DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 138 963 CS 003 476

AUTHOR Lamme, Linda; Olmsted, Pat
TITLE Family Reading Habits and Children's Progress in Reading.
PUB DATE May 77
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association (22nd, Miami Beach, Florida, May 2-6, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Education; Family Environment; Family Influence; Grade 1; *Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Influence; Parent Participation; *Reading Achievement; *Reading Habits; *Reading Interests; *Reading Research
IDENTIFIERS *Project Follow Through

ABSTRACT

This study examined the influences of the home on children's attitudes toward reading, perceptions of reading, reading habits, and reading achievement. Participating in the study were 38 low-income white children (and their parents) from nine first-grade classrooms involved in the Florida Parent Education Follow Through project. Data were obtained from children and parents through interviews and direct-observation procedures, including the videotaping of parent and child reading a book together. Findings showed that the total scores of children's attitudes, perceptions, and reading habits were not significantly related to their reading-achievement scores; that children who were read to at home watched less television; that the availability of books from various sources was significantly related to reading-achievement scores; that parents of low-achieving children corrected their children in a negative way more often than did parents of high achievers; that children who had been read to made greater use of the public library; and that children who were read to more frequently also saw adults read more frequently at home and had more children's books at home. (JM)

Family Reading Habits and Children's Progress in Reading*

Linda Lamme
College of Education
General Teacher Education
Institute for Development of Human Resources

Pat Olmsted
College of Education
Institute for Development of Human Resources
University of Florida, Gainesville

This study, which examined family reading habits and children's progress in reading, was a part of the Florida Parent Education Follow Through (FT) research and evaluation effort for the 1975-76 school year. This pilot project examined in depth the multiple aspects of one area (reading) at one grade level (first) in one elementary school. The study attempted, as far as possible, to use existing project personnel to gather data as a part of the ongoing program. Data pertaining to reading were obtained from children and parents via both interview and direct observation procedures. Examining the relationships among the various types of data was the major focus of this study.

Objectives

This study examined the influences of the home on children's attitudes toward reading, perceptions of reading, reading habits, and reading achievement.

Specific objectives were:

A. To study the home reading environment.

B. To assess parent-child reading interaction by videotaping them reading a book together.

C. To study children's attitudes toward reading, perceptions of reading, reading habits and reading achievement.

D. To examine the relationships among A, B and C.

Method

Subjects. A random sample of low-income white children was selected from the nine first-grade FT classrooms in the largest school in one project site. The sample was restricted to one SES level and one ethnic group to control for these variables while examining the variables of interest. The number of children selected per room ranged from two to seven. Data were gathered for 38 children and their parents.

*Paper presented at annual meeting of International Reading Association, Miami, Florida, May, 1976.

Prodecure. In general, each instrument used in this study was developed, pilot-tested on a similar population in Gainesville, and revised before being administered. All data were collected between January and June, 1976.

Instruments. A brief description of each instrument will be given at this time. Copies of the instruments can be provided upon request.

A. Home Reading Environment.

1. Biweekly Home Reading Questions. These home reading questions, developed by the investigators, were asked during the regular biweekly home visits made by paraprofessional parent educators between late January and early June.

2. Parent Interview. A staff member of the local FT program interviewed one of the parents of each target child during April (n=38).

B. Parent - Child Reading Interaction. During April each parent - child dyad was videotaped reading The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle. These videotapes were then coded using the following three observation systems:

1. Desirable Teaching Behavior (DTB) Usage. The Florida Parent Education FT Program focuses on ten Desirable Teaching Behaviors (DTB) which researchers have identified as helping children learn. The number of times each parent used each DTB during the reading session was tallied. Two independent viewings of each videotape were done, with descrepancies resolved by a third viewing. Intercoder agreements exceeding .80 before resolutions were maintained throughout.

2. Reciprocal Category System (RCS). Verbal behavior of the parent and child was coded into categories every three seconds or whenever the behavior changed. A special form of the RCS developed by one of the investigators to examine parent-child reading behavior was used. Intercoder agreement exceeded .80 on the instrument as a whole and on various subcategories of interest.

3. Parent-Child Reading Observation Schedule (ROS). This instrument, developed by the investigators, recorded information such as who read the book; where was the book while it was being read; did the reader read the cover, title page, etc. The coding was done by a trained graduate student.

C. Child's Development in Reading.

1. Child Interview. The interview consists of three parts:
   a. attitudes toward reading
   b. perceptions of reading
   c. reading habits

   The interviews were conducted during May by a graduate student for her doctoral dissertation study. Audiotapes of the interviews were coded and analyzed by the same graduate student.
2. Reading Achievement. The local school district administered the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) to all FT children during March. Reading achievement scores for the children in this pilot study were obtained from that set of data.

Findings

Home Reading Environment

Biweekly Home Reading Questions. The biweekly reading questions were divided into two categories. The first set of questions asked the parent to remember things that had happened during the previous day while the second set asked about what had happened during the past week. Since these home visits were always scheduled for Tuesdays through Fridays, they report weekday reading activities. Only questions from the second half might include weekend activities.

Home visits were made to 49 homes, but for 4 of these no biweekly Reading Question forms were returned. Therefore, data are reported for the 45 children on whom we have at least one form. A total of 182 forms (47% of the total possible forms) was tabulated. The number of forms received for each child is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Biweekly Reading Question Forms Received for Each Child in the Sample

No. of BH Reading Forms per Child	No. Children	Total BH Reading Forms
0	4	0
1	5	5
2	7	14
3	9	27
4	7	28
5	4	20
6	7	42
7	3	21
8	2	16
9	1	9
Totals	49	182

Summary data for the biweekly reading questions is given in Table 2. The first question asked parents if their child had been read to (or read with) during the previous day. Some children had been read to far more than others. Ten parents never reported reading with their child. Ten parents reported that someone had read with their child prior to every visit, indicating that reading to or with that child was at least somewhat habitual. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the reports indicated any reading with the child. Mothers read with their children far more than other family members (mentioned 21 times). Sisters (9 times), fathers (8 times), and brothers (6 times) followed. Some children were read to consistently (on more than one report) by the same person (20 children) while others read with several family members (11 children).

Table 2

Biweekly Reading Questions Summary

Item	% of times reported (n=182)	% of families reporting occurrence (at least once) (n=45)
Adult read with child	49	80
Adult saw child read	63	91
Child saw someone read	69	91
Storybook brought home	31	69
Visits to library	12	26
Child draws at home	82	98
Child writes at home	85	98
Adult can show writing or drawing	79	98

Similarly some children read with family members consistently at the same time of day while others read at several times. Some (26 children) read repeatedly in one special reading place while others (6 children) read in various places of the house. The favorite place for reading with the child was in the living room or family room (mentioned 26 times), either on the floor (12 times), a sofa (11 times) or at a table or desk (6 times).

The second question asked if the adult had seen the child read by him/herself during the previous day. Children had been seen reading alone 63% of the time. Some (4 children) had never been seen to read, while 12 had been seen reading on every biweekly report.

The third question asked if the child had seen anyone else in the family reading during the previous day. Almost 70% of the reports showed that the child had seen other family members read the prior day. Mothers were reported to be seen reading far more than other family members (29 times reported compared with 9 father reports, 13 sister reports, and 7 brother reports). The newspaper was the most widely read item (27 times mentioned) with novel or storybook getting 18 tallies (this includes children's books), textbooks getting 16 tallies (mostly schoolbooks of siblings), and magazines being mentioned 5 times.

The remainder of the questions asked about what happened during the past week. Only 31% of the visits indicated that the child had brought a storybook (not a textbook) home from school to read during the week before the visit. Fourteen of the children never brought home storybooks from school.

Only 12 (out of 45) families ever reported visiting a public library or bookmobile. Just 12% of the total home visits reported a visit to the public library had been made by any family member and the target child was only involved in one of these visits. Most visits were made by the mother.

The adult was asked if the child had drawn or painted anything during the week before the visit. Children had drawn or painted prior to 82% of the visits. They had written prior to 85% of the visits; but this writing was largely writing a name (such as signing artwork) or doing schoolwork of some sort, and not writing stories or letters to other people. Most children wrote at a table (37 out of 44). Seventeen had written

on a floor. Only 6 reported to have written at a desk. Some children (for whom we have more than one report) always wrote at the same place (21) while others wrote at several locales (19). We asked the adult if she would show us anything the child had written during the past week. On 79% of the visits the adult was able to do this.

To summarize, it would appear that there is variety in reading habits and environments of these families. They read rather infrequently with their first grade children (which may be indicative of parents themselves). Most children do see other family members read, with newspapers being rather widely read. These youngsters do not bring home many books from school for pleasure reading and even more rarely visit a public library. One wonders where they get books to read for pleasure and if they do any pleasure reading. Most children draw or paint and write frequently, though the writing is typically their name on a drawing or assigned schoolwork. Rarely is pleasure writing done. Parents are able to share their children's writing with others when asked.

These biweekly reading question data are sketchy at best. With information from fewer than 50% of the visits, it seems that using paraprofessional parent educators to gather data of this type is difficult.

Parent Interview. Table 3 shows that the homes of these children are fairly well equipped for entertainment (a mean of more than one television) while 18 didn't have a radio. Only one home was without a phone. These families are less well equipped with "educational" items like typewriters, calculators, and slide projectors. In most cases the children were not allowed to operate these pieces of equipment by themselves. Exceptions included the television and the tape recorder.

Table 3

Mean Number of Items in the Home
and Number of Children Who Can Use Each Item Independently
(n=38)

	$\bar{x}$	No. Children Who Can Use Item on Thier Own
Television	1.6	26
Radios	1.9	8
Tape Recorders	0.7	18
Record Players or Sterios	1.5	7
Typewriters	0.4	5
Calculators	0.6	0
Slide Projectors	0.1	1
Cameras	1.6	1
Telephones	1.0	2

Many of these parents (16) reported that they owned 25-50 books. Seven reported having 5-25 books. Five reported to have over 100 books in their houses, so there was variety among families on books available in the home. There were approximately the same number of children's books as adult books in these homes; however, seven homes were reported as having fewer than five children's books. Only four homes had over 100

children's books. We asked whether any of the children's books "belonged to" the target child. In 13 families (1/3) the child had no books he could call his own.

Table 4 shows the resources available to the target child. Again, these homes are well supplied, especially in areas of entertainment (paper for drawing, pens, and pencils, games, scissors, and crayons). In "educational" areas (encyclopedia, dictionary) the homes are less well supplied. This may be partially due to the higher cost of the educational items. Dolls related to storybooks and puppets were not common to these homes. All but six children had access to a desk or table on which to write. All but 10 had bookshelves, though 18 children shared shelves with siblings. Overall, these homes were fairly well supplied with learning resources for the children.

Table 4

Resources Available to the Target Child
(n=38)

Item	Child Does Not Have Item	Child Share Item	Child Has Item
Bookshelf	10	18	10
Desk	6	25	7
Dictionary	22	11	5
Lined Paper	3	35	0
Drawing Paper	3	2	33
Pens or Pencils	2	4	32
Ruler	14	8	16
Crayons	2	5	31
Scissors	8	10	20
Paste or Glue	13	9	16
Encyclopedia	23	12	3
Easel	38	0	0
Blackboard	16	8	14
Puppet	24	1	13
Puzzles	9	6	23
Games	4	11	23
Storybook Dolls	24	1	13
Records or Tapes	8	9	21

Sources of Reading Materials. Parents were asked a number of questions about sources of reading materials for their children. Only 21 of the children (55%) ever bring home story books from school.

Library card ownership is very low in this population. Nine mothers, four fathers, two brothers, and five sisters have cards entitling them to use the public library. Only one target child had a library card. Twenty-four families (63%) reported that no one in their family had a library card. Eight mothers said that they visited the public library their children. Only one father, two brothers, and one sister were reported to have ever taken a target child to the public library. Only one child attends "story hour" at the library. Public library usage is certainly minimal for this population.

Bookclub activity, though low, is higher than might be anticipated among low-income families. Fourteen families report that someone in their family is a bookclub member. Four mothers, one father, one brother, four sisters, and eight target children belong to bookclubs. Seven children belong to school-originated bookclubs, and seven have a home bookclub membership.

Almost all of the families (33 out of 38) reported that they buy books for the target child on occasion. Usually it is the mother who buys books (23 do). Eight fathers and ten "other relatives" buy books for the target child. The frequency with which books are bought varies greatly among families. Sources of bought books include the supermarket (7 families), a drug or department store (21 families), a bookstore (5 families), garage sales (1 family), and a book fair (1 family).

Parents learn about good children's books from television (2 families), teachers (2 families), parent educators or friends (3 families), library or book fair (2 families), and advertisements in newspapers or magazines (2 families). In short, these families don't report to be "up-to-date" on good children's books.

Seven of the families (18%) subscribe to children's magazines. One of these is a religious magazine, 3 are general children's magazines, 2 are literary, and 4 get nature/science magazines. Overall, children's magazine subscription use is low among this population. On the other hand, 21 of the families (55%) subscribe to adult magazines or newspapers. Twenty families get the local paper. One family subscribes to a religious magazine, 5 families get sports magazines, 1 gets a news magazine, 5 get women's magazines, and 6 get professional journals. Magazine and newspaper subscription for adults, though more substantial than for children, still involves only slightly more than half of these households.

Reading Habits. The third part of the parent interview asked about the family's reading habits. In most households mothers read most (16) followed by fathers (9), sisters (4), brothers (3), and other family members (3). The target child (in first grade) read most in two homes.

In 15 families, mothers read the least, followed by fathers (11), brothers (5), and the child being studied (3).

All but one family reports to either read aloud to the target child or listen to him/her read. This is a much higher percentage of families reported reading with the child than on the biweekly reading questions. Mothers report reading with their children more frequently (21 times) than fathers (2), brothers (6), sisters (5), other family members (1), or babysitters (1). Fathers are reported to read least with their children in 19 of the families. Reading with the child is reported to occur daily by 16 parents and once a week or more by 17 parents. Again, this is substantially higher than biweekly findings. More families read with the target child after supper (13) than at any other time. Nine read just before bed and eight just after school. Reading rarely takes place before school or on weekends.

The living room or family room is by far the most popular place to read (22 families read there). Other reading places often used are the

bedroom (8 families) and the dining room or kitchen (5 families). Most families (16) prefer a sofa or comfortable chair in which to read with their children. Some use the floor (7) or a bed (7). Lap reading is apparently over by the time the child is in first grade (only 3 families read with the child on a lap). Children usually (25 families) sit next to the adult while reading with him/her.

Every parent reported that the target child read on his/her own. Thirty read storybooks, 10 read schoolwork, 11 looked at magazines, 17 looked at the paper, and only 3 read comic books. Most children read something every day (22) or at least once a week (16). Most of this independent reading is done in the evening (18) or before supper (12). The child usually reads in the living or family room (23) or bedroom (9), on the floor (17), a sofa (9), or bed (5).

Most families (37) do not set aside a time for the whole family to read, but 33 say they "used to." Nor do families set aside time to regularly read with the target child (only 4 do), but 30 "used to." In 3 families time is set aside daily for the child to read or study by him/herself. It does not appear that reading regularly fits into the daily schedule of these families.

Most families (33 out of 38) report that they do tell stories to the target child. Mothers tell more stories than fathers (16 compared with 5), brothers (5), sisters (5), or other family members (7). The latter is interesting because there were only 7 "other" family members in these households, so 100% of these added family members are reported to be story-tellers. These stories are more likely to be made-up stories (21) than a retelling of a book (13) or a true story about actual events (12). In 29 of the families the first grade target child is reported to be a story-teller. These stories are also more likely to be made up (19) than either from literature (11) or true (6).

Table 5 shows that these parents are more likely to point out words to their children when they are reading with their child or reading a newspaper themselves than when they are engrossed in other types of activities. Most parents point out words while riding in their cars and while on family picnics. They are less likely to point out words while cleaning house, taking a walk, cooking or sewing.

Table 5

Situations Where Parents Report pointing Out Words to Their Children (n=38)

Situation	No. Parents Who Point Out Words
when reading with child	35
riding in a car	32
watching television	31
reading a newspaper	25
family outings or picnics	21
in a store or supermarket	20
cooking or sewing	16
taking a walk	12
cleaning the house	10

Most families say they correct their child's speech very often (24). They are more likely to reward their child by token gifts (like candy or money, but not books) (17) and by verbal praise (15) than by giving privileges (4) or a hug (8). Negative behavior is most likely punished by physical means such as spanks (22) or by taking away privileges (15) and sending the child to his/her room (11).

Many of these families (10) do not report to encourage their child to read. Those who do supply books (7), offer to read with the child (5) or offer rewards for reading (4).

Table 6 shows the frequency with which the person interviewed engaged in various types of communication skills. Visiting with neighbors was the only category where many families participate daily. These families write and receive friendly letters more than they use the phone for a long distance call. This person rarely buys books to read, sends or receives a package in the mail, sends telegrams, or types something. Communication is more likely to be verbal than written.

Table 6

Frequency of Communication by Mothers
(n=38)

Activity	Every Day	Once a week or more	Less Than Once a Week	Once a Month Or Less	Never	Doesn't Know
Receive a friendly letter	2	21	4	11	0	0
Write a friendly letter	1	16	4	14	2	1
Receive a long distance telephone call	0	6	7	17	8	0
Make a long distance telephone call	0	2	7	24	5	0
Type something	1	2	1	7	26	1
Buy books for yourself	0	3	3	20	12	0
Visit a neighbor to talk	19	9	1	3	5	1
Have visit from neighbor	17	13	7	0	1	0
Send a telegram	0	0	0	6	32	0
Receive a package	0	1	0	30	6	1
Send a package	0	0	0	25	13	0

We asked several questions about the child's writing habits. Most children (28) write daily at a desk or table (28). They write their name (18), numbers (13), alphabet letters (15) or letters, thank-you's, etc. (6). None are reported to be story writers. Schoolwork (18), or assigned writing, is high on the list of things written. Most children (24) draw or paint at home just about every day or at least once a week (11) and almost all of the parents (33) regularly display this artwork. Artwork is displayed in the child's room (21), in the living or family room (12), in the dining room or kitchen (15) and in the parents' room (3). Displaying the child's work appears to be fairly common among these families.

Most parents (28) did not know how their children were being taught to read at school or could not describe the process well enough for us to

get a codable answer. Those who did know mentioned the phonics approach most often. Most parents felt that their child was a good reader (10) or average reader (14) compared with others in his/her class. Only 7 thought their child was a poor reader and 7 others didn't know. Twenty-two parents claimed to have received some suggestions from the school on how they could help their child at home with reading, while 14 had not. Considering the periodic visits by parent educators, this finding is unexpected.

In most cases (26), these parents did not know how much time their child's teacher expected the child to work at home each night.

The educational aspirations of these parents vary. Nineteen want their child to complete high school while 12 would like their child to graduate from college. In response to the question "How far do you think your child will go in school?" most (19) said their child would finish high school. Seven thought their child would complete college.

Most parents (26) reported that their children like school a lot. Nine like school a little. Only one child was reported not to like school much.

Most parents (23) say their child likes to read a lot. Nine children like reading a little, and 2 don't like to read much. Animal books appear to be most popular (11), followed by fairy tales (8), but a wide variety of reading interests was reported by these parents.

These children like to write a lot, too, according to their parents (23). Seven don't mind writing, 3 don't like to write much and 1 doesn't like to wiite at all.

Television preferences were obtained through the interview. Most parents(20) report that their first grade child watches from 1 to 3 hours of television a day. Nine watch less than 1 hour and 7 watch more than 3 hours. Only 8 parents had recommended a television show to their child in the previous week, but 35 say they do watch television shows with their children, although most did not know how frequently they did this. Twenty-seven of the families report that they discuss television shows with their children, but the frequency of these talks varies widely.

Parents' reading preferences were obtained in the final section of the interview. Most of these parents (30) report that they like to read; 5 do not. Almost all (35) think that books make good presents, and do give books as gifts to their children (33). Many (28) would like to buy or read more books than they presently do. Almost all (35) discuss what they read with husbands and/or friends. Interestingly, not all of these adults liked to read as children, 20 say they did and 13 did not. However, 34 report they like to read aloud to children.

Parent-Child Reading Interaction

DTB Usage. A total of 38 parent-child dyads were videotaped reading a book together. In 28 cases the parent read the book to the child while in the remaining 10 cases either the child read the book or the parent and child shared the reading. It is interesting to note that in 7 of these

latter 10 cases, the children were in the classrooms which consisted of the children who were "high stanine readers." The level of the child's reading does seem to be related to who reads the book.

Since the data for the two types of situations are very different, the results will be presented separately for each group. When the parent read the book, the length of time spent reading varied from 1'35" to 7' except for one dyad who spent over 16'. The average time spent for this group (including the one outlyer) was 3'20". The reading time for the second group (child read or both read) varied from 7'35" to over 16'. Except for one dyad in the first group, every dyad in the second group took more time to read the book than every dyad in the first group. There is virtually no overlap between the two groups. The mean reading time for the second group was 12'15".

The mean number of times each DTB was used by each group of parents is shown in Table 7. The group of dyads in which the parent read the book used very few DTB's. Two DTB's (#1 and #10) were not used by any parent in the group. The percentage of parents using each DTB is also given in Table 7. The DTB used by the most parents was #2 which was used by 36% (n=10) parents. Fourteen of the 28 parents in the group used no DTB's. The data of the second group look similar to those of the first group except for DTB;s #6 and #8. Every parent in the second group used at least one of each of these DTB's with the mean numbers used being 17.7 and 20.6 respectively. It appears that when the child does all (or at least part) of the reading, the parent corrects the child more and gives the child time to figure out the words. Since these children are beginning readers, this finding is understandable.

Table 7

Mean Number of Each DTB Used by Parents and Percent of Parents Using Each DTB in the Two Conditions

	Parent Reads Book (n=28)		Child Reads Book (n=10)	
	$\bar{X}$	%	$\bar{X}$	%
1. Get child to ask questions.	0.0	0	0.0	0
2. Ask questions with more than one correct answer.	0.8	36	0.4	20
3. Ask questions with more than work answer.	1.3	25	0.4	20
4. Encourage child to enlarge upon his answer.	0.3	11	0.1	10
5. Praise child when he does well.	0.4	14	0.1	10
6. Correct child in neutral or positive way.	0.1	14	17.7	100
7. Get child to make judgements on basis of evidence.	0.1	11	0.1	10

Table 7 cont:

	Parent Reads Book (n=28)		Child Reads Book (n=10)	
	$\bar{X}$	%	$\bar{X}$	%
8. Give child t[illegible]	0.1	11	20.6	100
9. Before start[illegible] time to look ov[illegible]rials.	0.1	11	0.0	0
10. Before starting, explain activity.	0.0	0	0.0	0

To summarize, there were two groups of parent-child dyads. In one group, the parent read the book in the other group the child did all or part of the reading. The first group of parents spent approximately 3 1/2 minutes reading the book and used very few DTB's. The second group spent about 12 minutes reading the book and used a large number of DTB's #6 and #8.

Reciprocal Category System (RCS). Examination of the RCS data indicated that, as with the DTB's, two distinct sets of results were present; one for dyads in which the mother read and one for dyads in which the child read. When the mother read approximately 90% of the talking was done by the mother with 10% done by the child. When the child read the mother and child each did approximately 50% of the talking. A difference in this direction between the two sets of dyads would be expected, but the magnitude of the difference is surprising. For 3 of the 28 dyads in which the mother read the mothers did 100% of the talking.

The variety of talk is defined as the number of different categories of verbal behavior used, (e.g., directions, questions, reading, praise, etc.) The maximum number of categories for both persons is 14. In dyads in which the mother read, she used an average of 5 different categories while the child used 2 different categories. The other dyads, the mothers used an average of 8 different categories and the child used an average of 4 different categories. It is intereting to note that in the child-reading dyads both the mothers and children showed a greater variety of talk.

Questions asked by the mother were divided into two categories, closed and open. The definitions for these categories are very similar to those usually found in the literature. Very few open questions were asked by mothers in either type of dyad so no further discussions of that data will be given. Since the two types of dyads differed in the total length of their session (to be discussed further in the next section), direct comparison between the two sets of dyads cannot be made of the number of closed questions asked. Percent of mother talk which was questions also cannot be directly compared between the two types of dyads as reading by the mother is a large component in one type of dyad and is small or absent in the other group. One thing which can be examined, however, is whether or not the mothers asked any questions. In dyads in which the child read, every mother asked at least one question, while in dyads where the mother read only 24 of the 28 mothers asked at least one question.

One last set of results to be reported concerns the percentage of questions answered by the child. This percentage uses as a base the total number of questions the child was allowed time to answer and eliminates those immediately rephrased or answered by the mother herself. In mother-reading dyads approximately 60% of the questions were answered by the child while in child-reading dyads approximately 75% of the questions were answered by the child.

To summarize, in child-reading dyads the mother and child more equally shared the talking and both mother and child used a greater variety of categories of verbal behavior. Also, in child-reading dyads, a higher proportion of mothers asked questions and a higher percentage of the questions were answered.

Parent-Child Reading Observation Schedule. The data for most of the items on this instrument looked similar for those dyads in which the parent read the book, and for those in which the child read the book. For those items on which the two groups differed, data will be presented separately with group 1 (parent reading) n=28, and group 2 (child reading) N=10.

Regardless of who read the book, the reading usually began immediately. Twenty-five of the 38 dyads mentioned the title of the book, either from the cover or the title page, never from both. No dyads mentioned the author's name, while four mentioned the dedication.

For 76% of the dyads, regardless of who read the book, the book was placed on the table in front of both the parent and child. For 16% of the pairs the book was placed on the table in front of the child while for the remaining 8% it was in various other positions.

Three kinds of questions which the parent might ask were tallied. The first related to asking the child to predict what might happen next in the story. A total of 18 questions of this type was asked by 15 different parents. No parent every asked the child to imagine him/herself as a character (or in a situation) in the book. Only one parent related something in the book to the child's own experiences.

Tallies were also made of the number of times the parents discussed the different topics presented in the book. Numbers and counting were most frequently discussed (26 times by seven different dyads). Various types of foods followed in popularity (16 times by nine different dyads). Metamorphosis and cause-effect were rarely discussed, while the days of the week were never discussed.

Nearly every parent looked at his/her child many times during the session and approximately one-third of the dyads were in physical contact much of the time. The children showed large variation in how much they touched (or handled) the book and in how often they inserted their fingers in the various holes in several pages. There were also large differences in how often parents pointed to pictures (or words) and verbalized the label (or word).

Very little occurred after the book had been read. Six dyads retold the story. Four of these six, plus three other dyads looked at the pictures again. Two of the same initial six dyads reviewed the key words with the child. Thus, only nine different dyads did any activities following the reading of the book.

For the ten dyads in which the child read the book, tallies were made of the various procedures used by the parents when the child stopped at a word, mis- ounced a word, or skipped over a word. The most common procedur- pply the correct word. The next most frequent technique used wa- avin- e child sound out the word by himself. This technique was closel- owed by helping the child sound out a word, using hint questions and providing no information. The procedure tallied least often was the use of picture cues.

Child's Development in Reading

Children's Reading Achievement. In March, 1976, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) was administered to all Follow Through children in the project site. The number of children in this particular study who scored at each stanine level for each reading section of the test is given in Table 8.

Table 8

Number of Children at Each Stanine of the Reading Subtests of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (n=47)

Stanine	Letter Sounds	Word Rec. I	Comprehension	Word Rec. II	Composite Score
1	4	4	9	5	2
2	3	7	10	6	4
3	5	6	8	5	10
4	11	10	8	12	13
5	14	10	5	12	11
6	7	7	4	4	5
7	3	1	2	2	2
8	-	2	1	1	-
9	-	-	-	-	-

For each subtest and for the composite score, there is a range of at least 7 stanines. The distributions look relatively "bell shaped," but in every case the midpoint of the distribution falls in the third or fourth stanine.

The distribution of standard scores by classroom is presented in Table 9 (standard scores will generally be used for data analysis). It is evident that some classrooms have children who score considerably higher than other classrooms. This is not surprising since the children who were "high stanine readers" at the beginning of the year were grouped in one of the two pods while those who were "low stanine readers" at the beginning of the year were grouped in the other pod. Within each pod, however, the children were randomly assigned to teachers.

Table 9

Mean Classroom Standard Scores for the Reading Subtests of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (n=46)

Classroom	No. of Students	Letter Sounds	Compre-hension	Word Rec. II	Composite Score
1	6	226	209	203	232
	4	223	210	191	222
	6	236	221	200	227
4	6	217	215	195	196
5	1	243	242	233	295
6	6	230	214	215	246
7	5	234	235	212	261
8	5	234	252	236	292
9	7	211	218	209	226

Child Interview. The first 22 questions assessed the children's attitudes toward reading. Questions were adapted from several existing instruments to be appropriate for first graders. Children could respond yes, sometimes, or no to the questions. When they were coded, responses indicating a positive answer were assigned two points (#2), 'sometimes' were assigned one point, and a negative attitudinal response was scored zero. The responses were totaled so that the highest possible score with the most positive attitude was 44. Scores ranged from 20 to 44 with 37.34 being the mean for the 41 children. Table 10 shows the distribution of attitude scores. This group of first graders had very positive attitudes toward reading.

Table 10

Distribution of Scores for the Reading Attitude Section of the Child Interview

Attitude Score	No. of Children	Attitude Score	No. of Children
20	2	37	4
27	1	38	5
30	1	39	4
32	1	40	5
33	1	41	1
34	1	42	3
35	3	43	3
36	3	44	3

The second part of the child interview asked the child questions about what reading is. For example children were asked to explain how they knew what a sample sentence said and how they would teach another person to read. Responses were totalled in such a way that the clearer the child's perception of reading as conveying meaning was, the higher the score and the vaguer the response, the lower the score. Perception scores ranged from 3 to 13 with 16 being the total possible score. The mean score was 8.68.

Table 11 shows the distribution of perception scores.

Table 11

Distribution of Scores for the Perception of Reading Section of the Child Interview

Perception Score	No. of Children	Perception Score	No. of Children
3	1	10	5
4	2	11	9
5	2	12	3
6	3	13	1
7	3		
8	10		
9	2		

Most of these youngsters perceived of reading as decoding or sounding out letters within words. Few attached meaning to their demonstrated definitions.

The third and largest part of the interview concerned the reading habits of the children and included questions about home and school reading environments and library usage. For example, children who responded that they frequently read at home with a variety of family members and in a variety of places scored higher than children who did not read at home. Scores on this part of the interview renged from 7 to 36, with 43 being the highest score possible. The mean was 26.12 with a distribution as shown on Table 12.

Table 12

Distribution of Scores for the Reading Habit Section of the Child Interview

Habit Score	No. of Children	Habit Score	No. of Children
	1	27	6
2	1	28	3
22	3	29	5
23	5	30	2
24	4	32	1
25	5	36	1
26	4		

In general these children read at home, predominantly with their mothers. In every response which asked which family members read with the child or took the child to the library, mothers far outscored other family members. These children report they do more reading on their own than with other family members. There was very little public library usage reported.

Findings: Relationships Among Measure

Children's attitude, perception, and habit total scores were not significantly related, nor was any one of these combined measures significantly related to the children's reading achievement scores. Few of these child measures were related to the measures of home environment or mother-child interaction. Although, a number of the correlations would likely be spurious with so many different variables, some of the significant relationships seem either sensible enough or frequent enough (i.e., are reinforced by both parent interview and the biweekly home review) to be reported here.

There were several indications that television may be related to reading attitudes and habits. Families that owned more televisions (the mean was 1.6 television per home) tended to have children who reported negative feelings about reading. Children who reported that someone often read to them at home also watched less television according to their parent's interview.

There was some indication that children who perceived themselves as poor readers were read to less and were less involved with books. These children who perceived themselves as poor readers did tend to score lower on the reading achievement test ($r = .36$; $p < .01$).

The availability of books as determined by the different sources mentioned by children and their parents did seem to be related to some specific child attitudes, habits and achievement. When all the sources (library, bookstore, etc.) were combined, the total was significantly related to reading achievement scores ($r = .58$; $p < .01$). Apparently better readers utilize more sources of books than poor readers do.

Only a few items of mother-child interaction related to child achievement in reading. Parents of low achieving children corrected in a negative way (negative DTB #6) more often than parents of high achievers ($r = .53$; $p < .01$). Further children of parents who correct in a positive way report that they like to read in school.

The biweekly reports indicated that children who had been read to more often made greater use of the public library ($r = .33$; $p < .01$). Their families as a whole also were more frequent users of the library ($r = .41$; $p < .01$). Children who were read to more frequently also saw adults read more in their home ($r = .43$; $p < .01$) and had more children's books at home ($r = .58$; $p < .01$). In general, their homes (a composite variable) were more involved with reading ($r = .35$; $p < .01$) than the homes where children were not read to as frequently.

There was a high and significant correlation ($r = .83$; $p < .01$) for dyads in which the child read the book on the videotape between total DTB usage and the number of biweekly visits with reading questions asked. Although this involves a very small n ($n = 10$), it may be an indication either that (1) families which are easier to approach, or, (2) parent educators who more fully carry out their responsibilities do in fact result in a greater use of DTBs by parents.

Writing and drawing in the home had positive relationships with children's total attitudes toward reading. Children who wrote more (on the biweekly reports) also read more with their parents (on the same instrument).

Children's responses to the item, "books should be shared," were interesting. Children who felt positively about sharing books both had fewer books in the home and were in families that bought fewer books.

Homogenous grouping of children was reflected in several responses. Children in the low pod (5 classrooms) were seldom permitted to use the school library. Therefore, as expected, positive relationships existed among reading achievement scores, the use of the school library and the number of story books brought home from school.

Conclusions

Conclusions about Reading

Perhaps the most interesting finding of this study was the fact that these children had access to so few sources of books. Public library usage was minimal. School library usage was limited to those first graders who could read; and even then, there was little use of the school library. Sources such as bookclubs were rarely used, and book buying was common only in a few homes. It is apparent that if these children are to have ready access to books, either the school library needs to be utilized more or parents need to be helped to seek out books from more sources.

Since many of these children have vague perceptions of what reading is or perceive of reading as "sounding out letters," it may be wise to examine the reading curriculum at schools. The school uses phonics approaches to teaching reading. Either this decision should be reviewed considering children's perceptions or the curriculum might be expanded to give children broader views of reading.

Mothers are the most involved family members with reading. Mothers read with children far more often than other family members. In the few homes that did visit the public library, it was mothers who took their children. Since mothers are more heavily involved with children's reading development than other family members, this Follow Through Program and the school system might consider trying to involve other family members more in home learning tasks.

Also since these mothers do not captialize on learning opportunities when reading a book with their child (DTBs, RCS and ROS), it might be helpful to give them some training in book reading. Home learning tasks might focus on book reading behavior or groups of parents might be offered workshops on the topic. Parent educators may need better training in helping parents become better readers with their children.

Since children's attitudes toward reading, perceptions of reading, reading habits and reading achievement do not appear to be related, teachers and parents might be advised to look beyond achievement as the sole indicator of child development in reading. School curricula might be devoted not only to teaching young children how to read, but also to helping children retain positive attitudes toward reading, developing clear perceptions of what reading is and developing good reading habits. While these

conclusions about reading pertain solely to our sample population, it is possible that other low SES, white families might resemble our subjects. Some of these conclusions, therefore, may be relevant for a wider audience. The liklihood of similar conditions existing elsewhere ought to at least be explored by others interested in family reading habits and children's progress in reading.

Conclusions about Procedures

Using paraprofessionals to gather data on biweekly home visits was not a wise decision. Too few forms were returned. Periodic interviewing, however, would seem to be a useful technique for gathering information on family reading habits. Although we have no way of determining which responses are more accurate, in cases such as amount of reading done with the child, we suspect that the biweekly account is a more dependable report than the one-time parent interview. Parents who report that they read with their children every night may intend to develop this habit, but in fact may not be living up to their ideals. A cross-check between two interview instruments, in cases where they agree such as library usage, etc., does verify to some degree parental reporting of family activities.

Interviewing a child is probably the most direct way to gather information on attitudes, perceptions and habits, especially for a first grader. A problem arises, however, in the interpretation of the child's response. Children may have more precise perceptions of the reading process, but may be unable to verbalize their perceptions. The high-retest reliability for our pilot sample with the child interview does indicate that attitudes, perceptions, and habits while dynamic, are at least consistent for short periods of time.

More baseline data needs to be gathered which looks at children's total development in reading and at family reading habits. Before we ask the question, can parents be trained to read better with their children, we need to know more about how a broader range of parents does read with their children. In order to determine the effects of the quality of parental oral reading behavior on young children, we need a wider range of parental reading behaviors. There is no doubt that direct observation is the best method of obtaining data on parent-child interaction.