

the condition of education 2003



INDICATOR 36

Home Literacy Environment and Kindergarteners' Reading Achievement

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2003*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2003*, visit the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003067>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Family Support

Home Literacy Environment and Kindergartners' Reading Achievement

Children with richer home literacy environments demonstrate higher levels of reading skills and knowledge when they enter kindergarten than do children with less rich literacy environments.

Children learn through interacting with others, and activities such as reading to children can enhance their reading skills and knowledge (Snow, Burns, and Griffin 1998; Burgess, Hecht, and Lonigan 2002). This indicator explores the relationship of home educational activities and literacy resources to children's reading skills and knowledge at kindergarten entry. The data are from the base-year (kindergarten) collection of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS–K).

Children's home educational activities and literacy environment are measured by an index that counts whether parents reported that children are read to (1 point), sung to (1 point), and told stories to (1 point) *three or more times a week*; whether they have the average number of children's books or more (1 point); and whether they have the average number of children's records/audiotapes/CDs or more (1 point).¹ Therefore, children's scores on the home literacy index can range from 0 to 5 points. The higher the value of the index, the "richer" the home environment is in terms of

educational activities and literary resources. Children's home literacy environment varied by certain family characteristics in 1998–99. For example, the measure of home literacy environment varied by poverty level, with poor children scoring lower than nonpoor children on the home literacy index (see supplemental table 36-1).

The ECLS–K provides reading scale scores to measure children's reading knowledge and skills as they enter kindergarten. In 1998–99, children with higher values on the home literacy index scored higher on the reading scale than did children with lower values on the literacy index. The positive relationship between home literacy environment and children's reading knowledge and skills existed for both poor and nonpoor children, with a stronger relationship for nonpoor children. As a consequence, regardless of poverty status, children with richer home literacy environments displayed higher levels of reading knowledge and skills than did their counterparts with less rich home literacy environments.

¹On average, children have 73 children's books in the home and 15 children's records/audiotapes/CDs.

NOTE: The home literacy index is based on parental reports of home educational activities and literacy resources. Children's reading skills and knowledge are measured through a one-on-one, two-stage adaptive direct assessment that includes items on basic skills (such as letter recognition and print familiarity), beginning and ending sounds, rhyming words, word recognition, and vocabulary and comprehension.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS–K), Base Year Public-Use Data File, 1998–99, February 2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1, 3

Supplemental Table 36-1

Indicator 37

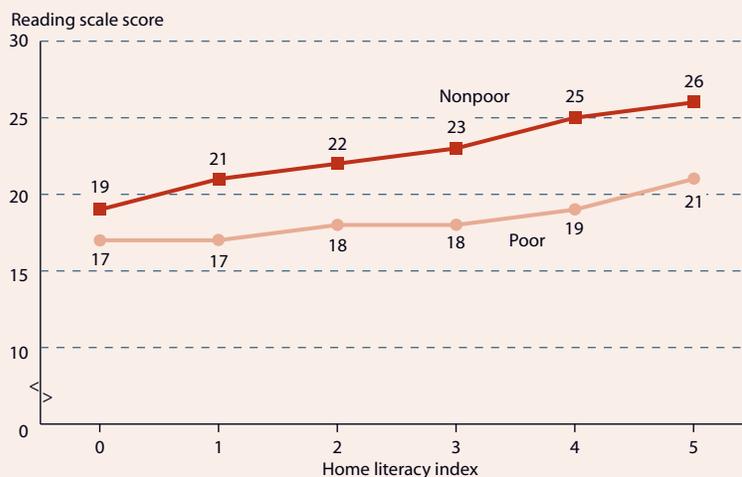
NCES 2000–026; NCES 2000–070

Burgess, Hecht, and Lonigan 2002

Snow, Burns, and Griffin 1998



KINDERGARTNERS' READING ACHIEVEMENT: Mean fall kindergarten reading scale score according to home literacy index, by children's poverty status: 1998–99



Home Literacy Environment and Kindergartners' Reading Achievement

Table 36-1. Mean home literacy index and mean fall kindergarten reading scale score of young children enrolled in kindergarten for the first time, by selected characteristics: 1998–99

Selected characteristics	Mean home literacy index	Mean fall kindergarten reading scale score
Total	2.9	22.2
Sex		
Male	2.8	21.6
Female	3.1	22.8
Race/ethnicity¹		
Asian	2.7	26.7
Black	2.4	20.1
White	3.2	23.3
Other ²	2.7	20.1
Hispanic	2.5	19.5
Mother's home language		
English	3.0	22.3
Other than English	2.2	20.0
Mother's education		
Less than high school	2.1	17.3
High school diploma or equivalent	2.6	20.3
Some college, including vocational/technical	3.1	22.5
Bachelor's degree	3.5	26.2
Graduate/first-professional degree	3.7	28.3
Family type		
Two-parent household	3.1	23.0
None or one-parent household	2.6	19.8
Poverty status³		
Below poverty threshold (poor)	2.3	18.1
At or above poverty threshold (nonpoor)	3.1	23.1
Between 100 and 200 percent of the poverty threshold	2.7	20.2
Above 200 percent of the poverty threshold	3.2	24.3

¹Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

²Other includes Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and more than one race.

³See *supplemental note 1* for additional information on poverty status.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K), Base Year Public-Use Data File, 1998–99, February 2001.

Home Literacy Environment and Kindergartners' Reading Achievement

Table S36. Standard errors for the mean fall kindergarten reading scale score according to home literacy index, by children's poverty status: 1998–99

Home literacy index	Nonpoor	Poor
0	0.3	0.3
1	0.2	0.3
2	0.2	0.3
3	0.2	0.3
4	0.2	0.3
5	0.3	0.5

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K), Base Year Public-Use Data File, 1998–99, February 2001.

Home Literacy Environment and Kindergartners' Reading Achievement

Table S36-1. Standard errors for the mean home literacy index and mean fall kindergarten reading scale score of young children enrolled in kindergarten for the first time, by selected characteristics: 1998–99

Selected characteristics	Mean home literacy index	Mean fall kindergarten reading scale score
Total	0.03	0.16
Sex		
Male	0.03	0.18
Female	0.03	0.18
Race/ethnicity		
Asian	0.07	0.57
Black	0.05	0.28
White	0.02	0.19
Other	0.17	0.96
Hispanic	0.04	0.28
Mother's home language		
English	0.03	0.17
Other than English	0.05	0.35
Mother's education		
Less than high school	0.04	0.16
High school diploma or equivalent	0.03	0.17
Some college, including vocational/technical	0.03	0.19
Bachelor's degree	0.03	0.22
Graduate/first-professional degree	0.04	0.37
Family type		
Two-parent household	0.02	0.17
None or one-parent household	0.04	0.20
Poverty status		
Below poverty threshold (poor)	0.05	0.20
At or above poverty threshold (nonpoor)	0.02	0.16
Between 100 and 200 percent of the poverty threshold	0.03	0.19
Above 200 percent of the poverty threshold	0.02	0.17

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K), Base Year Public-Use Data File, 1998–99, February 2001.

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SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K), Base Year Public-Use Data File, 1998–99, February 2001.