Today’s piece is prepared by Carmela Carrasco, MD based on a story in the New York Times, Bedtime Stories for young Brains <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/17/bedtime-stories-for-young-brains/>.

This news story is written by Perri Klass, MD, a well-known pediatrician and the Medical Director of Reach Out And Read. The story describes research on potential mechanisms behind the known benefits of regular reading to young children. The study described brain imaging to visualize the areas of the brain stimulated when children 3-5 years of age were read stories, reporting differences in brain activation between children who were read to more vs. less frequently at home, finding greater frequency associated with higher levels of specific regional brain activity as a story was read aloud. This identified brain area is remarked to link sound and visual associations, allowing a child to imagine a scene as it is verbally described. Dr. Klass suggests reading aloud may assist children to progress to reading non-picture books in the future and provides other early-life literacy and language-promotion strategies to practice imagining images to go with stories.

This article is written by an author who is strong supporter of parent-child reading and one of the authors of the policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics on the importance of literacy promotion in infants and toddlers, an expert in the field, and no suggestion of controversy is provided, and while the article taps generally accepted scientific views on early exposure to language and reading and the later beneficial effects, the article is written in editorial style from an author with a very established point of view.

Useful sources on promoting literacy are readily available to families and some helpful resources follow.

RESOURCES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY:

Literacy ToolKit for Pediatricians & Families from the American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://littoolkit.aap.org/Pages/home.aspx>

Get Ready to Read! Free early literacy and learning resources for parents and educators: <http://www.getreadytoread.org/>

And that’s today’s Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!