



Words for life

PEARSON

**Children's early literacy practices at
home and in early years settings:
Second annual survey of parents and
practitioners**

Key Findings

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Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status is strongly associated with children's early literacy practices at home.

- More children from AB and C1 households look at or read stories daily (77.4% and 71.7% respectively) compared with children from C2 and DE households (59.8% and 62.1% respectively). More children also enjoy stories "a lot" in AB and C1 households (81.5% and 78.3%) compared with children from C2 and DE households (70.5% and 71.2%).
- More parents from AB and C1 households engage in a variety of supportive activities and more are very confident supporting their child (88.3% and 90.2% respectively) compared with parents from C2 and DE households (79.5% and 75.0%).
- Children from AB households are more likely than children from DE households to look at or read stories daily and to enjoy stories "a lot" irrespective of whether they look at or read printed stories or stories on a touch screen.

Yet, building on our findings from 2013, survey data from 2014 shows technology may provide a route in to reading for children of lower socioeconomic status.

Compared with their AB peers:

- Twice as many children from DE households look at or read stories on a touch screen for longer than they look at or read printed stories (29.5% vs. 17.4%).
- Slightly more children from C2 and DE households use a touch screen in a typical week than those from AB and C1 households (31.9% vs. 27.0%).
- More children from DE households use technology more for educational activities than for entertainment (43.2% vs. 30.4%).
- In general, young children are more likely to have above average vocabulary attainment if they look at or read both printed stories and stories on a touch screen compared with those who read printed stories only (19.5% vs. 14.5%). This dynamic holds true both for children from low-income families (9.1% vs. 0.0%) and high-income families (50.0% vs. 20.0%).

There are also differences in the way children from different backgrounds use touch-screen technology at home and the way their parents support them to look at or read stories using touch-screen technology.

- Half of children from DE households use touch-screen technology more with an adult than on their own, compared with a third of children from AB households (51.2% vs. 33.3%).
- Irrespective of the media they share, parents from DE households are slightly more likely than parents from AB households to say they encourage their child to notice the pictures (printed stories: 81.8% vs. 80.6%; stories on a touch screen: 59.1% vs. 54.3%).

- More likely to say that children look at or read both printed stories (57.1% vs. 35.7%) and stories on a touch screen (100.0% vs. 45.2%) with an adult than on their own.
- Twice as likely to say that downloaded stories/story apps are more educational than printed stories (20.0% vs. 11.4%).

However, practitioners' attitudes towards touch-screen technology are also associated with their qualifications:

- 37.5% of practitioners with entry-level teaching qualifications say that children should not use touch-screen technology in their setting, compared with 1 in 4 (24.6%) practitioners with postgraduate teaching qualifications.

Ofsted ratings

Ofsted ratings are also associated with children's early literacy practices. Compared with settings rated as requiring improvement/inadequate, practitioners who work in settings rated as outstanding are more likely to say that:

- Children look at or read stories daily in a typical week (93.2% vs. 78.9%); enjoy stories "a lot" (84.1% vs. 65.8%); and are "very confident" looking at or reading stories (47.0% vs. 36.8%).
- They are "very confident" encouraging parents to share stories with their child at home (61.2% vs. 44.4%).

The gap between settings with higher and lower Ofsted ratings persists both when children look at or read printed stories and stories on a touch screen:

- Children from outstanding settings have access to more books (329 vs. 161) and are more likely to have access to a touch screen (44.7% vs. 34.2%).
- Differences in children's reading practices from different settings are irrespective of whether they look at or read printed stories or stories on a touch screen.
- More children from outstanding settings use touch-screen technology more for educational activities than for entertainment than do children from settings rated as requiring improvement/inadequate (74.1% vs. 50.0%).
- However, nearly twice as many practitioners from outstanding settings than practitioners from settings rated as requiring improvement/inadequate say that touch-screen technology does not have a place in early years settings (27.3% vs. 15.8%).

This research explored the activities parents do at home to support their young child's literacy development, as well as how parents support their child with printed stories and with stories on a touch screen.

It highlights that sharing both printed stories and stories on a touch screen benefits children's vocabulary attainment compared with looking at or reading printed stories only.

About the National Literacy Trust

We are a national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy. We run projects in the poorest communities, campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents, and support schools.

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Suggested reference for this report is: Formby, S (2014). Children's early literacy practices at home and in early years settings: Second annual literacy survey. London: National Literacy Trust.

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