

# Discussion on the Parents Roles in Early Years Children Literacy Education

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## ABSTRACT

This research focuses on early childhood literacy education and the role parents should play in it. The aim of the study was to give parents a better understanding of their role and to reduce the burden on kindergarten educators by providing basic preparation for their children before kindergarten. This is because parents have an integral responsibility in the education of early childhood and can have a varying degree of influence on several dimensions of the child. This study takes the form of a literature survey, combined with the researcher own experience in Hungarian and China and as a Hungarian language learner, to analyse how literacy education in different countries has its difficulties and what role parents should play in it. It is true that difficulties in the process of the study, as there was not very much data, but in the future, the researcher is willing to do more data surveys to analyse the problems in different countries. The research shows that parents do play a very important role in the early literacy education of children and have a great influence on their children's interest in reading and the direction of their reading choices.

**Keywords:** *Early years education, Reading interests, Literacy education, Reading habits.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In fact, many scholars in different studies have mentioned this topic. For example, in Dorothy S. Strickland, Lesley Mandel Morrow, Susan B. Neuman, Kathleen Roskos, Judith A. Schickedanz and Carol Vukelich explain in detail the role parents should play in their children's early years and how they can work with educators to help children find the right path in literacy [1]. In this study, the researcher has searched through a large body of literature, as well as through her own past upbringing and language expertise, to demonstrate that it is vital for parents to help young children with their book choices and to accompany them in their reading. At the same time, parents need to be role models for their children, to develop an interest in reading for them and to help them get started, for example by stipulating how many pages of books they read each day or what types of books they read to develop an interest in reading for them. On the other hand, books for young children in different languages can also have some impact on their language learning. This study aims to show that parents need to spend more time reading with their children, especially in the 0-5 age group. Parents should also develop an interest in reading and reading habits that are essential for

children's future development, as reading affects children's ability to express themselves orally, comprehend and write in writing. This study also provides new ideas for future researchers, as literacy is taught differently in different languages and more time needs to be spent on studying the effects of different language approaches to education.

## 2. THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE SELECTION OF BOOKS

The role of parents is crucial during the period when children are not yet able to choose their own books. Firstly, parents need to understand their child's reading interests and know exactly what their child is interested in. Secondly, parents need to help their children select books that interest them, but also books in other areas that they need, such as helping them to learn more about unfamiliar vocabulary, explore more unknown areas, etc. The reason why parents need to help their children explore more areas is that they are not sure what their real interests are at this stage, and it is only by learning more about them that they can help them determine their future direction earlier, rather than wasting a lot of time through trial and error as they grow up. While trial and error are necessary, if you can identify what your interests are earlier, you will be

able to achieve your life goals earlier and more efficiently, because literacy learning requires interaction between cognitive and affective factors. Motivation is associated with several important correlates, such as higher reading achievement, greater conceptual understanding, and a willingness to persevere when reading tasks become challenging. Without attention to reading motivation, some students may never reach their full literacy potential [2]. Thirdly, parents also have an obligation to select books for their children that are not appropriate for their age, such as books about crime, gambling, drugs, sex, bloody violence, etc. Although these books are published with a restrictive rating, children's curiosity can sometimes be harmful and it is important that parents play a role in controlling this, for example, in the case of sex, it is important that children are aware of their physiology and understand it in order to better. It is important that children have a clear understanding of their physiology and knowledge of it so that they can protect themselves and not harm others around them. Fourthly, when helping children to choose books, parents should also teach them basic cognitive skills, such as size, colour, shape, etc., so that they have a basic concept and become familiar with society as early as possible so that they can integrate more quickly and adapt to their role in the future.

### **3. THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN ACCOMPANYING READING**

It is not enough to help your child choose books, as most children are not yet able to read independently between the ages of 0-5, so reading with them is also a vital part of the process, especially before they enter kindergarten. Parents should also make time to continue reading with their children once they have entered kindergarten, as kindergarten educators and parents are always different anyway. In addition, the energy of a kindergarten educator is also limited, and the companionship given by parents is different and cannot be generalised. Families are children's first teachers, and there is ample theoretical and empirical evidence that children benefit when families remain involved in children's learning after school entry[3]. Parents also have a better understanding of their children's reading interests and habits, as mentioned above. Indeed, a key factor in early literacy is the role of parents. Parents create a home environment that may provide more or less support for early literacy, through the value they place on literacy and through their provision of books and other reading materials. As children become more adept at decoding the implications of illustrations through shared readings and discussions with parents, they can derive increasing levels of nuanced complexity in the story[4]. Parents' reading with their children—including "dialogic reading," in which parents engage children in talking about the books being read to them—is particularly important. Other parent-child verbal interactions also make major contributions to vocabulary development, which is in turn

associated with children's early literacy. Children whose parents do not offer a home environment conducive to literacy development, do not read frequently with them, or have limited verbal interactions with them are at elevated risk of reading problems[5]. In this age of digital and multiliteracies, there are increasing demands for interpretive critical thinking in interactions with texts (of all kinds). We can begin to foster these higher level literacy practices with children in instruction, and one authentic context is the classroom read-aloud[6]. This study focuses solely on the role that teachers play in education; teaching would be more effective and useful if the role of parents were added, as they have more time outside of school to read with their children and read aloud with them.

#### ***3.1. Why parents need to read English texts with their children***

Preschoolers can learn to recognize the letters of the alphabet and detect the sounds in words that will later help them to decode print, while also building the vocabulary skills that will ultimately help them to make sense of what they read[7]. Native English speakers are not able to read texts directly through the letters of the alphabet when they are young; they may guess the pronunciation of some words, but none of them is always accurate. Therefore, when parents read with them, children can use their parents' pronunciation to determine the rules of pronunciation, find out how words sound and write them down permanently. At the same time, parents can teach their children natural spelling patterns and phonetic symbols to support reading when they read with them. After a period of time, the child will be able to use these aids to read on their own, which will not only help them to improve their vocabulary and correct their pronunciation in early childhood but will also lay the foundation for future independent reading. Reading with a parent also teaches the child how to differentiate between similar sounds that most children cannot do on their own in the early years, for example, bite & bat.

#### ***3.2. Why parents need to read Hungarian texts with their children***

Although the rules of pronunciation in Hungarian are relative, simple compared to English and there are not many variations in the pronunciation of each letter of the alphabet, the "r" letter in Hungarian is pronounced with a large tongue, which causes many children to be unable to pronounce it correctly and to seek professional help. There are many songs in Hungarian texts for young children to help them practise their pronunciation. They are usually simple and easy to understand and do not have any meaning. There are, of course, many similarities with English, for example, they also have many words with similar pronunciations, which most children cannot distinguish independently, such as 'dél-tél'. In addition to

this, Hungarian grammar is complex, as they also have vowel-consonant sounds, but because of the special existence of word suffixes, they need to determine whether to use vowel or consonant inflections for their suffixes, whether to use you, me, or us and them, as well as definite and indefinite inflections, depending on the words made up of different vowel-consonant sounds and the person of the sentence. This is why it is important for parents to be with their children in their early years, to guide them in their pronunciation and spelling, and to avoid hearing problems when they are older (i.e. not understanding what is being said).

### ***3.3. Why parents need to read Chinese texts with their children***

Unlike English and Hungarian, Chinese has its own unique writing system and pronunciation rules. In Chinese texts for young children, almost every one of them is marked with pinyin, which is somewhat similar to the phonetic symbols of English, but because Chinese is a hieroglyphic character and is not made up of letters, each character has more than one meaning, and many characters have the same pronunciation but are completely different characters with different meanings. This is why it is so important for parents to be there for their children. When reading, the role of the parent is to help the child understand these Chinese characters which have the same pronunciation but are written in a completely different way and have different meanings, avoiding various reading problems that the child may encounter in the future, such as the ability to read for comprehension and how to apply different words and grammar in different situations. A substantial body of evidence reflects the positive role of home involvement in children's literacy development, likely through very precise pathways. For example, research indicates that young children's knowledge of letters and sounds is linked to families teaching letters and rhyming songs or games at home. On the other hand, oral language and vocabulary development are related to the number of conversations children have with parents and siblings during book reading, meals, play, and chores or errands. We can infer from this research that families' instructional practices likely build the skills they most directly target[8].

## **4. THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN DEVELOPING AN INTEREST IN READING**

Parents are the ones who know best what their children are interested in, so they can better identify their children's interest in reading and therefore better target their children's interest in reading. Young children should be invited into literacy activities that mirror the experiences they have in life, like reading for fun and to share, reading to find out how to make or do something. By having many opportunities to hear and read authentic literature and to

respond to that literature in a wide variety of ways, children begin to value books and reading[9]. Much research has addressed this question by examining the role that parents play in helping preschool and primary grade children become interested and skilled in reading. Reviews of this research indicate that parent involvement in their children's reading activities and their beliefs about reading both correlate with and have a causal impact on reading motivation and achievement[10]. Children start by imitating their parents, and if parents read consistently and periodically, then children will imitate them and start to read as well. This is one of the important roles that parents play, leading their children to start reading, starting with basic imitation and gradually developing their own preferences for reading, and then finding their own interests and exploring them in depth. Studies have shown that the more parents read, the more interested children are in reading from an early age, and the more attractive books are to them compared to other matters. Promoting the value of reading requires deliberate actions, not just words. Children need peer and adult role models who don't just "talk the talk" but are "walking the walk"[11]. Therefore, it is important for parents to set the right example during their children's early years, whether it is reading or doing anything else, because whatever you are doing, your child is likely to make unconscious imitations that will form muscle memory, and later, when they have the ability to be independent, they may assign actual meaning to these imitations, which in turn will form a variety of habits later on. Parents must not only play the role of a guide to their children, leading them through the process of initiation, but also be a light on their path.

## **5. THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN DEVELOPING READING HABITS**

The reading habit is something that stays with us throughout our lives. It is much easier to establish a reading habit in early childhood than in adulthood. Parents who establish the habit of reading when their children are young will benefit their children for life. A deeper understanding of the ways and extent to which parents' support for reading is related to their children's reading habits, motivations, and attitudes may help inform the work of the many educators, researchers, and policy makers who are currently pursuing the goal of improving adolescent reading engagement and achievement[12]. The role played by parents in the early years is very important in that they need to help their children develop relevant reading plans, such as daily reading times and establishing punch cards. Alternatively, they can start with a short text of a few sentences and work their way up to a page or two and eventually a whole book. In Hungarian texts for young children, there are many small prose texts of three, five or seven minutes' reading time, suitable for children of all ages. This length of reading time does not discourage or bore children, but gradually builds up their reading time and forms a habit of reading. Of course, this is not asking

parents to restrict their children's lives and interfere with their children's choices. Parents need to control this scale, and the point of parents is to guide their children correctly towards the right path, without interfering with them as much as possible, rather than restricting their children's choices and forcing them to follow the path that their parents have set for them in life.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Parents do play an important role in their children's literacy education, and many things can even only be done by parents. A child's ability to have a sound reading system, to read texts well and to communicate fluently with others in the future is inextricably linked to the teaching of parents. When choosing books for their children, parents play the role of auditors, helping to filter out books that are not suitable for children of this age and helping to find books that really interest the child, and in the meantime completing the child's basic cognitive education. After helping the child select books, parents need to take on the role of chaperone, reading with the child, teaching literacy skills and enhancing their listening and reading skills. Teach them the rules of correct pronunciation, grammar and how to distinguish between words with similar pronunciations. During this time, parents also need to take on the role of role models. Only when they set an example and insist on reading will their children imitate their actions and take the initiative to read. As a start, parents can help their children to select books that interest them and continue to read consistently, thus gradually developing a habit. In the process of developing the habit, the parent is more of a boss, setting up a reading plan for the child, with relevant punch cards and rewards, so that the child can enjoy and continue to read. In these plans, you can also consciously increase the difficulty of the reading, starting with a basic story of a few sentences and gradually increasing the difficulty. This will not only gradually develop your child's reading skills, but will also teach them the virtue of persistence, starting with the simple and slowly persisting in whatever they are doing and gradually increasing the difficulty. It is clear from this that many of the best qualities that influence a person's life are developed already in early childhood, so the role of parents becomes particularly important, as only they can provide the right guidance in their children's early years.

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