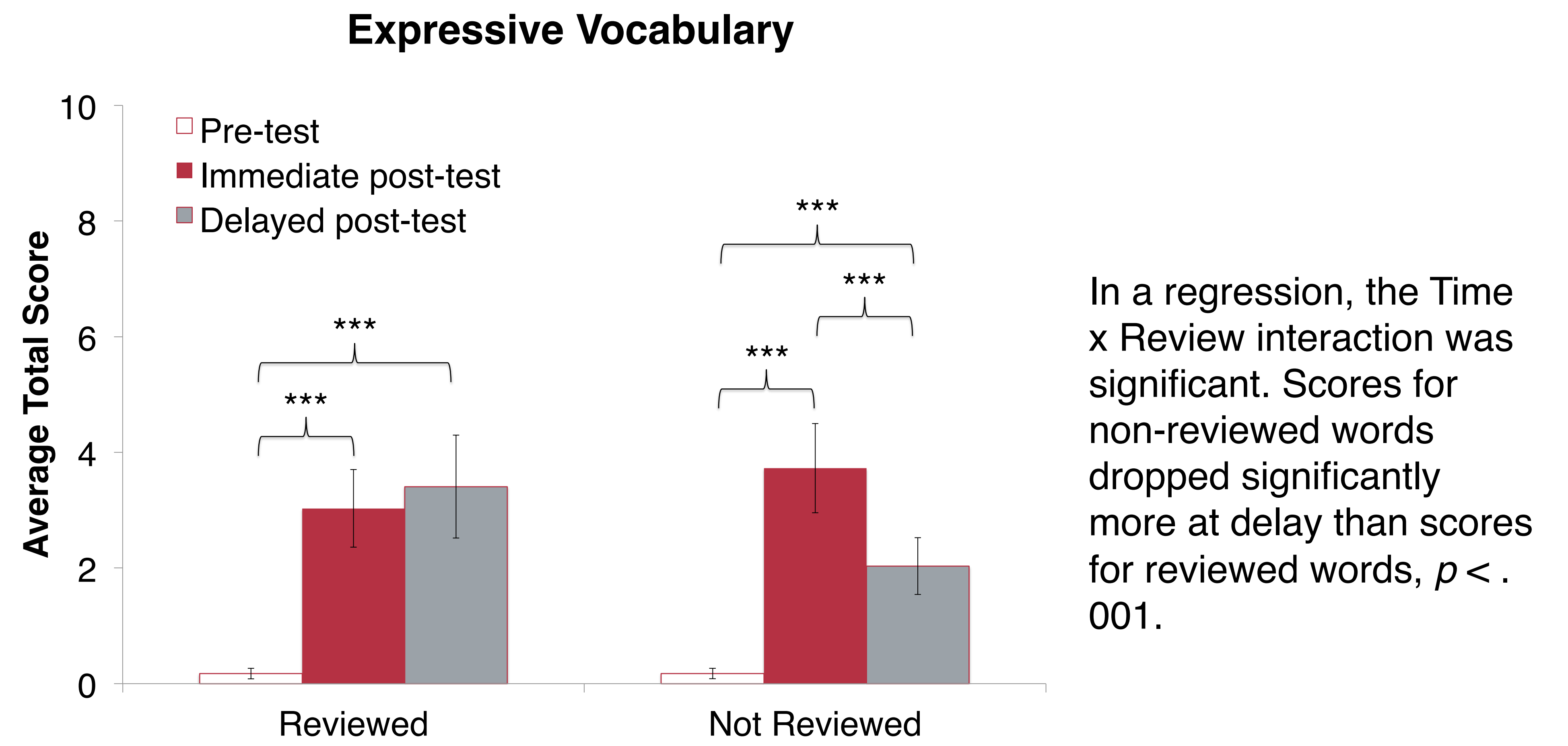
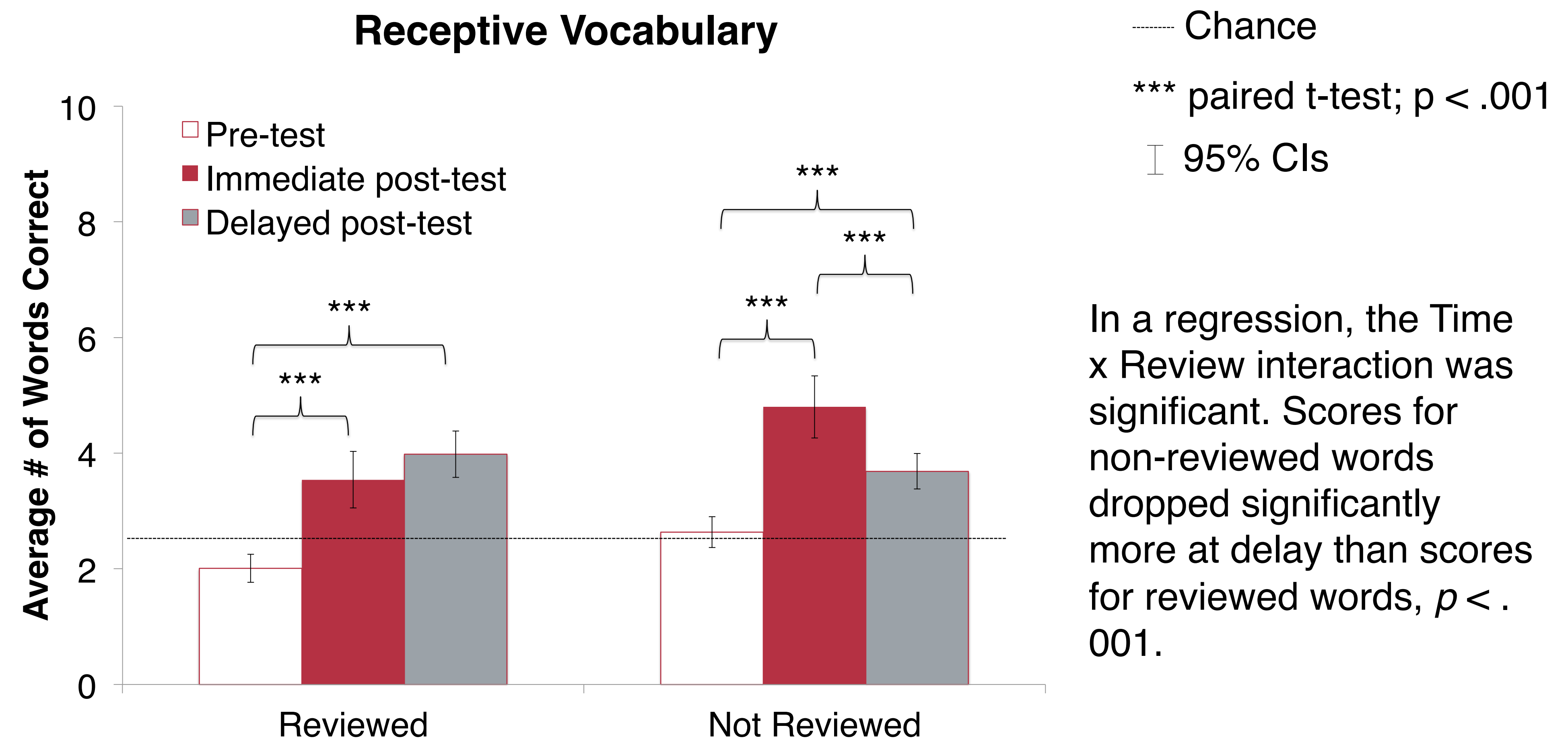
Expressive Vocabulary

“What does awning mean?”
“What is a burrow?”

Responses coded for information units such as describing a feature, giving a synonym, using in context

Score is total # of information units generated

Results



Conclusions

- From this brief intervention (~1 hour per week for four weeks) children showed significant learning of new words.
- Much of this knowledge was retained 4 months later, particularly when a brief interim review was given.
- Book reading and guided play can be effective curriculum tools for encouraging vocabulary growth in low-income preschoolers.

References

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Acknowledgements

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