



Kids & Family Reading Report™ CHINA



YouGov®

“Reading helps me understand and talk about the world around me. I want to read about characters I aspire to be, especially characters who are smart, brave, and strong.”

— Child

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
A Letter from the President of Scholastic Asia	2
Read-Aloud Recommendations by Experts	4
Key Findings	
The China Reading Culture and Behavior	9
The Role and Importance of Read-Aloud in China	53
The Role and Importance of Parents	63
The Aspirations Chinese Parents Have for Their Children	73
English Language Learning in China	83
Takeaways: Success Factors of English Language Learning in China	121
Appendix A: Methodology	160
Appendix B: Demographics of the Sample	162
Appendix C: Subgroup Sample Sizes	164
Appendix D: Citation References	166

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2020, Scholastic, together with YouGov, conducted a survey to explore aspirations, family attitudes and behaviors around reading in China. The inaugural China Edition of *Kids & Family Reading Report*[™] is the first research that seeks to identify factors that motivate children to progressively build English proficiency, while recognizing reading as the preferred method, in a market where English is a foreign language. This research is based on a nationally representative sample of 1,210 parents and children, including 509 parents of children aged 0-5; and 701 parents of children aged 6-17—children in this age bracket were also independently surveyed. Some key findings are as follows:

➤ The China Reading Culture and Behavior

- ▶ Parents clearly recognize the importance of children reading for fun. Nearly all, i.e. 96%, say it is extremely/very important that their child reads books for fun. The parents themselves frequently read books, with 95% saying they do so at least once a week. Reading is highly valued by parents across all income levels; however, there is some disparity seen by household income:
 - ▶ The sentiment that children reading books for fun is 'extremely important' increases from 49% in lower-income households (<¥8,000) to 67% in higher-income households (¥25,000+).
 - ▶ Additionally, 44% of parents in lower-income households (<¥8,000) read books 5-7 days a week, but this number rises to 59% in higher-income households (¥25,000+). (Pages 12 & 13)
- ▶ Nearly half of all children aged 6-17 read at least 5-7 days a week. Children between the ages of 6–11 read most frequently (51% read 5-7 days a week), but reading frequency begins to decline after age 12, dipping to 40% at ages 15-17. (Page 42)
- ▶ Most children aged 6-17 agree with their parents about the importance of reading for fun, with 87% saying it is extremely/a little important. Similar to the trend seen among parents, fewer children in lower-income households (<¥8,000) think reading books for fun is important compared to those in higher-income households (¥25,000+); i.e. 80% versus 90%. (Page 14)

- ▶ On average, each household has about 49 children’s books at home, with 17 (35%) in the English language. The number of books, both overall and in English specifically, notably increases for households in higher income brackets. (Page 16)
- ▶ The importance of both school and community libraries is agreed upon by nearly all parents (96% school libraries, 94% community libraries). Libraries (54%) and online purchases (56%) are the largest sources of English books for children. (Pages 26 & 27)
- ▶ Nearly all parents and children see reading as a tool for both learning and self-enrichment.
 - ▶ Ninety-nine percent of parents agree that characters in books can help their child develop the qualities that they care about most; namely self-confidence, responsibility and kindness. (Pages 24 & 25)
 - ▶ Children want to read about characters they aspire to be, especially characters who are smart, brave, and strong. (Page 30)
 - ▶ Ninety-seven percent of children agree that reading about things happening in the world/current events makes it easier to talk about or understand them. Additionally, 85% of parents say there have been times when a book helped their child get through a difficult time. (Pages 26 & 27)
- ▶ Regardless of age or gender, 83% of children say they love or like reading for fun a lot. It is also clear that the freedom for children to choose the books they read increases their enjoyment and motivation for reading. An overwhelming 98% of children say they are more likely to finish reading a book they have picked out themselves. (Pages 34 & 35)
- ▶ Despite high frequency of reading and levels of enjoyment, 4-in-10 of both children and parents say they have/their child has trouble finding books they like. (Pages 46 & 47)
- ▶ Preference for books printed on paper remains high across all age groups with 83% of children saying they would always choose to read books printed on paper even though there are ebooks available. (Page 51)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

➤ The Role and Importance of 'Read-Aloud' in China

- ▶ 'Read-aloud' plays an important role in fostering a foundation for reading. Nearly all parents (95%) say it is/was a special time with their child, with 4-in-10 saying they strongly agree with the importance of the activity.
 - ▶ Parents of frequent readers are more likely to strongly agree. (Page 56)
- ▶ Children similarly enjoy being read aloud to at home. Of the children aged 6-17 who do/used to read books aloud, 84% say they love(d)/like(d) it a lot. Unsurprisingly, enjoyment is higher among younger children. (Page 57)
 - ▶ Many children, especially younger children, who were read aloud to previously but not anymore, were not ready for it to stop. Forty-six percent of children aged 6–8 and 33% aged 9–11 wanted 'read-aloud' to be continued. (Page 58)
- ▶ 'Read-aloud' begins fairly early, with 44% of parents starting before their child is a year old. Eighty percent of children aged 0-14 are read aloud to at least once a week. (Pages 59 & 60)

➤ The Role and Importance of Parents

- ▶ Parents and children are aligned, with 95% sharing the belief that being able to read, speak and write in both Chinese and English will make them more successful. (Pages 65 & 66)
- ▶ When parents themselves read frequently, their children are more likely to say it is extremely important that they read books for fun. (Page 67)
- ▶ At 89%, parents are the largest source of reading encouragement, followed by teachers, at 71%. (Page 68)

➤ The Aspirations Chinese Parents Have for Their Children

- ▶ When asked about the importance they place on various aspects of their child's life, the vast majority of parents believe it is important for their child to be able to read and speak Chinese (95%) and English (80%). (Page 75)
- ▶ English proficiency is mentioned by nearly half of the parents as a most wanted skill for their child; falling in the top 4 alongside critical thinking, math/science and athletic ability. (Page 76)
- ▶ Among parents whose children are learning or will learn English, the most common hope is that their child can master a foreign language (54%). Other top hopes include: their child being comfortable speaking it in social settings (49%); getting a good job that provides financial stability (30%); and doing well on the famously difficult National College Entrance Exam (30%). (Page 79)

➤ English Language Learning in China

- ▶ On average, children in China start to learn English when they are close to 5 years old (4.8, on average). However, there is a 1.3 year gap between the average ideal age (3.5 years old) and average actual age (4.8 years old) at which children start to learn English. (Pages 100 & 101)
- ▶ Children learn English differently depending on age.
 - ▶ Younger children (<six years old) primarily learn English at home while children aged 6–17 primarily learn English at school (83%) and learning/enrichment centers (43%).
 - ▶ Younger children (<six years old) primarily learn English at home through English language TV programmes and movies (60%), video games (44%) and being read to or looking at books (43%). School-aged children also use resources at home but to a lesser extent, likely with more time being taken up at school and language enrichment centers. (Page 85)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ When it comes to learning English, both parents and children recognize the vital role of reading. Reading books is perceived by 9-in-10 parents as the most effective way for children to learn English. Among children, 96% agree that they should read more books in English to be able to speak English well. (Pages 88 & 89)
- ▶ Guided Reading in English:
 - ▶ Of those children learning English, 84% are guided to read materials in English at home on a weekly basis; 3-in-10 at least five days a week. (Page 90)
 - ▶ Print materials play a large role in guiding children to read in English, regardless of age. (Page 92)
 - ▶ Despite the promising number of children in China learning to read English, most parents face many challenges in helping their children with guided reading. Ninety-five percent of all parents agree that they would be more engaged in their child's English learning at home if they were better able to speak and read the language themselves. As for parents who guide their children to read in English 5-6 days a week or less, the main barriers against doing so more often include: not fluent in/do not know English (37%), lack of time (30%) or they do not know how to guide their child (26%). (Pages 93 & 94)
- ▶ Reading in English
 - ▶ Nearly 73% of children ages 6-17 read in English. The proportion of children who read in English increases as children age and with household income. Most children (70%) who read in English say they love it or like it a lot, a sentiment that increases with income level. (Pages 38 & 39)
 - ▶ Almost 9-in-10 parents agree they need help finding the right books in English for their child. Additionally, 96% wish there were more books available that support English language development for children at their child's age. Children also struggle to find the right books in English, with 52% saying they have trouble finding books in English they like, which rises to 66% among children in low-income households. (Pages 106, 108, 109 & 112)
 - ▶ Classics, like Grimm's Fairy Tales, and global bestsellers, like Harry Potter, are the most cited choices for the first book in English that children loved. (Page 111)

➤ Takeaways: Success Factors of English Language Learning in China

- ▶ **Parental Encouragement of Reading to Learn Plays a Role:** Parents who place greater value on reading in English to learn the language foster an environment where children not only read more frequently, but also enjoy it more.
 - ▶ Children whose parents say it is extremely important to read in English to learn the language are more likely to read more frequently, 36% read in English 5-7 days a week compared to the 16% of children with parents who say it is less important. (Page 125)
 - ▶ Children whose parents say it is extremely important to read in English to learn the language are more likely to love reading in English a lot, 21% say they love reading in English a lot compared to 4% of children with parents who say it is less important. (Page 126)
 - ▶ Children whose parents say it is extremely important to read in English to learn the language are more likely to prefer reading in English over Chinese, 38% say they prefer reading in English compared to 21% of children with parents who say it is less important. (Page 126)
 - ▶ Children whose parents say it is extremely important to read in English to learn the language are more likely to have a greater number of English books at home, these children have an average of 21.8 English books at home compared to an average of 14.6 for children with parents who say it is less important. (Page 125)
 - ▶ Children whose parents say it is extremely important to read in English to learn the language are more likely to be able to read in English before the age of 6, 33% read before the age of six compared to 24% of children with parents who say it is less important. (Page 126)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ **Economic Status Impacts English Learning:** While less affluent families do see the importance of learning English and reading in English, children from less affluent families appear to be slightly disadvantaged compared to their more affluent counterparts when it comes to learning English. The impact of the income gap becomes apparent when comparing lower-income households (<¥8,000) with higher-income households (¥25,000+):
 - ▶ Despite parents across income levels believing children should start learning English between the ages of 3 and 4, children in lower-income households display the largest gaps between actual and ideal starting age for learning English (on average, the gap is 2 years for the lowest-income families versus just half a year for the most affluent families). (Page 130 & 149)
 - ▶ Children in lower-income households are guided to read less frequently, 23% are guided to read in English 5-7 days a week compared to 41% of children from higher-income households. (Page 132)
 - ▶ This is also due to parents in lower-income households struggling with their own English fluency. Among parents of children ages 0-14 who guide their child to read in English 5-6 days a week or less, 47% of those in lower-income households say they guide their children to read in English less frequently because they are not fluent themselves—30% of those in higher-income households say the same. (Page 133)
 - ▶ Children in lower-income households tend to have fewer English books, with 9 English books on average found in lower-income households compared to 26 in higher-income households. (Page 134)
 - ▶ More children in lower-income households say they have trouble finding books in English that they like (66%), compared to just 45% in higher-income households. (Page 136)
 - ▶ Children in higher-income households are more likely to frequently read books in English, 30% read books in English 5-7 days a week compared to 13% of children in lower-income households. (Page 141)

- ▶ **Start as Early as Possible/Start Young:** The earlier children start learning English, the more likely they are to not only succeed, but also enjoy it.
 - ▶ Children who began learning English between ages 0-5 are more likely to read in English frequently, 30% read in English 5-7 days a week compared to 18% who began learning after the age of six. (Page 151)
 - ▶ Children who began learning English between ages 0-5 are more likely to love reading in English, 80% love/like it a lot compared to 61% who began learning after the age of six. (Page 151)
 - ▶ Children who began learning English between ages 0-5 are more likely to be able to read in English on their own at an earlier age. These children start to read in English around the age of 6 (5.7 on average) compared to children who start learning after the age of six and are not able to read in English until the age of 10 (9.7 on average). (Page 151)
- ▶ **Variety and the Freedom to Choose:** Giving children the freedom to choose what they read helps them to enjoy reading and consequently sets them up for success.
 - ▶ 96% of children agree that their favorite books are the ones they have picked out themselves and 98% of children say they are more likely to finish reading a book they have picked out themselves. (Pages 153 & 35)
- ▶ **Reading in English Made Rewarding:** We know that children feel accomplished when they finish reading a book, so it is important to also make reading in English a rewarding experience.
 - ▶ 96% of children feel accomplished when they finish reading a book; as do 94% of children when they finish reading an English book.
 - ▶ Additional programs and a supportive reading environment are potential external complements to the internal accomplishment children experience.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ **'Read-Aloud' is Enjoyable and Beneficial:** 'Read-aloud' plays an important foundational role in fostering a love of reading.
 - ▶ Of those children aged 6-17 who are/were read to, 84% say they love(d)/like(d) it a lot.
 - ▶ 'Read-aloud' effectively boosts reading fluency, prepares the baby's brain for language and literacy skills, and builds word-sound awareness, motivation, curiosity & memory (Huang, 2010). Furthermore, it boosts parent-child bonding.
- ▶ **Parental Involvement a Positive Influence:** When parents play an active and supporting role in their child's English learning, children are likely to make better progress.
 - ▶ 84% of children aged 0-14 who have started the process of learning English are guided to read in English by their parents at least once a week. (Page 156)
 - ▶ Parents are the largest source of reading encouragement, mentioned by 89% of children, followed by teachers, at 71%. (Page 157)
 - ▶ Children read more frequently in English when they are encouraged to do so—52% of children who frequently read in English (5-7 days a week) say their parent(s) prefers them to read in this language compared to 28% of infrequent readers (less than 1 day a week). (Page 158)
- ▶ **Confidence and Fluency of Parents Play a Role:** With a lack of English skills being the top reason parents do not guide their child to read in English more often, supportive measures or tools to assist in guiding their child to read in English could help lower this barrier.
 - ▶ 95% of all parents agree they would be more engaged in their child's English learning at home if they were better able to speak and read the language themselves. (Page 93)
 - ▶ For parents who guide their children to read in English 5-6 days a week or less, the main barriers against doing so more often include: not fluent in/do not know English (37%), lack of time (30%) or they do not know how to guide their child (26%). (Page 94)

- ▶ **Guidance for Selection of Suitable Reading Materials is Needed:** Both parents and children have trouble finding suitable English reading materials.
 - ▶ Almost 9-in-10 parents agree they need help finding the right books in English for their child. To overcome this challenge, proper guidance can be provided to assist parents in choosing the right reading materials for their children.
 - ▶ Additionally, 96% wish there were more books available that support English language development for children their child's age. (Pages 106 & 112) Children also struggle to find the right books in English, with 52% saying they have trouble finding books in English they like. (Page 109)

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SCHOLASTIC ASIA

WELCOME

Today, as we step into an increasingly connected world, competence in international languages becomes necessary to access global opportunities. Over the years, research has shown that reading is one of the best methods to develop a good language foundation.

Reading is a transformative experience for the heart and mind. When children read, not only are they strengthening their language fluency, but it is also a practice that builds critical thinking skills and personal development. Stories help children discover the world they live in, nurture empathy and resilience, and encourage new perspectives. Developing a lifelong love of reading has the power to transform children into resilient, effective learners – the foundation for academic and personal success.

Reading is the cornerstone of learning that leads to a myriad of opportunities throughout one's life. Since 1920 and for generations to come, Scholastic remains committed to connecting children, families, and educators with high quality and engaging educational content that inspires, nurtures, and cultivates children's minds. As the needs and aspirations of the communities that we serve continue to evolve, insightful research data is crucial in enabling us to provide effective, tailored, language-learning solutions that achieve impactful learning outcomes.

With this, I am proud to share the inaugural China Edition of *Kids & Family Reading Report*[™] – our first national research in China that studies the reading culture and habits of children and their parents in native Chinese and English languages.

The global *Kids & Family Reading Report*[™] examines the influences that determine reading behaviors and this edition is the first research that seeks to identify factors that motivate children to build English proficiency, while recognizing reading as the preferred method to learn the language progressively, in a market where English is a foreign language.

Scholastic is honored to pioneer these key areas of research in our continued dedication to help parents achieve their aspirations for their children through meaningful initiatives and collaborations today and in the years ahead. I hope the invaluable insights of this report will stimulate conversations and foster partnerships among education leaders and professionals, schools, and the community to advocate and nurture a lifelong love of reading and learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Wong', with a small flourish at the end.

Frank Wong
President of Scholastic Asia

READ-ALoud RECOMMENDATIONS BY EXPERTS

Recommendation by Pam Allyn

Wonderful things happen when parents read aloud to their child. Not only does it create an avenue for families to bond with special parent-child moments; it also instills an incredibly beneficial habit, laying the groundwork for children to become lifelong, more competent readers.

In my work with LitWorld, an organisation that champions global literacy, I have centered the read-aloud as the most important practice we can do with children so they can truly benefit from the power of reading and increase their literacy skills. Children who experience reading aloud, guided by both teachers and families, have shown extraordinary increases in academic skills across all disciplines. Through working with these communities, I have personally witnessed the transformation of struggling learners to accomplished learners in more than 60 countries.

When parents read to their children, it is an opportunity for the child to be immersed in a higher-level language and vocabulary. Non-native English-speaking homes may find reading aloud to their child to be a challenge, but it is one that can and should be overcome. When parents accompany their children in this journey to make meaning of and to understand stories, it allows young readers to overcome the challenges they experience in learning different languages with comfort and enjoyment.

Reading aloud is a great opportunity for parents to hone their own read-aloud practices, and to not be afraid to make mistakes. Mistakes are a natural part of a reading life and parents who are willing to be bold and fearless examples to their children will encourage them even further to read more and enhance their skills. When we build on our children's strengths and immerse them in an intellectually invigorating, emotionally nurturing, literature-rich community, we grow passionate, avid readers while nurturing their critical thinking.

Read-alouds are universal in helping both parents and children to become better readers, transcending language and culture. The read-alouds utilise both art and words to help children connect family memories and stories with the experiences of the characters and ideas in the books they read. Books create a world for them where they can become confident and empowered as readers and thinkers. Through read-alouds, families can make new meanings and create new ideas, which is a great family tradition worth developing in every household.

This research confirms that many Chinese parents agree that read-alouds are a special time between themselves and their children, while 84% of the children themselves truly enjoyed their read-aloud times at home. The inclusion of the routine of read-alouds in children's lives has been positively proven even in the most challenging of circumstances, bringing both pleasure and engagement within the family.

Parents play an important role in their children's learning experiences, therefore reading should not be a journey for a child to go through alone. To develop children's reading fluency and comprehension, it is important for parents to cultivate routines around reading aloud not just once a day, but at any time of day to create closeness and build academic and personal enrichment with children. This will expand their knowledge and interest in the written word and for the world of reading and learning.

Pam Allyn

Senior Literacy Advisor to Scholastic

READ-ALoud RECOMMENDATIONS BY EXPERTS

Recommendation by Professor Wen Cao

*Scholastic Kids & Family Reading Report*TM, for the first time in its history, surveys the reading behavior of children aged 0-17 and their parents in China, a country with possibly the world's largest children population. The Report findings are significantly valuable to all the stakeholders – publishers, researchers, educators, and parents – in their promotion of children's reading and literacy education in China. Among all these findings, the following four aspects are the most notable.

First, the Report examines the reading that takes place within families by analyzing the frequency and the starting age of family reading for Chinese children. Unlike textbook readings and assigned reading tasks for the purpose of school assessment, family reading is by nature more frequent and more interest-driven. Such approach is believed to have several positive impacts on children such as developing a genuine passion for reading, forming a good habit of reading, and consistently improving their reading literacy.

Second, the Report examines read-aloud experience by collecting data on how children enjoy this approach and their willingness to continue reading-aloud well into their teenage years. There is abundant literature on the benefits of reading-aloud especially at an early age for the child. For example, reading-aloud helps build word-sound awareness, boosts fluency, and promotes motivation, curiosity and memory in language learning.

Third, the Report examines parent-child interaction in the reading activity in the form of parents reading aloud to their children and vice versa. The family bond from such interaction not only supports the children to learn and read well but also plays a vital role in the all-round development of the child. The Report also highlights the fact that parents are the immediate models for their children in creating a love for reading.

Finally, the Report discovers that not only is Chinese acquisition important while reading in Chinese but there is also a link between reading in English and English learning – both parents and children believe that reading and writing well in both languages can contribute to the children's success. Language competence, either native or foreign, is dependent on wide and consistent reading in the target language.

The Report reveals a high proportion of recognition of the importance of reading among parents, which might explain why family reading, reading-aloud, parent-child interaction and learning English through reading are well-practiced among families in China. These four aspects, though essential in the development of a child's English literacy, are largely neglected in the China research context. In this sense, the Report initiating this unexplored topic of research in English education in China is timely and appreciated.

Among all the methods of effective reading, we need to recognize the role of reading-aloud especially for children at a young age when they are more sensitive to sound. The Report discovers that 95% of children consider reading-aloud to be a special time shared with their parents and frequent readers are more likely to agree strongly with this sentiment. Being read aloud to, by and to parents, can benefit their children both psychologically and linguistically. Psychologically, reading-aloud boosts their reading frequency, motivates their reading interest, and strengthens the parent-children bond. Linguistically, reading-aloud helps children build good fluency in any language. These findings are echoed by read-aloud advocates and guidebooks on read-aloud. By reading aloud a variety of engaging books to children, they will be exposed to the enormous diversity of languages as well as concepts and ideas of the world. Reading-aloud is the first step a child learns how to read. It is highly recommended for Chinese parents to start reading-aloud within the first three years of the child's life.

Professor Wen Cao

Chief Academic Officer, International Education Group of Beijing Foreign Studies University

"I believe it is very important for my child to read for fun. Books help nurture positive qualities like self-confidence and kindness, and help my child during challenging times."

— Parent



**THE CHINA
READING CULTURE
AND BEHAVIOR**

➤ **Strong local reading culture due to Asian traditions**

Francis Bacon, the 16th-century English philosopher once said “Reading makes a full man”. Indeed, being able to read is one of the most important basic skills that a person can learn. In China as well as in other Asian countries, reading is deeply rooted in local cultures and the value of reading is widely recognized. China, in particular, boasts a long, proud scholarly tradition.

According to the World Culture Score Index, China ranks third for the amount of time spent on reading; the Chinese people spend eight hours every week on this activity. China has a 96.4% literacy rate, well above the global average of 86.3%. In an OECD study, researchers found that over 90% of students in Shanghai, China’s commercial hub, read for entertainment purposes, which has increased from previous years. This rise suggests that reading is gaining popularity among the Chinese citizens.

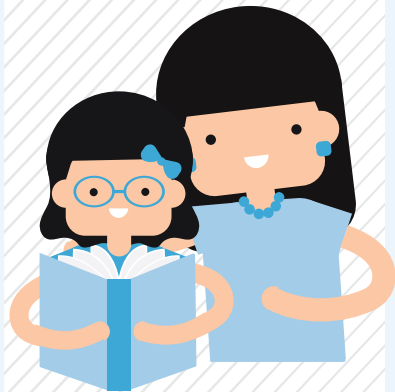
➤ **Parents’ economic status and reading habits have an impact on children**

Although no parent would dismiss the critical role of reading in the life of a child, reading remains, regrettably, a luxury activity for the more affluent. Parents of higher economic and social status have more generous budgets and are keener to encourage their children to read (Li & Tan, 2019). This proves to be true in our survey.

- ▶ Overall, 96% of Chinese parents believe reading for fun is extremely/very important among children aged 0–17 – 57% believe it is extremely important - *See Figure 1.*
- ▶ While parents across all income levels agree that reading for fun is important, the “extremely important” sentiment increases with income level. The level of importance is the highest in Tier 1 cities like Beijing and Shanghai, whose average household income is the highest in the country, followed by Tier 2 and so on - *See Figure 1.*

- ▶ The parents' reading habits largely determine how much importance they place on reading for fun, and a similar correlation can be found in their reading frequency. Parents with higher household incomes are more likely to be frequent readers (reading 5–7 days per week). Just 44% of those in the lowest income homes read more than 5 days a week, while this number is 59% in the highest income homes - *See Figure 2.*
- ▶ Children agree with their parents about reading for fun, with nearly 9 in 10 children indicating it is extremely or very important to read books for fun. Children whose parents are frequent readers are more likely to believe that reading for fun is extremely important - *See Figure 3.*
- ▶ Nearly all children (97%) believe they should read more books outside school; those who agree "a lot" are usually from households with monthly incomes of more than ¥8,000, and frequent readers - *See Figure 4.*
- ▶ On average, there are 49 books for children in the home, with 17 (35%) of those books in English. The number of books, both overall and in English specifically, notably increases for higher household income levels - *See Figure 5.*

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

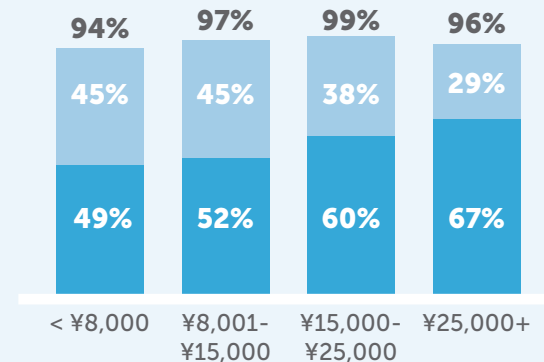
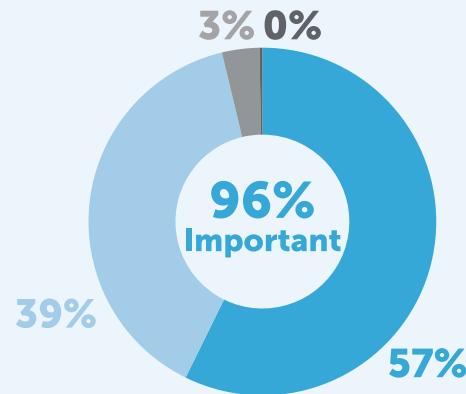


The number of parents who say it is "Extremely important" increases with income level

Figure 1. Most Chinese parents agree it is important that their child reads books for fun

PARENT'S VIEWS ON CHILD READING BOOKS FOR FUN

Extremely important
 Very important
 A little important
 Not important





Data by Household Income Level


Base: Total Parents

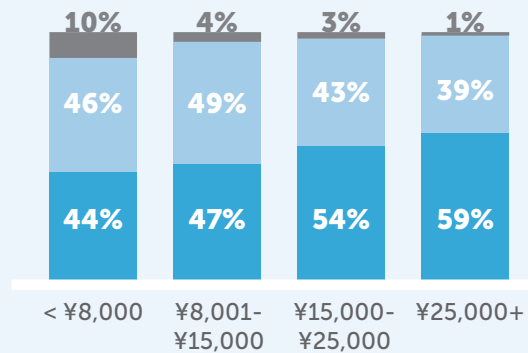
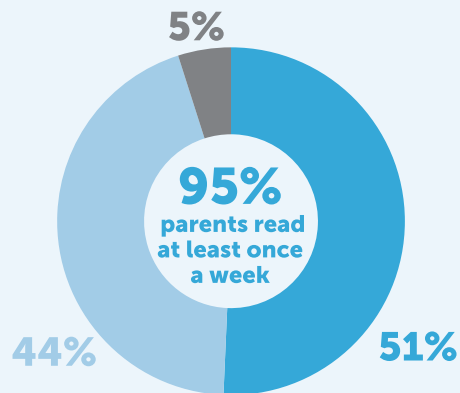
Figure 2. Parents with higher household incomes are more frequent readers

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH PARENT READ BOOKS

 **Frequent**
(5-7 days a week)

 **Moderate**
(1-4 days a week)

 **Infrequent**
(Less than 1 day a week)



Data by Household Income Level



Over 50%
of parents read
at least five
days a week

Base: Total Parents

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

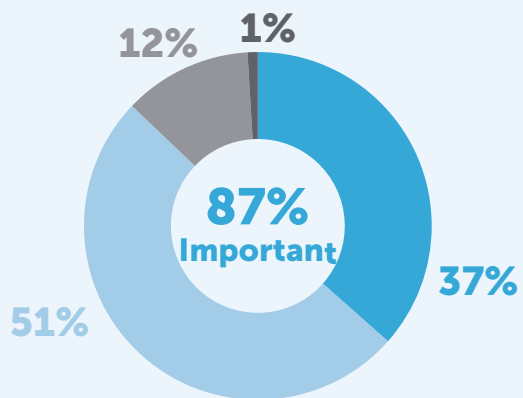
Figure 3. Children in higher-income homes place more importance on reading



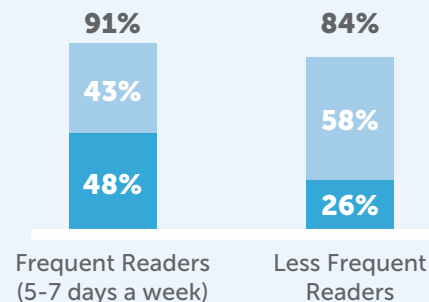
Children whose parents are frequent readers also find it more important to read

CHILDREN'S VIEWS ON READING BOOKS FOR FUN

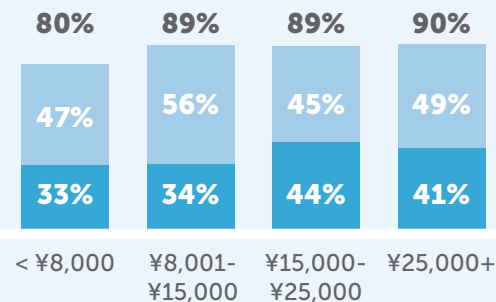
-  Extremely important
-  Very important
-  A little important
-  Not important



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



Data by Reading Frequency

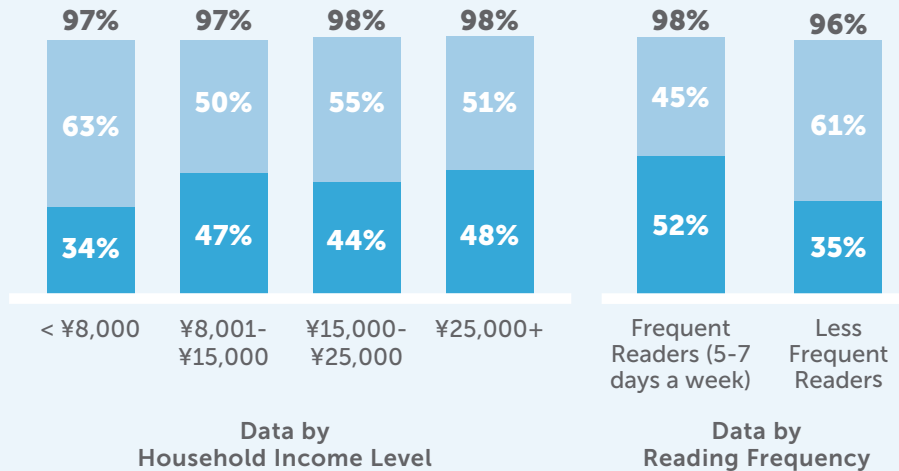
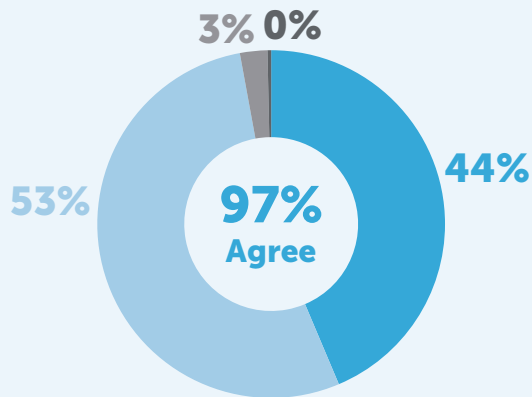


Data by Household Income Level

Figure 4. Most children know that they should read more books outside of school

Agreement with Statement:
I know I should read more books outside of school

 Agree a lot
  Agree a little
  Disagree a little
  Disagree a lot



This sentiment increases in higher-income households

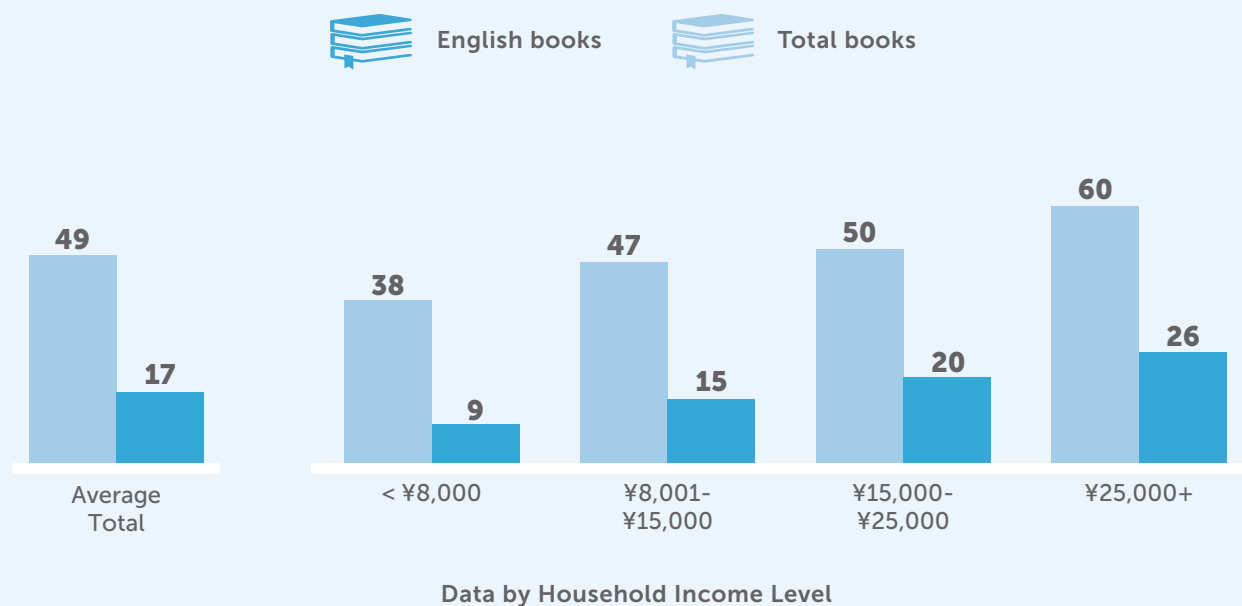
Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



The ratio of English books to Chinese books also increases with household income level

Figure 5. The number of books in a household increases with household income level

Number of Books in Household by Household Income Level



Base: Total Parents

➤ Public reading spaces are favored by parents

- ▶ Besides reading at home, parents also consider reading activities in the libraries as a good complement. A host of studies have shown that Chinese parents are increasingly aware of the importance of libraries in developing good reading habits in their children (Li, 2010), and see libraries as places where children not only read books, but also enjoy both family life and social life (Xu, Wang, Sturm & Wu, 2018). This well explains why community-oriented public spaces and reading-related activities are becoming more popular in China.
- ▶ The library is a common place where children get their books from, including English ones.
 - ▶ Online purchases seem to be the most popular way to access books, followed by school and public libraries where they source English books from. Children in higher-income families are more likely to have English books at home or purchase them, either online or from retail stores - *See Figure 6.*
 - ▶ 94% of parents agree on the importance of community libraries, regardless of child's age, gender, or income level - *See Figure 7.*
 - ▶ There is also similar agreement on the need for school libraries. Parents in households with the highest incomes are most likely to agree strongly - *See Figure 8.*
- ▶ Most parents like going to school and community events with their children; this view is shared across all age groups and income levels with 9 in 10 parents concurring - *See Figure 9.*

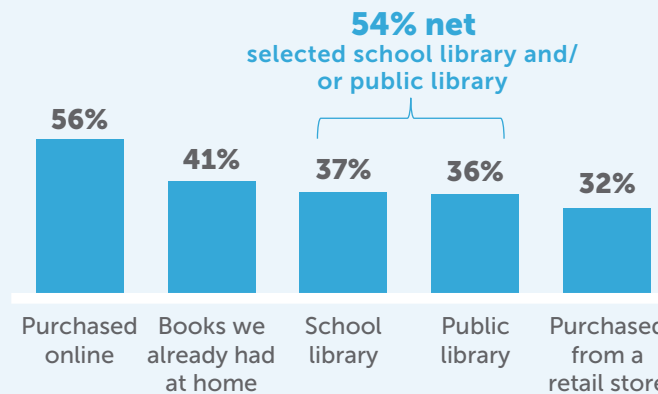
THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR



Most English books are either purchased online or sourced from public or school libraries

Figure 6. Children in higher-income homes have access to English books from a greater variety of sources

Sources of English Books (Outside of School)



	< ¥8,000	¥8,001-¥15,000	¥15,000-¥25,000	¥25,000+
Purchased online	44%	59%	55%	63%
Books already had at home	33%	38%	41%	51%
School Library	37%	36%	39%	38%
Public Library	33%	34%	41%	36%
Purchased from retail store	23%	31%	36%	38%

Data by Household Income Level

Base: Children 6-17 who started learning English

Figure 7. Nearly all parents agree on the importance of a community library

Agreement with Statement:
Every community needs to have a public library



Agree strongly



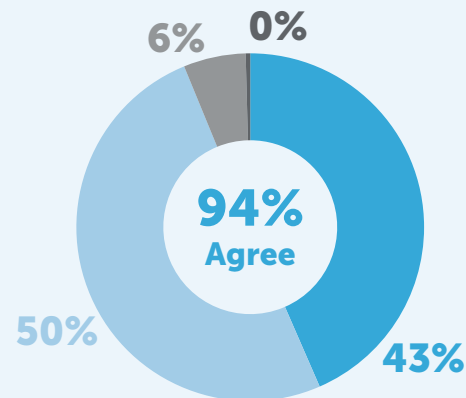
Agree somewhat



Disagree somewhat



Disagree strongly



Base: Total Parents



This sentiment is held by at least 9 in 10 regardless of child's age, gender, or income

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

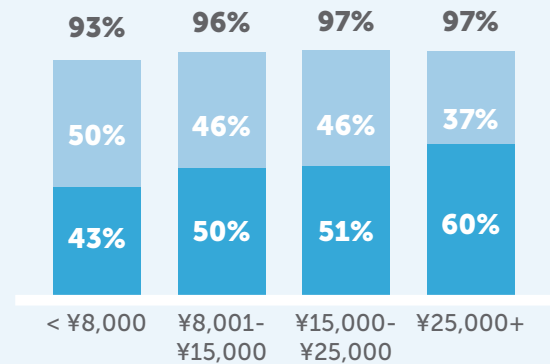
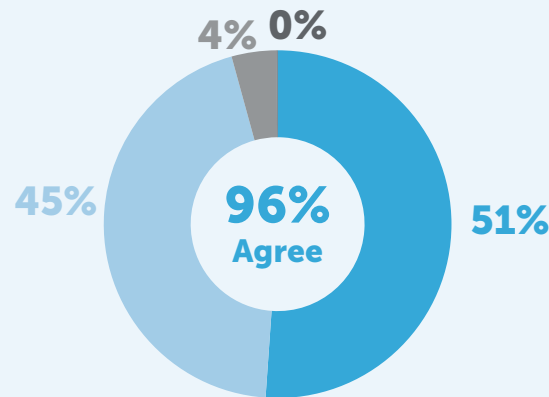


Parents in higher-income households are most likely to agree strongly

Figure 8. Even more parents agree on the importance of a school library

**Agreement with Statement:
Every child needs to have a school library**

-  **Agree strongly**
-  **Agree somewhat**
-  **Disagree somewhat**
-  **Disagree strongly**



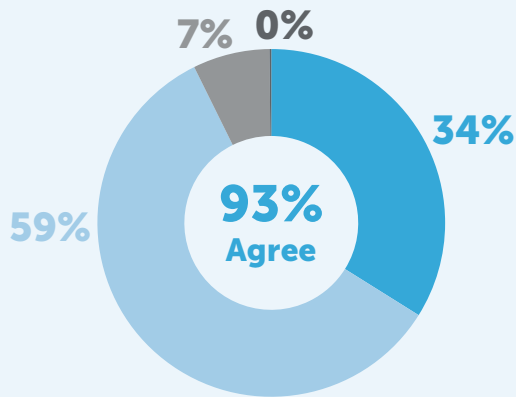
Data by Household Income Level

Base: Total Parents

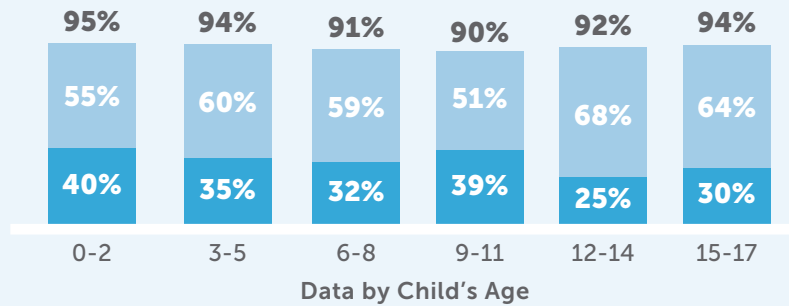
Figure 9. Most parents like going to school and community events with their children

Agreement with Statement:
I like going to events with my child that involve reading at school or in our community

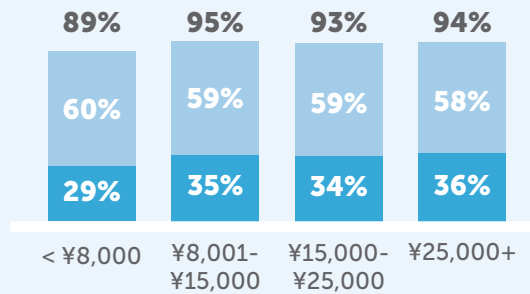
 Agree strongly
  Agree somewhat
  Disagree somewhat
  Disagree strongly



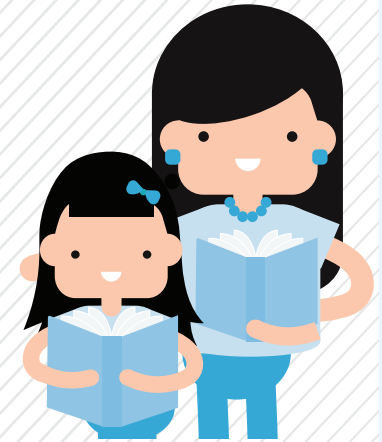
Base: Total Parents



Data by Child's Age



Data by Household Income Level



This sentiment is shared across all age groups and income levels, and more strongly felt among parents of children 0-2 and 9-11

➤ Reading is the way to learn and self-enrich

- ▶ Chinese parents believe strongly in the power of books and reading. We believe this is due to the active learning culture in China, as reflected by a popular saying “to be a person of knowledge and wisdom, one should read as extensively as 10,000 books and travel as far as 10,000 miles”.
- ▶ Reading brings a wide range of benefits to children. Besides language learning, reading helps shape children’s personality. 99% of parents agree that characters in books can help their child develop the qualities that parents care about most - *See Figure 10.*
- ▶ Self-confidence, responsibility and kindness are among the top qualities parents want their children to develop. Being able to get along with others, honesty, being respectful and having courage are also some other traits that parents wish their children to acquire - *See Figure 11.*
- ▶ 85% of parents say reading had helped their child through a difficult time - *See Figure 12.*
- ▶ Chinese children also read purposefully with a strong intention to learn about something and improve themselves.
 - ▶ 97% agree that reading provides a forum to understand and have conversations about things that are happening in the world - *See Figure 13.*
 - ▶ They usually look for books to explore places and worlds they have not been before. Books that include culturally and ethnically diverse storylines, settings or characters are also favored - *See Figure 14.*
 - ▶ This may be because Chinese parents believe in the importance of reading both fiction and nonfiction for their children to better understand the world they live in - *See Figure 15.*

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR


- ▶ Chinese children want to read about characters they aspire to be, especially characters who are smart, brave and strong - *See Figure 16.*
 - ▶ This is quite evident from the favorite books that have left a memorable impression among them – English books they first came to love - *See Figure 17.*
 - ▶ Some of the most popular English books include *The Little Prince*, *Harry Potter* and *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*. Be it original, adapted or abridged, they commonly feature protagonists who are courageous, smart and overcoming a situation or problem. *Cinderella*, *Red Riding Hood* and *Hansel and Gretel* are also household names in China. Many children see these characters as their role models and wish to develop these cherished and valued traits possessed by these figures.
- ▶ In addition to knowledge acquisition and character building, reading gives a sense of success and accomplishment to Chinese children.
 - ▶ They feel accomplished when they finish reading a book. This is particularly true for frequent readers as they are more likely to agree “a lot” that finishing a book makes them feel proud and accomplished - *See Figure 18.*
 - ▶ Chinese parents and children have high aspirations for academic accomplishments, as the Chinese education system is still very much assessment-driven that compels children to get high scores so as to stand out among peers and make it to top universities.
 - ▶ A supportive, reward-based reading environment, and initiatives that measure, exhibit and reward individual reading progress such as reading contests, certificates and prizes will make reading even more appealing to children.
 - ▶ International proficiency measurements and assessments such as Lexile and reading levels will assure English language learners of the progress they are making, and guide them in finding suitable reading materials (whether for reading level or interest).


THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

Figure 10. Nearly all parents agree that book characters can help develop desired qualities in their children

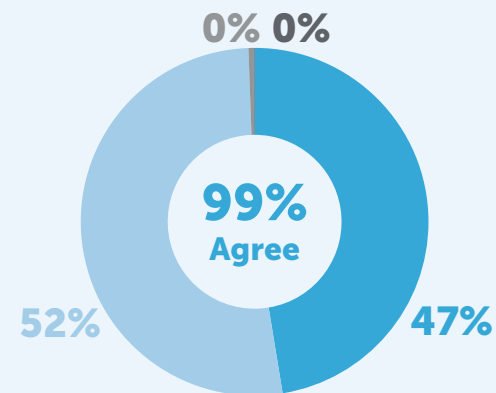
Agreement that Characters in Books can Help Child Develop the Qualities that Parent Cares About Most

 Agree strongly

 Agree somewhat

 Disagree somewhat

 Disagree strongly

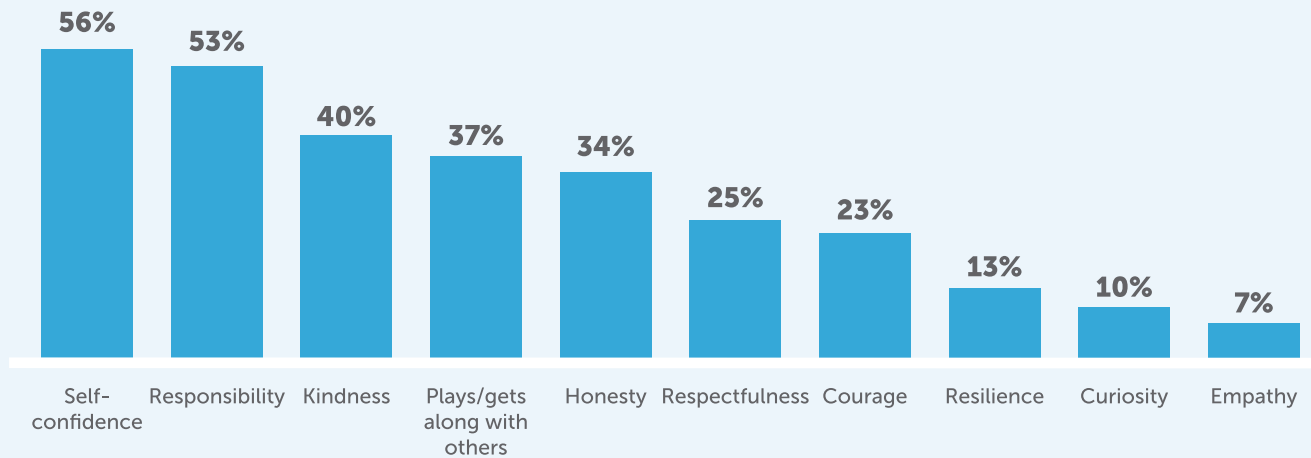


Base: Total Parents



Figure 11. Self-confidence, responsibility and kindness are the top three qualities parents hope their children will develop from books

Qualities Parents Hope Child Develops from Books




Base: Total Parents




Figure 12. Most parents agree that books have helped their children through difficult times

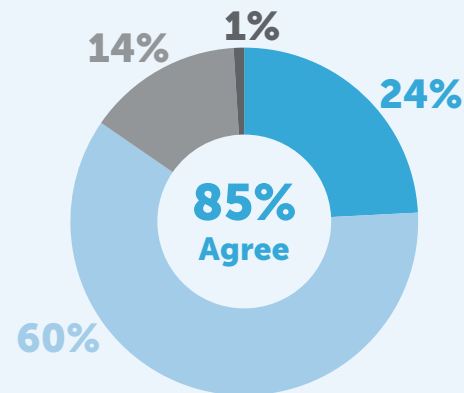
Agreement with Statement:
There have been times when a book helped my child get through a difficult time

 Agree strongly

 Agree somewhat

 Disagree somewhat

 Disagree strongly



Base: Total Parents



Figure 13. Most children agree that reading about current events helped them understand better

Agreement with Statement:
“Reading about things that are happening in the world / current events makes it easier to talk about or understand them”



Agree strongly



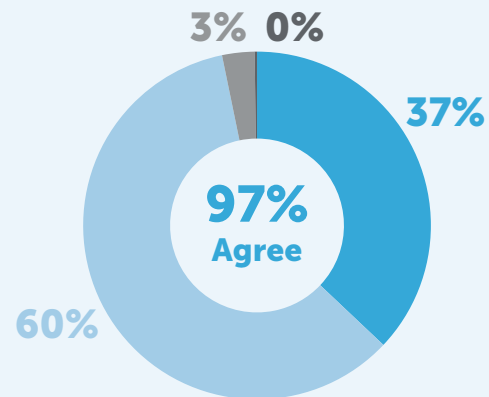
Agree somewhat



Disagree somewhat



Disagree strongly



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



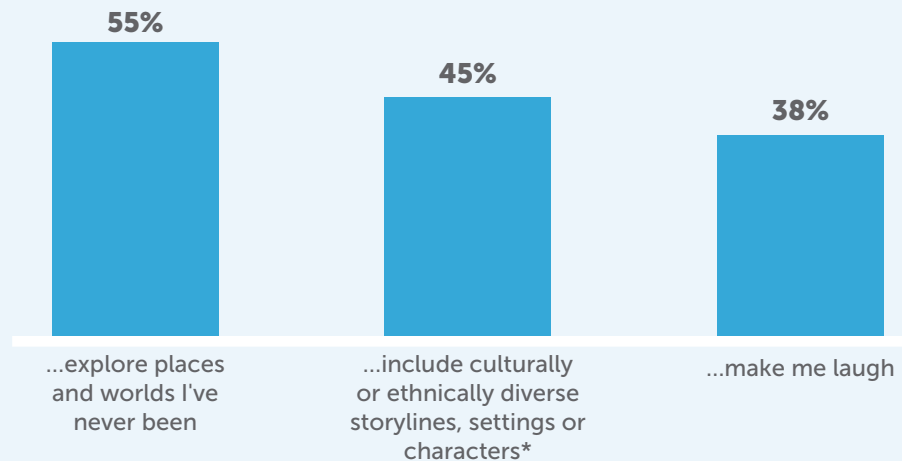
THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR



Many children also look for books that will make them laugh

Figure 14. Most children look for books that will allow them to explore places and cultures

**“What kinds of books do you look for when choosing a book to read for fun?
Books that...”**



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17 / *Base: Total Children Ages 9-17

Figure 15. Most parents agree reading helps their children understand the world around them

Agreement with Statement:
Reading fiction and nonfiction is important for my child to better understand the world



Agree strongly



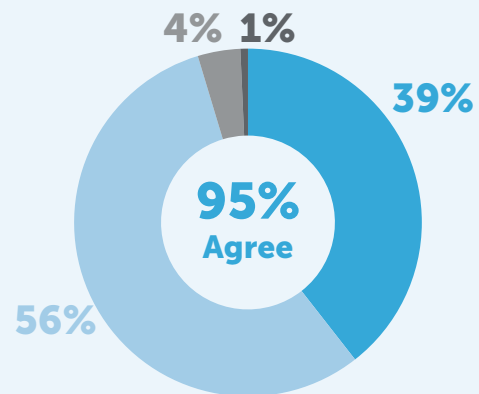
Agree somewhat



Disagree somewhat



Disagree strongly



Base: Total Parents

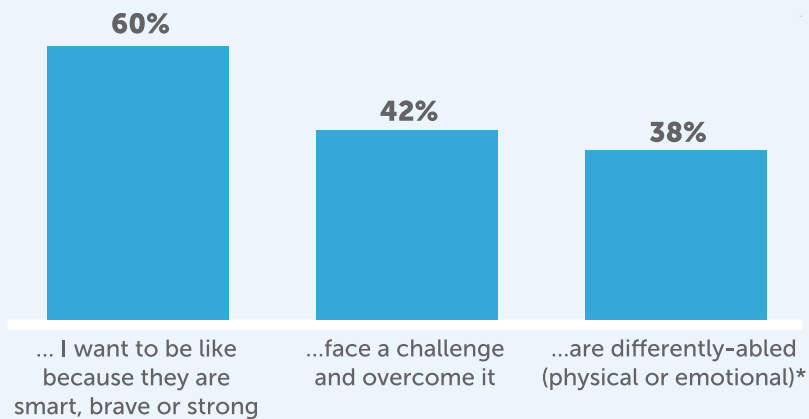




Many children also look for characters who face and overcome different challenges

Figure 16. Most children look for book characters with qualities they can aspire to have

**What kinds of characters do you look for in books you want to read for fun?
Characters who...**



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17 / *Base: Total Children Ages 9-17

Figure 17. The Little Prince, Harry Potter and Grimm's Fairy Tales are the top 3 English books children first loved



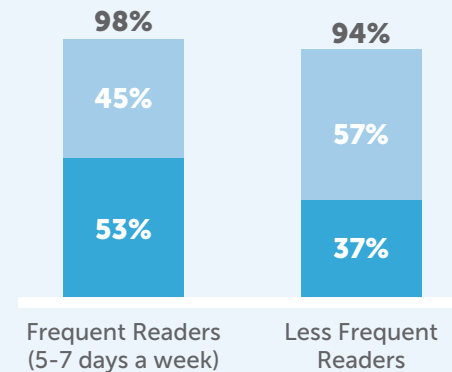
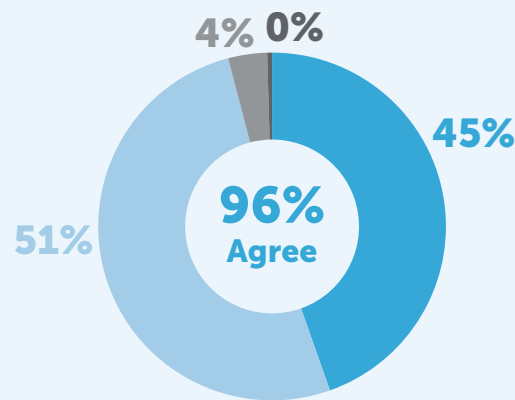
Base: Children ages 6-17 who can read in English, Total mentions n=409

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

Figure 18. Most children feel proud and accomplished upon completing a book

Agreement with Statement:
I feel proud and have a sense of accomplishment when I finish reading a book

-  Agree strongly
-  Agree somewhat
-  Disagree somewhat
-  Disagree strongly



Data by Reading Frequency

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



➤ Reading is enjoyable - the freedom to choose is what motivates children to read

- ▶ Although children read with a strong intent to learn, most of them enjoy reading for fun, and those who do are usually frequent readers (5–7 times a week).
 - ▶ Most children enjoy reading: more than 80% say they love or like reading for fun a lot; one-quarter indicate they love it, and 83% say they love/like it a lot when they read for fun — they are usually frequent readers who read 5–7 times a week - *See Figure 19.*
- ▶ One important finding in our survey is that the freedom to be able to choose and decide what to read motivates them to read.
 - ▶ Books they choose by themselves are more likely to be finished and end up to be their favorites - *See Figures 20, 21.*
 - ▶ Choice and variety are just as important for Chinese English-language learners if we want them to pick up reading in English and take a liking to reading in English.
 - ▶ Variety of story themes, formats, and characters all play a very important role in offering children good reading choices.
 - ▶ Serial reading/reading series & large series with continuity, for example, Acorn, Branches, Geronimo Stilton and Magic Tree House, etc are on our recommended reading list.
 - ▶ Parents need to be educated and informed about this, so that they could facilitate choices and freedom for children to pick their English language books and build up their interest in English-reading.

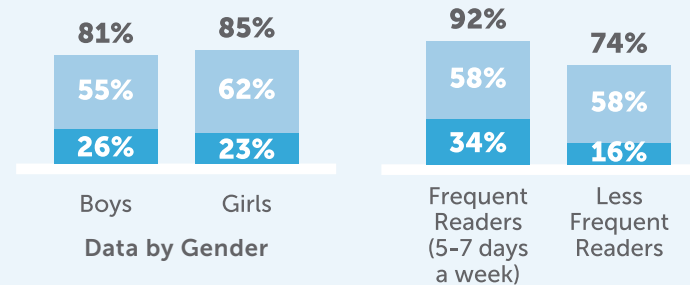
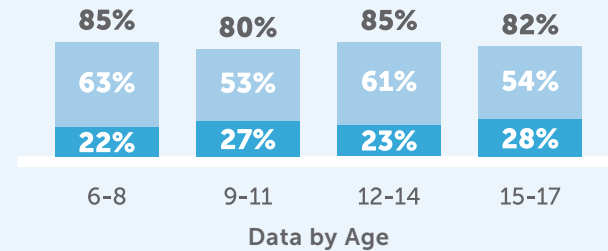
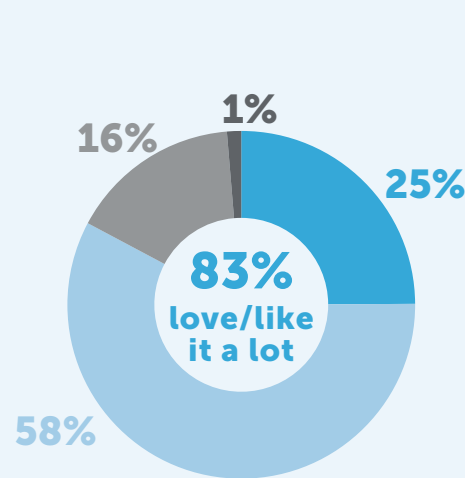


Children who read frequently “love it” twice as much as those who read less frequently

Figure 19. Most children enjoy reading regardless of age or gender

Enjoyment of Reading for Fun (Child)

I love it
 I like it a lot
 I like it a little
 I don't like it at all

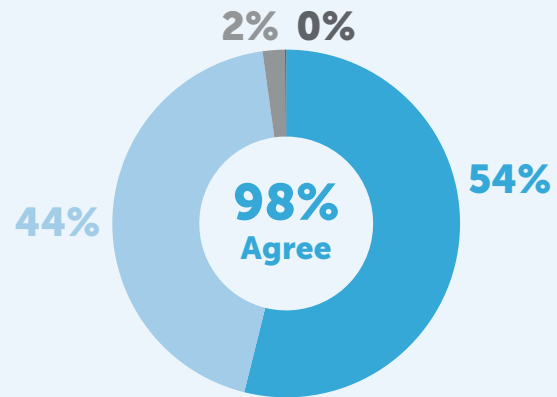


Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

Figure 20. Children are more likely to finish books they choose themselves

Agreement with Statement:
I am more likely to finish reading a book that I have picked out myself

 Agree a lot  Agree a little  Disagree a little  Disagree a lot



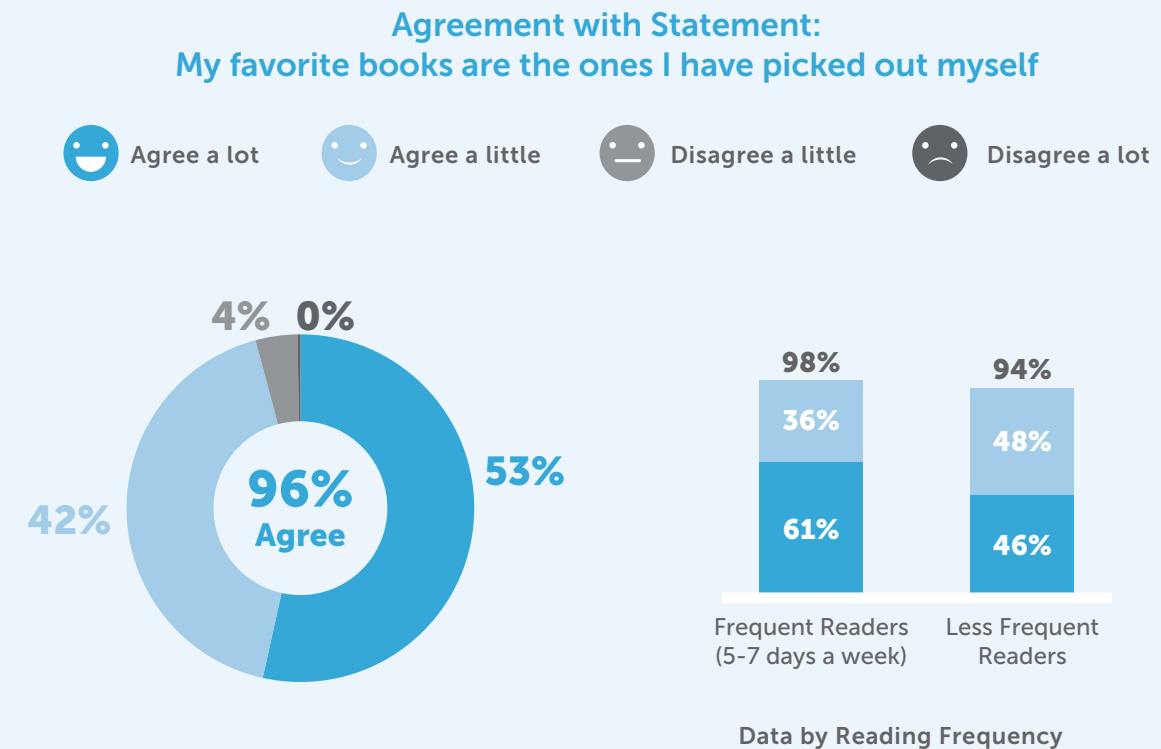
Base: Total Children Ages 6-17





Frequent readers are more likely to “agree a lot” with this statement

Figure 21. Nearly all children agree their favorite books are those they picked themselves



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

➤ Rooted appreciation for books and reading makes it worthwhile to enjoy reading in another language

- ▶ Those who generally enjoy reading in their own/native language and are frequent readers, are more likely to feel the same towards reading in English.
 - ▶ 78% of children who read at least 5-7 times a week either love reading in English or like it a lot - *See Figure 22.*
- ▶ Reading in another language ie English in this case is also something enjoyable for most Chinese children.
 - ▶ Nearly 73% of children aged 6–17 read in English. Not surprisingly, the proportion of children who are able to read in English increases with age group as well as household income level. Frequent readers are more likely to be able to read in English. The average age when a child can read in English is 7.6 years old - *See Figure 23.*
 - ▶ The majority (71%) of those who read in English read at least once to 4 times a week while 24% read almost every day (5–7 times a week) - *See Figure 24.*
 - ▶ Most children (70%) who read in English claim that they enjoy reading in this foreign language - *See Figure 22.*

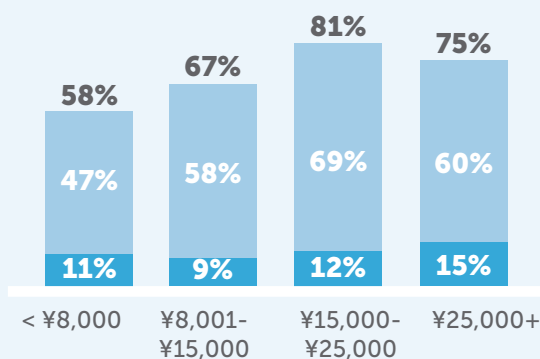
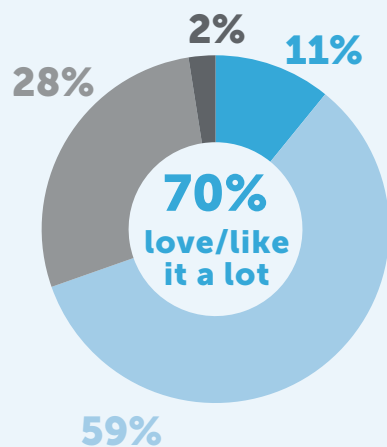


Children who are frequent readers and in the highest-income households are more likely to love or like reading a lot.

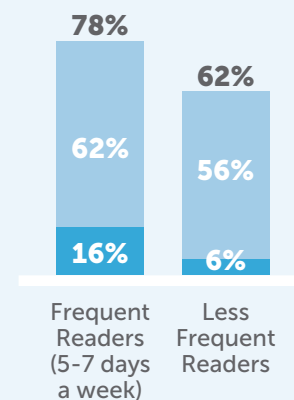
Figure 22. Many children enjoy reading in English

Enjoyment of Reading in English

I love it
 I like it a lot
 I like it a little
 I don't like it at all



Data by Household Income Level






Data by Reading Frequency

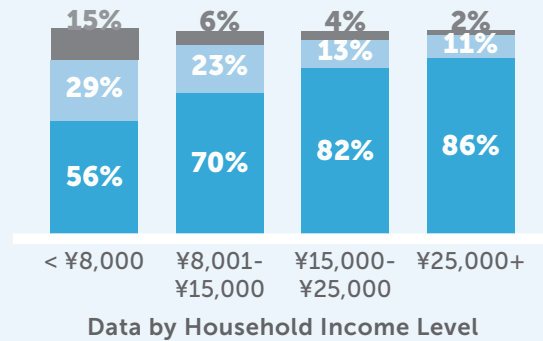
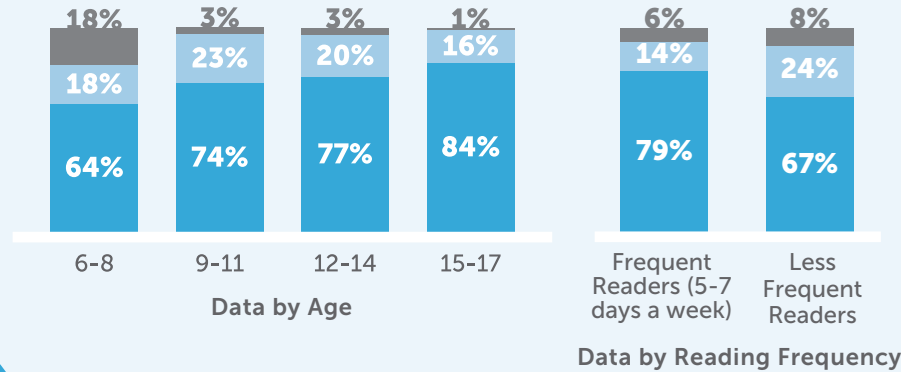
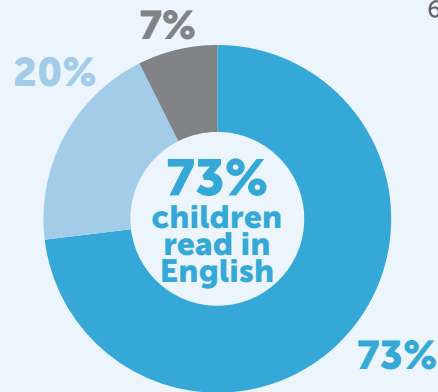
Base: Children Ages 6-17 who read in English

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

Figure 23. The number of children able to read in English increases with age and household income level

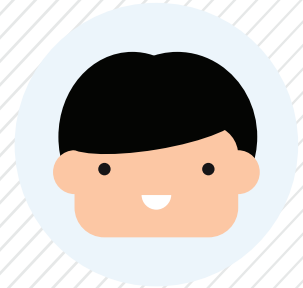
Child's English Learning Status and Reading (Ages 6-17)

-  Reads in English
-  Does not read in English
-  Has not started learning English



Base: Total Children 6-17; and Parents of Child Who can Read English

The average age when a child can read in English is 7.6 years old.



Frequent readers are also more able to read in English






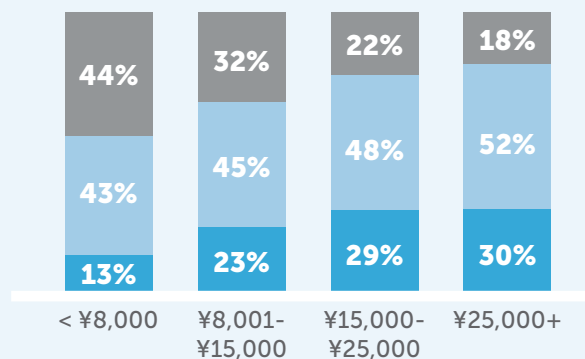
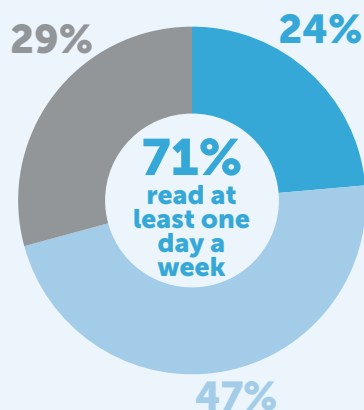
Children in higher-income households read more frequently

Figure 24.

71% of children ages 6 to 17 read in English at least one day a week

Child's Reading Frequency of Books in English

 **Frequent** (5-7 days a week)
  **Moderate** (1-4 days a week)
  **Infrequent** (Less than 1 day a week)



Data by Household Income Level




Base: Children Ages 6-17 who have started to learn English

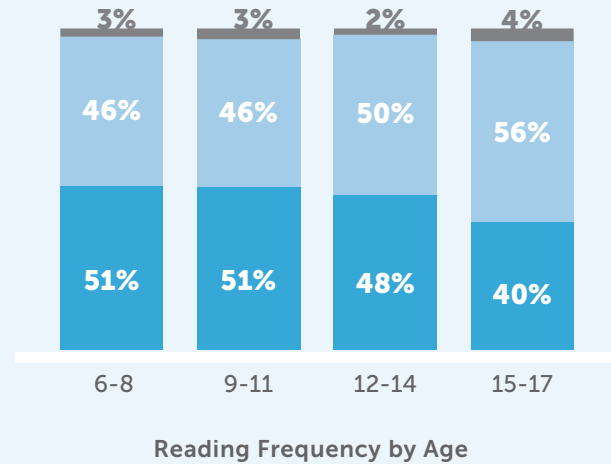
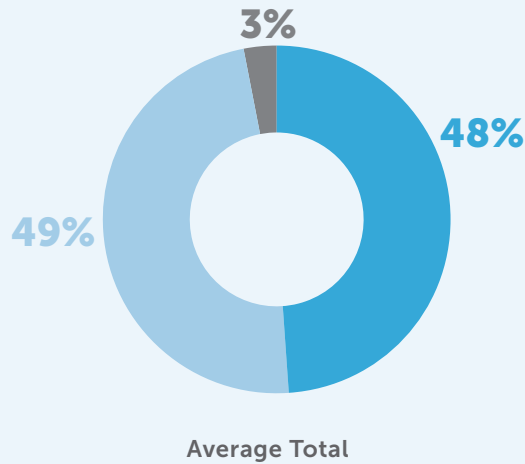
➤ Children's reading trends remain steady before declining after age 12

- ▶ It is crucial for them to become fluent, competent readers before they turn 12 because their reading frequency begins to decline significantly at age 12 onwards.
- ▶ At the age of 12, Chinese children have to start preparing for the High School Entrance Examination (Zhongkao) within their Junior High School years and subsequently the National College Entrance Examination (Gaokao) during their Senior High School years. Both exams are highly demanding and competitive. According to a reading survey conducted by a Chinese high school teacher in 2017, 35% of the students in his school read for less than one hour per day on average because they spend more time studying and improving test scores, with much less time at hand for extra-curricular reading (Wang, 2019). This finding is echoed in our survey.
- ▶ Children aged 6–11 read the most (51% in each age group); the reading frequency then declines at age 12 onwards - *See Figure 25.*
- ▶ Hence, it is important for Chinese English-language learners to become fluent English readers, especially during this crucial period (ages 6–11) as this is where they read most frequently. Otherwise, it would be more difficult to turn them into frequent and fluent English readers.

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

Figure 25.
The frequency of reading decreases with age

 **Frequent**
(5-7 days a week)
  **Moderate**
(1-4 days a week)
  **Infrequent**
(Less than 1 day a week)



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



➤ **Despite being frequent readers, parents and children lack knowledge and guidance in choosing suitable books**

- ▶ Although the majority are frequent readers, parents often find it challenging to find books children like to read and these children think the same too. This could be due to lack of knowledge in getting the right type/format of reading material to match the different stages/ages. Generic “storybook” is the most preferred reading material across all age groups - *See Figures 26, 27.*
- ▶ Though reading is highly established in the Chinese culture, 4 in 10 parents say their child has trouble finding books he or she likes. One possible reason is that parents do not have adequate knowledge on different types of reading materials - *See Figure 28.*
- ▶ This same challenge also occurs among children; 40% say they have trouble finding books they like - *See Figure 29.*
- ▶ Since children see parents as their role models and are quite dependent on their parent’s guidance and preferences, both parents and children are confronted with this challenge.
- ▶ Hence, if we want to encourage Chinese learners below age 12 to read more books, proper guidance should be provided to both parents and children, helping them to navigate through the myriad of books and identify the most suitable ones for their needs and interests.

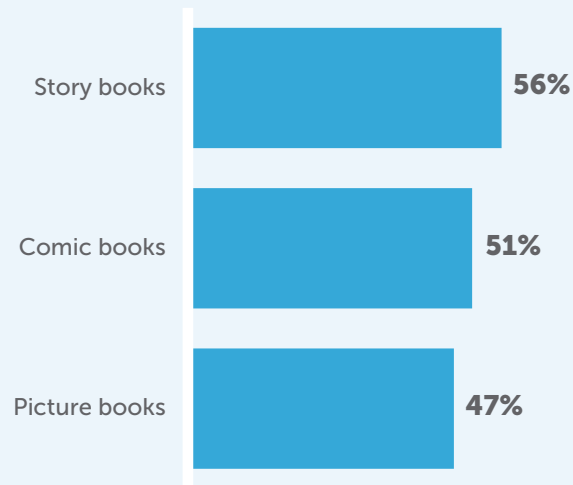
THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR



However, the next most preferred material for children is comic books while parents prefer picture books

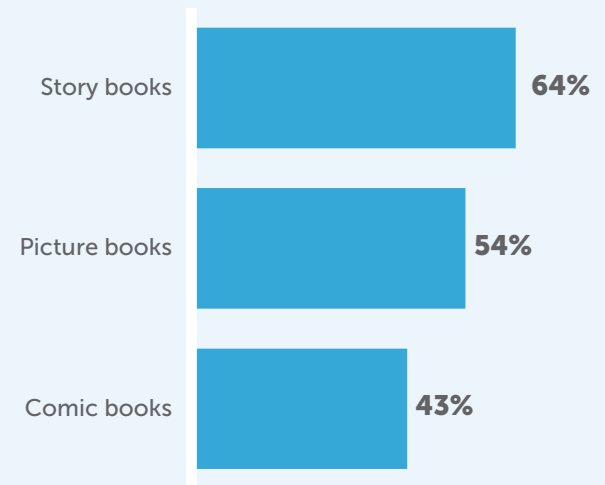
Figure 26. Both parents and children prefer story books over any other English reading materials

Types of English Reading Materials Children Like the Most



Base: Total Children ages 6-17 who have started learning English

Types of Reading Materials Parents Prefer for Child's English Books



Base: Parents of children who have started to learn English/Parents plan to have child learn English

Figure 27. Story books are most preferred by children of all age groups

Types of Reading Materials Children Like the Most

CHILDREN AGES 6-8		CHILDREN AGES 9-11		CHILDREN AGES 12-14		CHILDREN AGES 15-17	
Story books	67%	Story books	68%	Story books	60%	Story books	65%
Picture books	58%	Comic books	59%	Graphic novels	53%	Chapter books/ Novels	50%
Comic books	51%	Picture books	49%	Comic books	49%	Magazines	46%

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

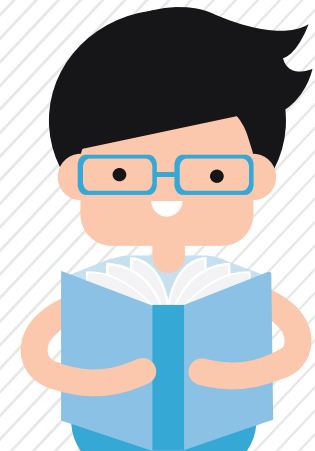




Figure 28.
4 in 10 parents say their child has trouble finding books they like

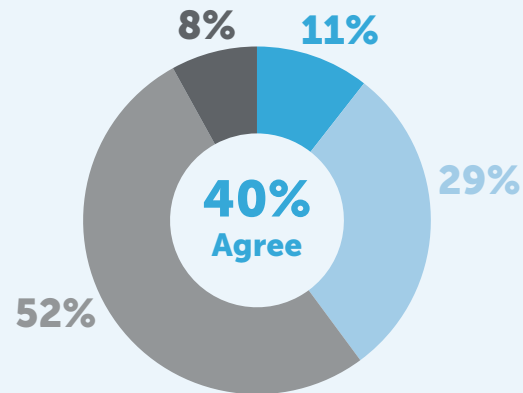
Agreement with Statement:
My child has trouble finding books he/she likes (asked if child is age 6-17)

 Agree strongly

 Agree somewhat

 Disagree somewhat

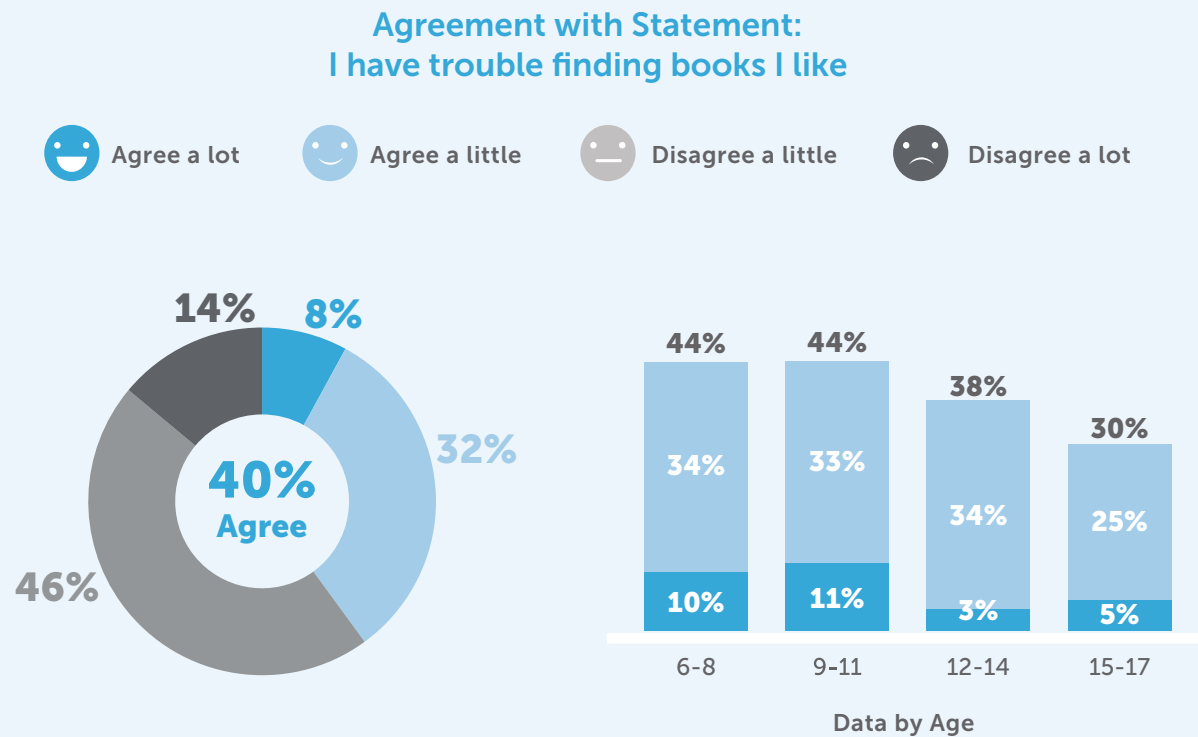
 Disagree strongly



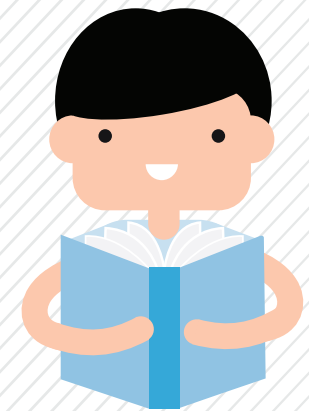
Base: Total Parents of 6-17 year olds



Figure 29.
4 in 10 children agree that they have trouble finding books they like



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



The percentage increases for children aged 11 or younger

➤ Print books over digital

- ▶ Print books are hugely favored over digital ones.
 - ▶ Although print preference decreases among children especially aged 12 and up, print preference is still stronger than e-books for all ages - *See Figure 30.*
 - ▶ 83% agree that they will always want to read books printed on paper even though there are e-books available — this is evenly distributed across all age groups (0–17) - *See Figure 31.* One reason is that there can be more meaningful dialogues and interactions between parents and children when reading print books together, which is crucial for the children’s communicative, emotional and cognitive development. Hence Chinese parents still favor and regard these print books highly (Fan, 2019).
 - ▶ Children aged 12 and up are exposed to blended learning which requires more use of digital media and book consumption; hence they consume fewer print books. The widely available and cheaper digital devices offer children a richer variety of options to read, and reduce their dependence on print books as a source of information and knowledge. According to the 2018 China Children Digital Reading Report released by the Chinese Academy of Press and Publication, Chinese children read 40 digital books on a per capita basis, and the potential digital book readers can be as many as 250 million (Lu, 2019).

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

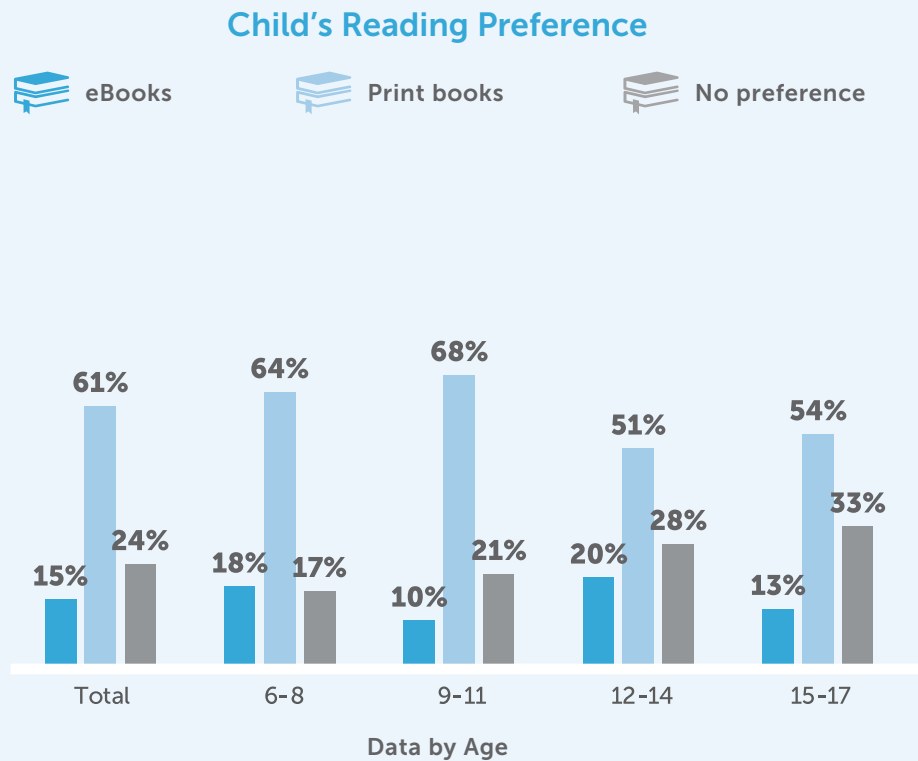
- ▶ Children aged 12 and above are reading less. One possible explanation is the mounting academic pressure. Teachers assign more homework to students, and parents usually send their children to after-school classes to improve their test scores. As a result, there is not much time left for the children to read.
- ▶ In addition, the Internet is taking away their reading time. According to the 2016–2017 China Children Internet Literacy Report, over 60% of children aged 14 spent over half an hour on internet surfing, online games, and social media apps.
- ▶ Hence if we want Chinese learners below age 12 to be keen in reading to learn, print reading materials should remain as a staple in the home, with digital components as a complementary or add-on feature.

THE CHINA READING CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR



The percentage is the highest for children ages 9–11

Figure 30.
61% of children prefer print books over e-books

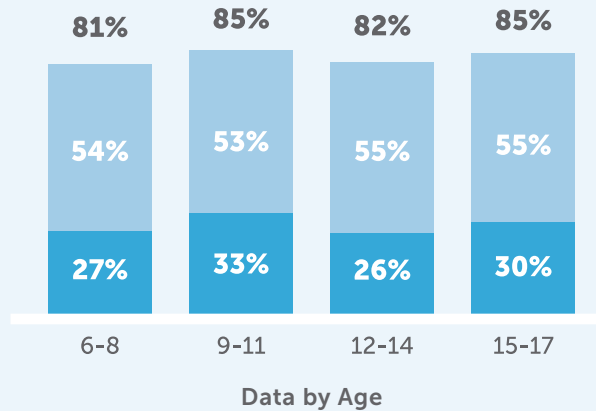
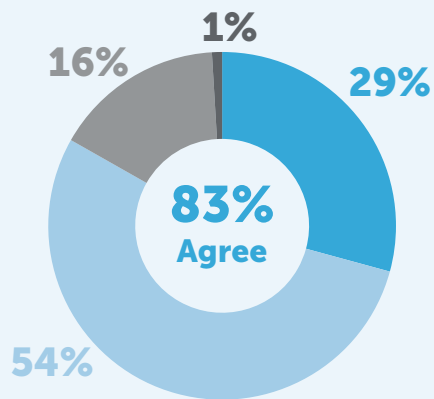


Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

Figure 31.
Most children agree that they will always prefer reading printed books

Agreement with Statement:
I'll always want to read books printed on paper even though there are ebooks available

 Agree a lot
  Agree a little
  Disagree a little
  Disagree a lot



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

“I like it a lot when my parents read-aloud to me at home. We do it at least once a week and it’s our special time together!”

— Child



**THE ROLE AND
IMPORTANCE OF
READ-ALLOUD
IN CHINA**

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF READ-ALOUD IN CHINA

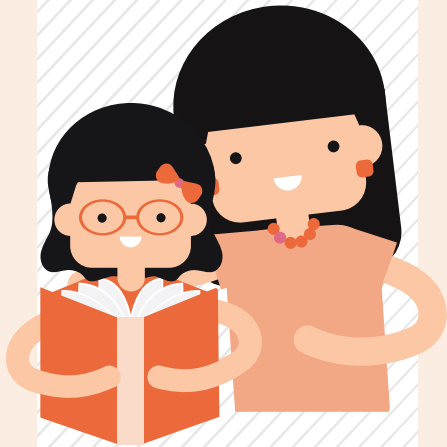
KEY FINDINGS

- Read-aloud has a positive impact on the child's reading frequency.
 - ▶ Read-aloud is (or was) a special time between the parent and child, with 4 in 10 parents agreeing strongly. Parents of frequent readers are more likely to agree strongly - *See Figure 32.*
- Read-aloud is commonly practiced and enjoyed as a special time between the parent and child from age 2 to 8, and children generally also love read-aloud.
 - ▶ 84% of children aged 6–17 love(d) or like(d) read-aloud time at home a lot. Younger children enjoy read-aloud more than older children - *See Figure 33.*
 - ▶ 46% of children aged 6–8 and 33% of those aged 9–11 wanted read-aloud to be continued - *See Figure 34.*
- Read-aloud begins fairly early among Chinese children, with 54% starting below age 2 – this percentage remains consistent through age 8 and then begins to decline - *See Figures 35; 36.*
 - ▶ Since read-aloud begins early and is already something Chinese families are usually familiar and feel comfortable with, English read-aloud can be introduced to children to kick-start their English learning from a much younger age. There are indeed highly recommended read-aloud materials for parents including *Acorn: Hello, Crabby* by Jonathan Fenske, *Dog Man #6: Brawl of the Wild* by Dav Pilkey, *The Parker Inheritance* by Varian Johnson, *The Word Collector* by Peter H. Reynolds, and *Kiranmala and the Kingdom Beyond* series by Sayantani DasGupta.
- Read-aloud is essential in progressive English learning because it builds word-sound awareness (Huang, 2010), boosts fluency (Torgeson, 2004; Ninsuwan, 2015), and builds motivation, curiosity, and memory (Bardige, 2009). These skills are required in mastering the language.

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF READ-ALLOUD IN CHINA

- At the same time, read-aloud boosts family bonding and makes sure the child is learning and reading well.
- Scholastic advocates strongly for read-aloud as it recognizes the important role of family bonding and the impact of read-aloud upon fluency.
- To celebrate the profound power of read-aloud, LitWorld, a non-profit founded by Pam Allyn, Senior Literacy Advisor to Scholastic, created the World Read Aloud Day (WRAD).
- Pam Allyn believes that “read-aloud is a prescription for lifelong success for the child and a dose of deep well-being for the family”.
- The *Kids & Family Reading Report*[™], US edition first created a data benchmark around family read-aloud habits in 2014, the same year the American Academy of Pediatrics released new guidelines encouraging parents to read to their children beginning at birth, saying it enhances parent-child bonding and prepares babies’ brains for language and literacy skills.
- Since then, there has been a rise of read-aloud among American parents and children. The latest *Kids & Family Reading Report*[™], US Edition shows that the percentage of parents reading aloud during a child’s first three months rose nearly 50% since 2014. The number of 6–8 year-olds being read aloud to 5–7 days a week increased by seven points since 2016.





THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF READ-ALOUD IN CHINA

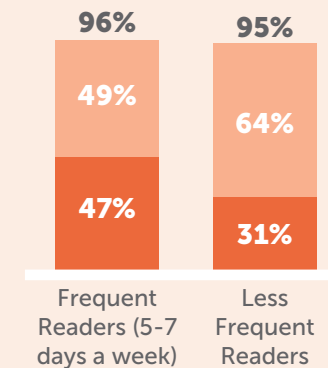
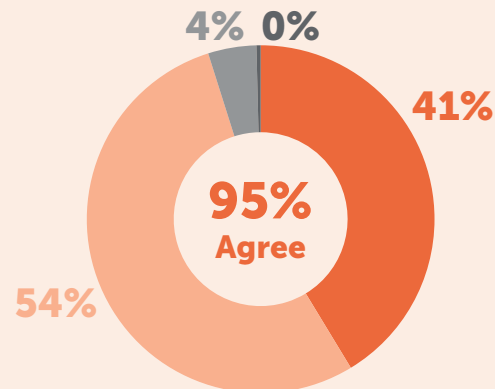


The sentiment increases for those who read more frequently

Figure 32.
Nearly all parents agree that read-alouds are special times with their children

Agreement with Statement:
Reading aloud is (or was) a special time with my child

 Agree strongly  Agree somewhat  Disagree somewhat  Disagree strongly



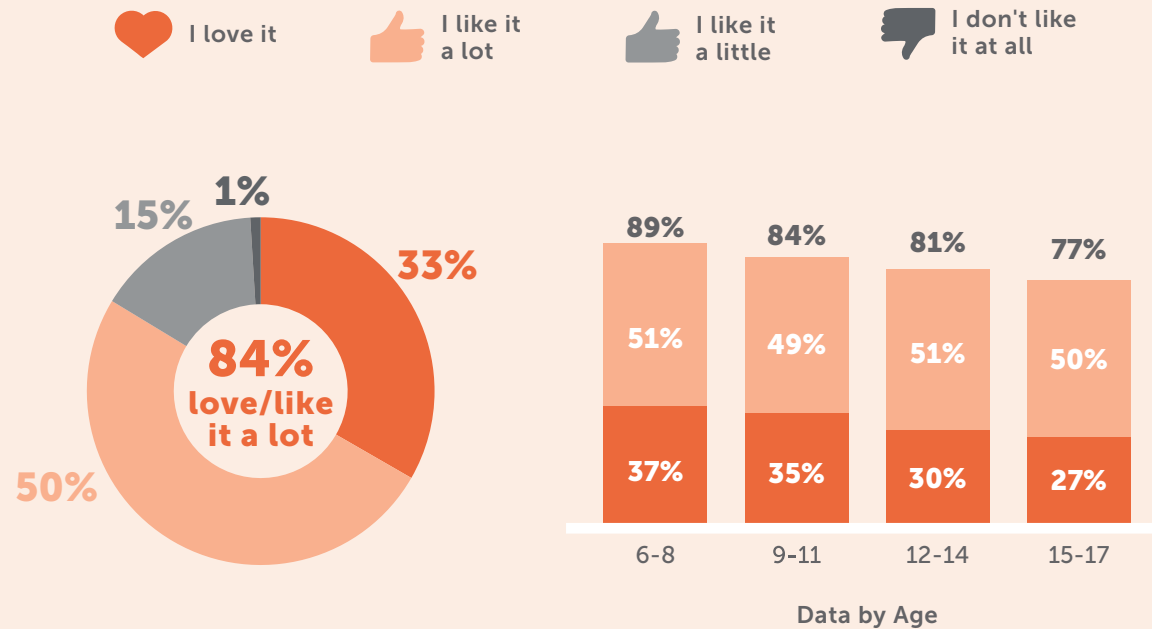
Data by Reading Frequency

Base: Parents of children 0-14, who ever read aloud to child

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF READ-ALOUD IN CHINA

Figure 33.
Many children enjoy being read aloud to

Child's Enjoyment of Being Read Aloud to at Home



The sentiment increases with younger children



Base: Children ages 6-17 who currently are or were read books aloud

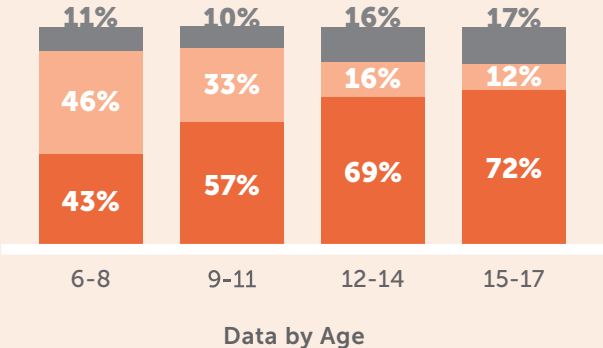
THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF READ-ALOUD IN CHINA



Figure 34.
Younger children are more likely than older children to not be ready for read aloud to stop

Whether Child was Ready for Read Aloud at Home to Stop

-  I was ready for reading aloud to stop
-  I wanted reading aloud to continue
-  It didn't really matter to me if reading aloud stopped or not

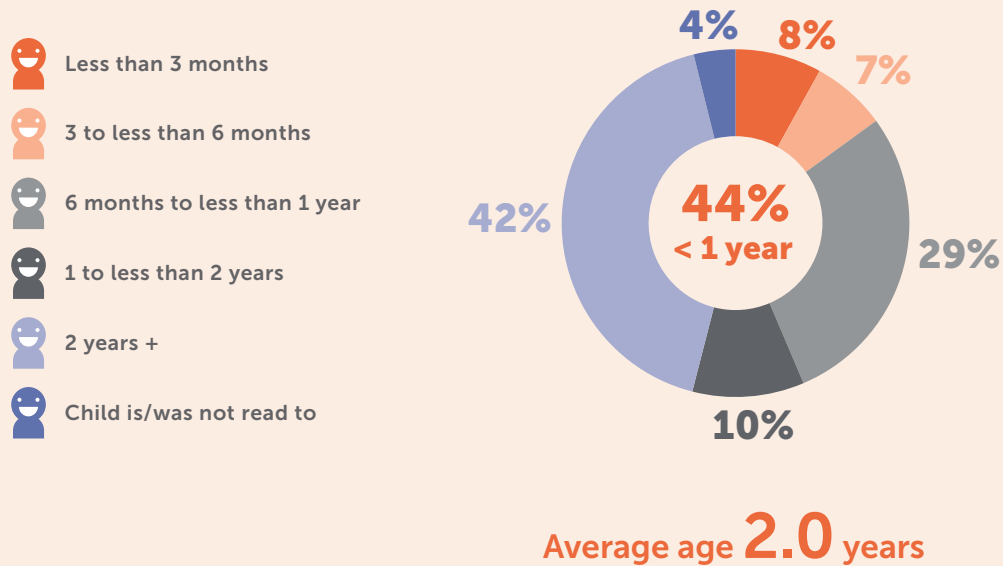


Base: Children ages 6-17 who were read books aloud previously but not anymore

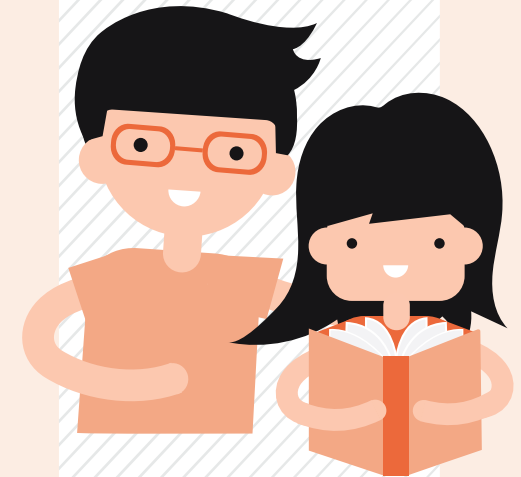
THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF READ-ALOUD IN CHINA

Figure 35.
44% of children were read aloud to before age 1

Age of Child When Reading Aloud at Home Began



Base: Parents of Children ages 0-14



However,
for **52%**
of children
reading aloud
only began
after age 1

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF READ-ALOUD IN CHINA

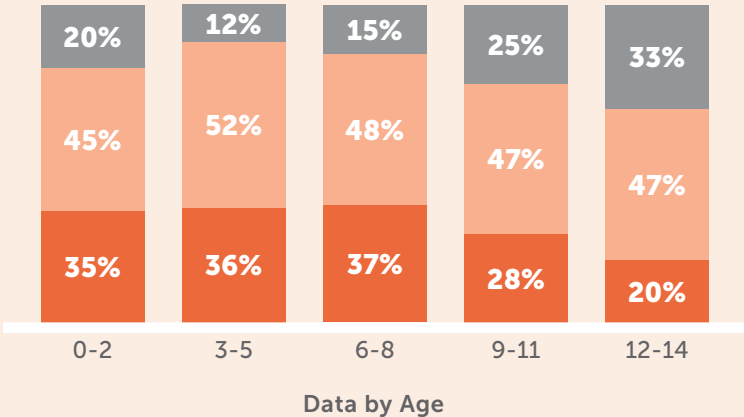
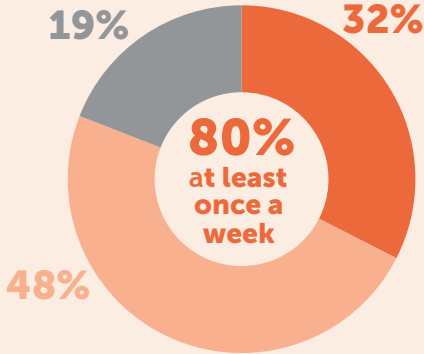


Frequency remains consistent through age 8 and then begins to decline

Figure 36.
80% of children are read aloud to at least once a week

Frequency Child is Read Books Aloud to at Home

- Frequent (5-7 days a week)
- Moderate (1-4 days a week)
- Infrequent (Less than 1 day a week)



Base: Parents of Children ages 0-14

"My parents are my biggest role models and source of encouragement. The more my parents read, the more I read too, and the more I believe how important it is to read books for fun."

— Child



THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS

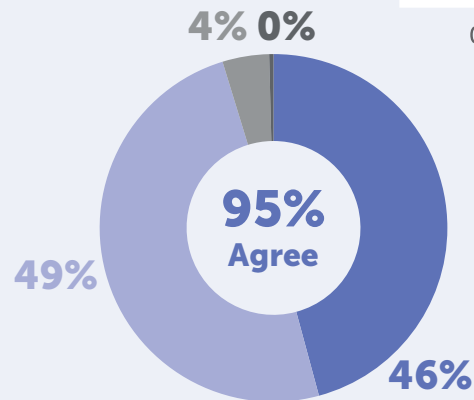
► Parents are children's biggest role models

- ▶ Parents are the biggest role models for their children, as children often emulate how their parents think and feel.
 - ▶ 95% of both parents and children share the same belief that being able to read, speak and write in both Chinese and English will make them more successful - *See Figures 37, 38.*
 - ▶ When parents read frequently, their children are more likely to say it is extremely important that they read books for fun - *See Figure 39.*
 - ▶ Children agree with their parents in their opinion of reading for fun, with close to 9 in 10 children indicating it is extremely or very important to read books for fun - *See Figure 39.*
 - ▶ Notably, parents are also the largest source of reading encouragement (89%), followed by teachers (71%) and this is apparent across all age groups - *See Figure 40.*
- ▶ Parents remain the largest source of reading encouragement as children get older, even as other sources of encouragement (such as teachers) increase - *See Figure 40.*
 - ▶ Our survey finds that parents of younger children (age 0–5) are less likely to be frequent readers compared to parents of older children (aged 6 and above) - *See Figure 41.*
 - ▶ This could be due to parents believing that reading (regardless of whether in English or the local language) is the surest way to improve academic performance and cognitive skills. Parents want their children aged six and above to read more and better so as to excel at school/academic studies.

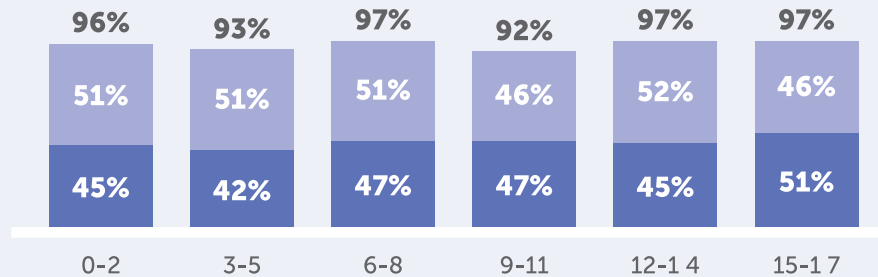
Figure 37. Nearly all parents agree that children who are able to read, speak and write in both Chinese and English will be more successful

Agreement with Statement:
Children who can read, speak and write in Chinese and English are more likely to be successful in the future

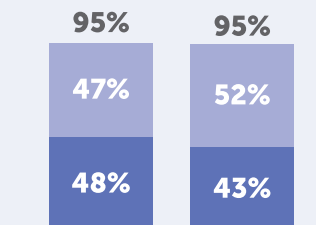
-  Agree strongly
-  Agree somewhat
-  Disagree somewhat
-  Disagree strongly



Base: Total Parents



Data by Child's Age



Data by Gender



This statement is mostly agreed with by parents regardless of child's age or gender

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS

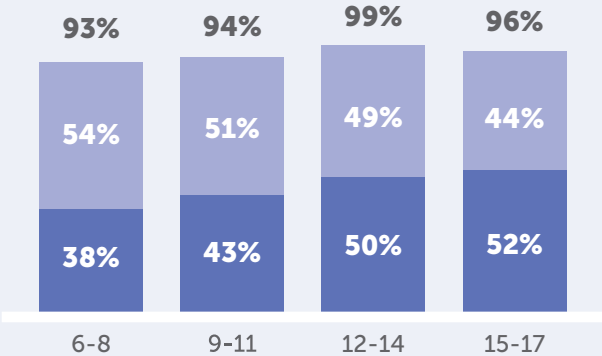
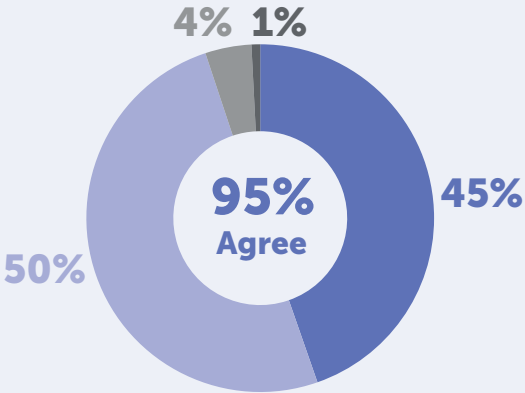


This sentiment increases with child's age

Figure 38. Nearly all children agree that fluency in English and Chinese will increase future success

Agreement with Statement:
If I can read, speak and write in Chinese and English, I will be more successful in the future

Agree a lot
 Agree a little
 Disagree a little
 Disagree a lot





Data by Child's Age


Base: Total Children Ages 6-17


Figure 39. Children echo their parents' view on the importance of reading

Importance of Reading for Fun (Child)

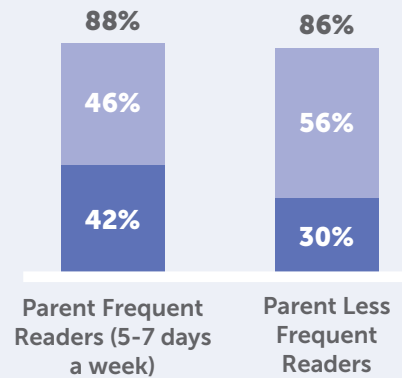
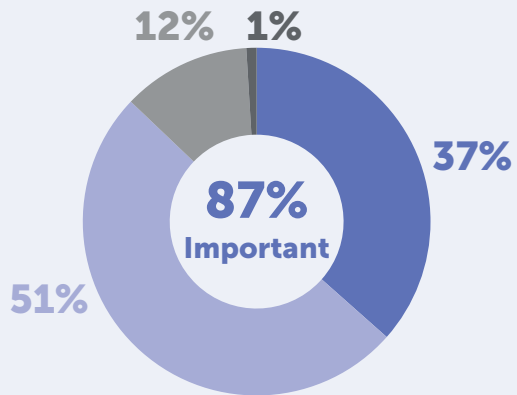
- 

Extremely important
- 

Very important
- 

A little important
- 

Not important



Data by Parent's Reading Frequency



Children whose parents are frequent readers find it more important to read

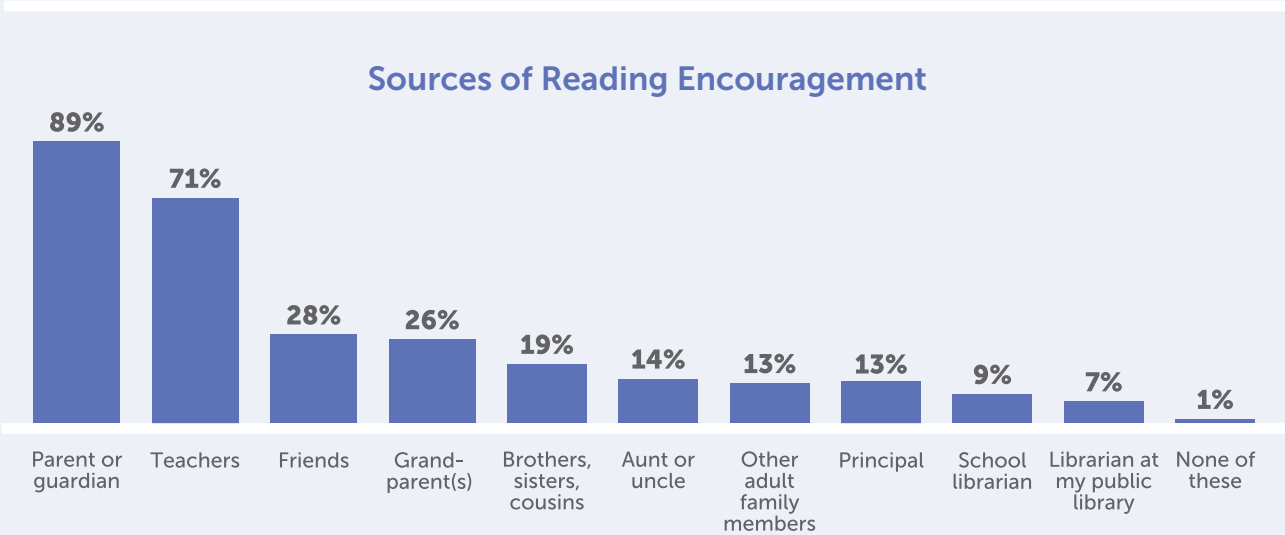
Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS



Parents remain the largest source of reading encouragement as children get older

Figure 40. Parents and teachers are the most common sources of reading encouragement

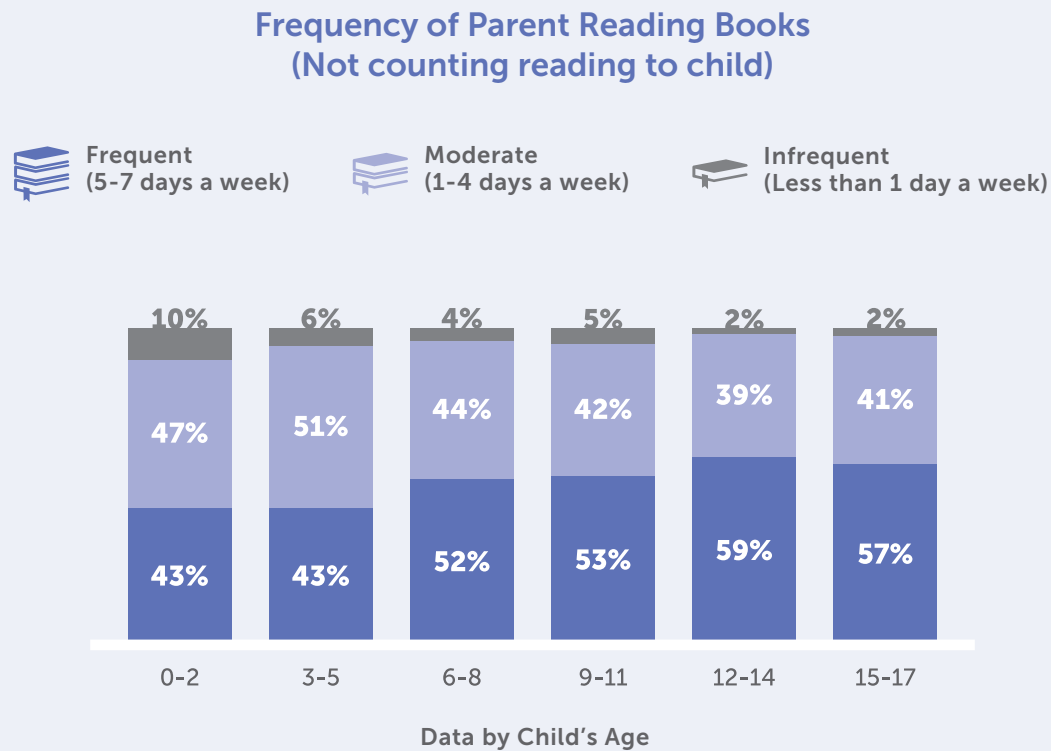


	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17
Parent/guardian	87%	88%	90%	91%
Teachers	67%	68%	73%	79%

Data by Age

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

Figure 41. Parents of younger children are less likely to be frequent readers compared to parents of older children



Base: Total Parents



THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ **Parents want to get involved as much as possible in their child's learning**
 - ▶ The more well-equipped/fluent the parents are in the language, the more involved they will be in the child's learning. As explained earlier, lack of proper guidance and linguistic competence can hinder parents from being involved in their children's reading activities.
 - ▶ A lack of English skills is the top reason for parents not guiding their child to read in English more often (37%) and 95% of all parents agree that better knowledge of English would help them be more engaged in their child's English-learning process. - See Figures 42, 43.

Figure 42. Low English proficiency is the most common reason parents do not guide their children's reading

Reasons Child is not Guided to Read in English More Frequently

GUIDED TO	TOTAL
I am not fluent in / do not know English	37%
I do not have time to do this	30%
I do not know how to guide my child	26%
I know my child is guided to read in English at school	23%
It is not a priority for me	20%
Child can read in English on his/her own	18%
We don't have English books at home my child would be interested in	11%

Base: Parents of children ages 0-14 currently guided to read in English 5-6 days a week or less

Figure 43. Nearly all parents agree that higher English proficiency would help them engage their children to learn

Agreement with Statement:
I would be more engaged in my child learning English at home if I were better able to speak and read in English



Agree strongly



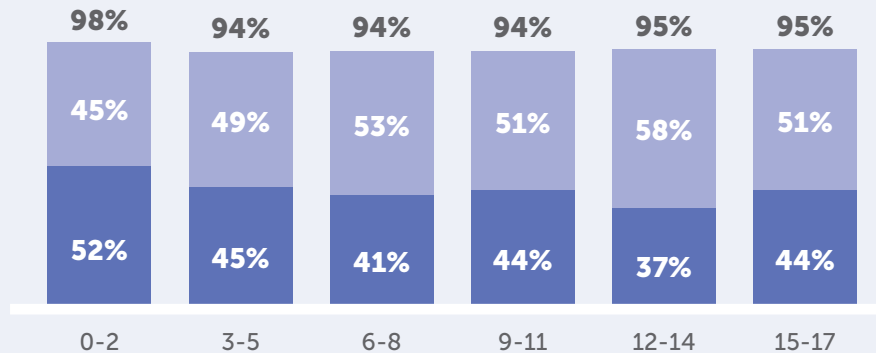
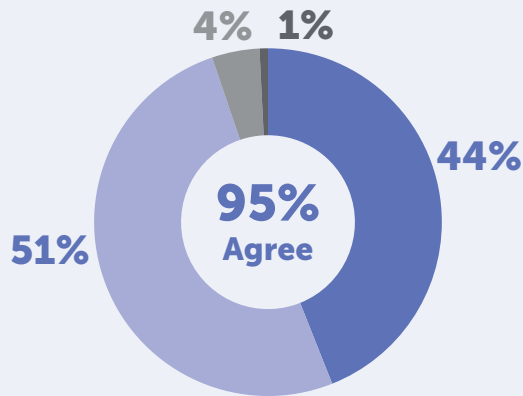
Agree somewhat



Disagree somewhat



Disagree strongly



Data by Child's Age

Base: Total Parents



Parents of children ages 0-2 agree the most with this statement

“I want my child to develop into a well-rounded individual, and English language proficiency is among the top important skills that I want my child to have. I believe my child will be more successful if s/he is able to read, speak, and write in both Chinese and English.”

— Parent



**THE ASPIRATIONS
CHINESE PARENTS
HAVE FOR THEIR
CHILDREN**

THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

KEY FINDINGS

➤ English proficiency is key to success

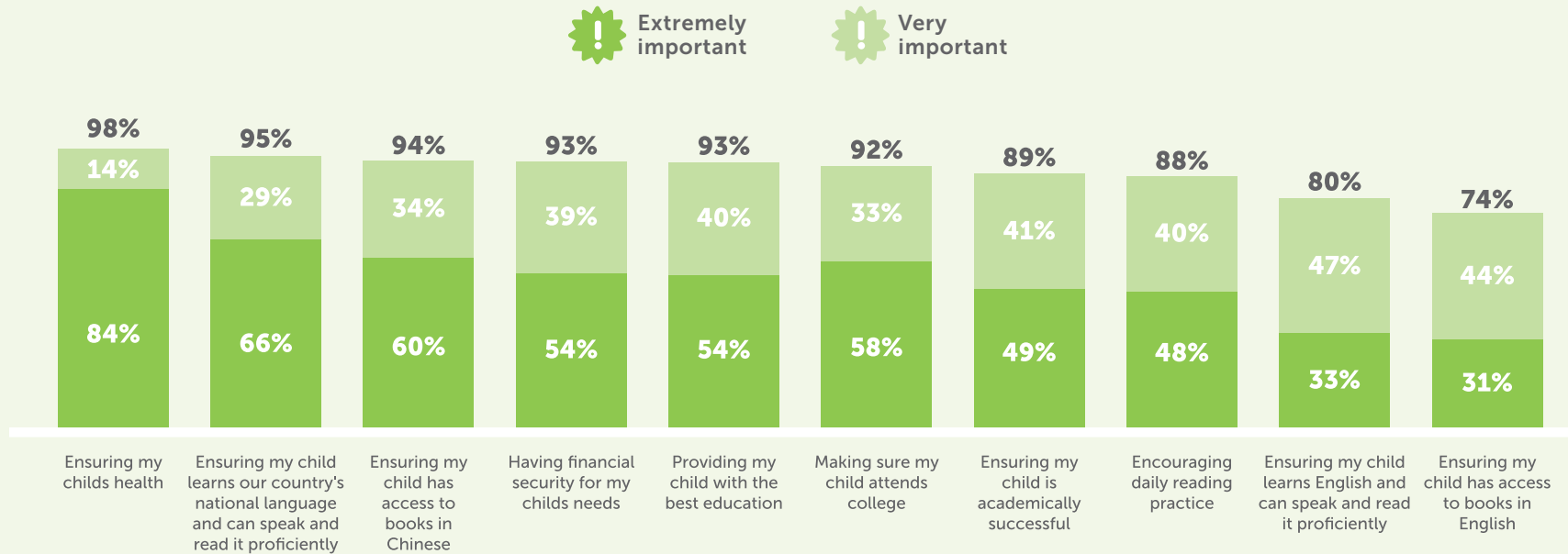
Chinese parents hold high hopes for their children. Such expectation can be found in language learning as well. As China becomes more integrated in the global economy, a solid mastery of English becomes a competitive edge personally and professionally.

- ▶ While Chinese language proficiency is the top language priority parents have for children since it is the national language used for daily communication and is a formal teaching medium, English is the most important foreign language to master.
 - ▶ 95% of parents believe Chinese language proficiency is important and 80% believe English language proficiency is also important – *See Figure 44.*
 - ▶ English proficiency is also ranked among the top four most important skills along Critical Thinking, Maths and Science, and Athletic ability which 46% of parents want their children to develop - *See Figure 45.*
 - ▶ 95% of both parents and children agree that those who are able to read, speak and write in both Chinese and English will be more successful.

THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Figure 44.
80% of parents agree that English proficiency is important for their child

Importance Parents Place on Various Aspects of Child's Life

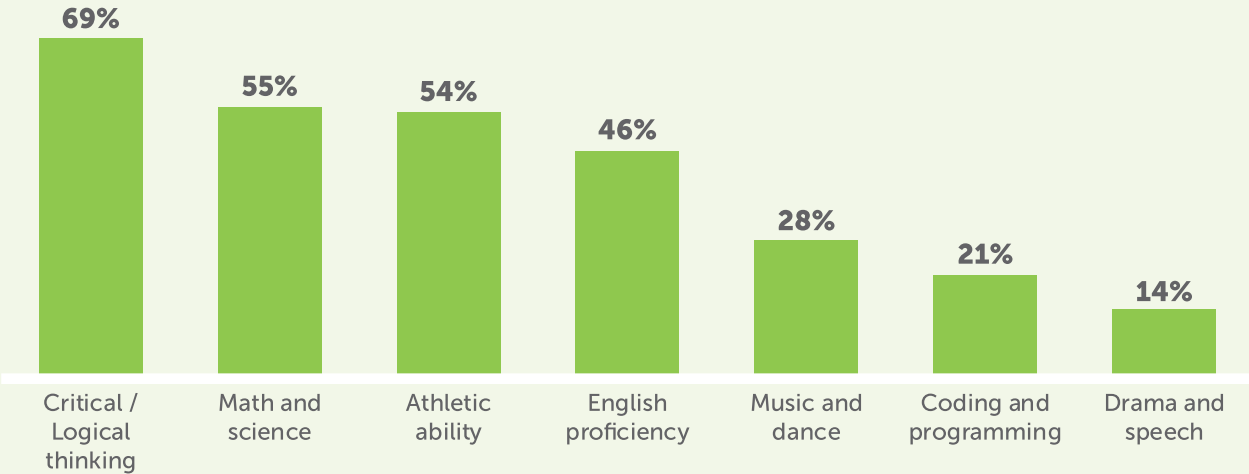


Base: Parents of Children Ages 6-17

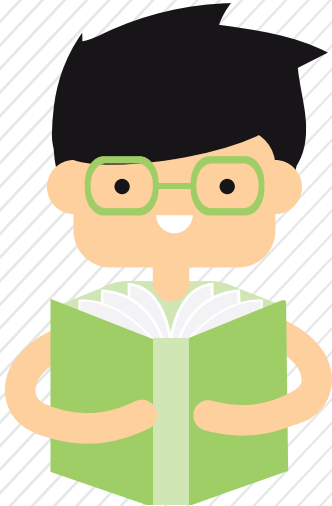
THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Figure 45. English proficiency is ranked by parents as among the top four most important skills for the child to have

Most Wanted Skills/Talents for Child



Base: Parents of Children Ages 6-17



THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

➤ English proficiency is required to achieve desirable academic, learning and career goals

- ▶ There are many specific reasons why parents want their children to learn English, but many simply recognize its general importance to have as a skill in today's world.
- ▶ More specifically parents recognize English as an important global language that grants access to opportunities around the world and is crucial for global communication, which can guarantee a better career and more success.
 - ▶ As a result of their learning English, more than half (54%) of parents most hope that their child masters a foreign language. Other top hopes include their child being comfortable speaking it in social settings (49%), getting a good job that provides financial stability (30%) and doing well on the famously difficult National College Entrance Exam (30%) - *See Figures 46, 47.*
 - ▶ These are in line with previous various studies on why parents think English is very important for their children's future.
 - ▶ Studies have shown that language learning provides a wide range of benefits for children's development.
 - ▶ Speaking a foreign language improves the brain's functionality by challenging it to recognize, negotiate meaning, and communicate in different language systems. In addition, it is found that language learning can help you stave off Alzheimer's and dementia. For monolingual adults, the mean age for the first signs of dementia is 71.4. For adults who speak two or more languages, the mean age for the onset is 75.5.
 - ▶ Being a multilingual person also means you are more observant. A study from Spain's University of Pompeu Fabra revealed that multilingual people are better at observing their surroundings. They are more adept at focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant details. They are also better at spotting misleading information.
 - ▶ With bilingual competence, one is also more likely to be a better decision-maker. According to a University of Chicago study, bilingual people tend to make more rational decisions (Macia, 2014).

THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN



In terms of specific uses/skills, helping career prospects and communication with others rise to the top

Figure 46. Most parents want their child to learn English because of its general importance

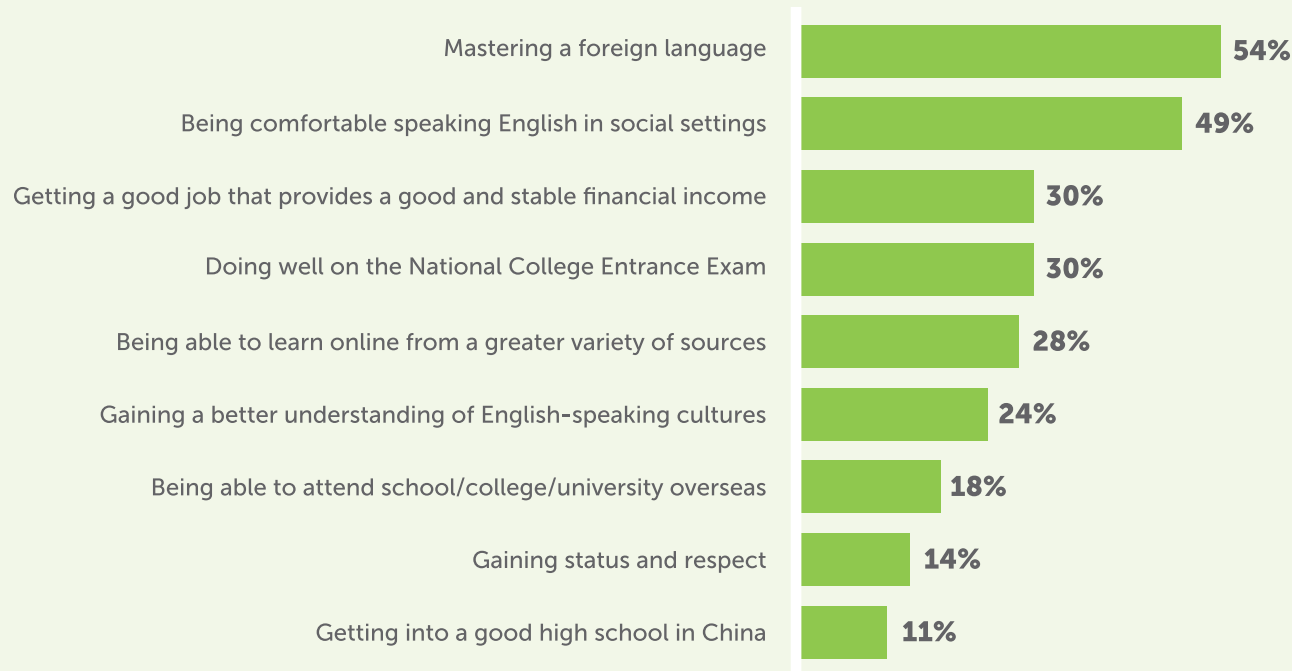
	TOTAL
General importance/utility (Net)	54%
English is a widespread/global/versatile/an international language/lingua franca	16%
Learning a foreign language is good/important	9%
As another skill/ability/tool	5%
It's important (unspecified)	6%
Specific Uses (Net)	44%
For job/career/future prospects/development/ earning more money	23%
For broadening horizons/understanding the wider world/culture	11%
For academic advancement/for examinations	9%
Being able to go abroad/study/travel abroad	5%
Specific Skills (Net)	29%
As a means of communication/socialize/ communicate with other people	19%
Reading ability	9%
Speaking ability	6%

Base: Parents who say it is important to learn English

THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Figure 47. Among parents whose children are learning or will learn English, the most common hope is that their child can master a foreign language

Hopes Parents have for their Child as a Result of Learning English



Base: Total parents of children who are learning English/planning to have child learn English



It is also hoped that it will help their children be more comfortable with speaking English in social settings

THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

KEY FINDINGS

➤ Parents are looking into better-rounded child development

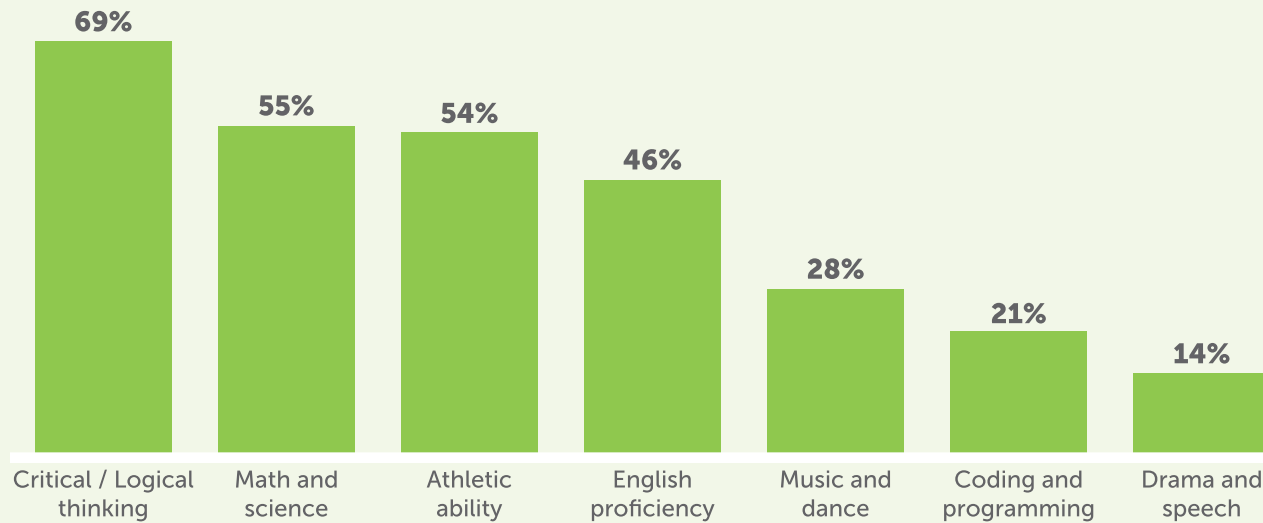
Parents are looking into a more balanced mix of intellectual, academic and physical skills: Critical Thinking, Maths and Science and Athletic skills are among the three most wanted skills or talents parents hope for their child to develop - See *Figure 48*.

- ▶ A holistic, integrated learning approach and programs that facilitate learning of the English language as well as knowledge and skills required to thrive in the 21st century would help, for instance, the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) framework.
- ▶ Since CLIL incorporates strengths from CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and TBL (Task-based Learning) and goes beyond language learning and domain knowledge acquisition, learners can reap multiple benefits, namely, cognitive capability, cross-culture communication awareness and communicative skills. CLIL offers a real-life, highly relevant context with comprehensible input across various knowledge domains for language learners, making the language learning more engaging (Li, 2014).
- ▶ Learning subjects like STEAM and social-emotional learning in another language also boost critical thinking and knowledge. STEAM is problem-solving driven and follows a learning-by-doing approach. Students are encouraged to apply what they have learned to solve problems. Sensory-rich activities and projects requiring interdisciplinary solutions promote children's logical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills (Huang, 2020).

THE ASPIRATIONS CHINESE PARENTS HAVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Figure 48. Most parents are looking for their child to develop a mix of intellectual, academic and physical skills

Most Wanted Skills/Talents for Child



Base: Parents of Children Ages 6-17



“I wish my child had started learning English at an earlier age. When it comes to English learning, my child and I agree that reading is very important and is the most effective way to learn! We also wish there were more books available to support English learning.”

— Parent



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

➤ Pre-school and school-going children learn English in slightly different ways

- ▶ Besides learning English at home and taking English classes at school, parents also send their children to language enrichment centers to increase their exposure to English.
- ▶ Children learn English differently according to whether they are not yet in school (below six years old) or school-aged (6-17 years old):
 - ▶ First, the places where they learn English are different. Younger children (below six years old) primarily learn English at home while children aged 6–17 primarily learn English at school and learning/enrichment centers. School is the primary place where school-age children learn English (83%).
 - ▶ Secondly, the extent to which they use certain mediums to learn English differ. Young children primarily learn English at home through English language TV and movies (60%), video games (44%) and being read to or looking at books (43%). School-aged children also use resources at home but to a lesser extent, likely with more time being taken up at school and language enrichment centers - *See Figure 49.*

Figure 49. Most children aged below six learn English from TV while those aged above six learn the language from school

Where/How Children Learn English

PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGES 0-5	
At home, by watching TV shows/ movies/ cartoons in English	60%
At home, by playing or using video, PC, or Mobile games in English	44%
At home, by being read to or looking at books in English	43%
At preschool or kindergarten	38%
Reading books in English (at home or in other locations)	27%
By having conversations in English (at home or in other locations)	27%
Reading other reading materials in English (at home or in other locations)	18%
At childcare or from his/her childcare provider	5%

PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGES 6-17	
At school	83%
At learning / enrichment centers	43%
At home, by watching TV shows/ movies/ cartoons in English	38%
At home, by playing or using video, PC, or Mobile games in English	36%
At home, by being read to or looking at books in English	34%
Reading books in English (at home or in other locations)	32%
Reading other reading materials in English (at home or in other locations)	23%
By having conversations in English (at home or in other locations)	15%
At childcare or from his/her childcare provider	7%

Base: Parents of children who have started learning English



➤ Reading is the way to go when it comes to learning English

When it comes to learning English, both parents and children recognize the critical importance of reading.

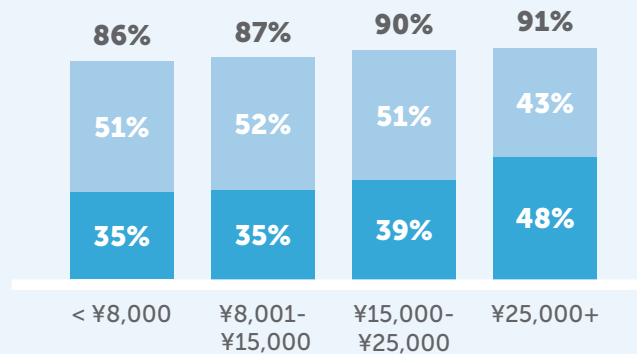
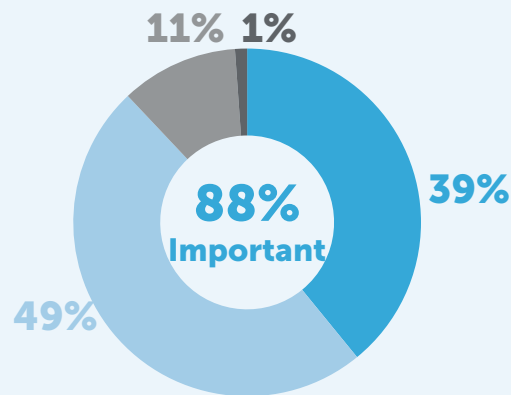
- ▶ 88% of parents say it is very or extremely important for their child to read books in order to become proficient in English. Higher income families are more likely than lower income families to say it is extremely important - *See Figure 50.*
- ▶ Meanwhile, reading books in English is perceived by more than 9 in 10 parents as the most effective way for their children to learn English - *See Figure 51.*
- ▶ Children unanimously agree that reading more English books will help them speak English well (96%); more Children learning English nearly unanimously agree they should read more books in English to be able to speak English well (96%); more than 4 in 10 say they agree "a lot" - *See Figure 52.*

This explains why being guided to read in English is also a key component of learning the language. Of those children learning English, 84% are guided to read in English at home on a weekly basis; 3 in 10 at least five days a week - *See Figure 53.*

Figure 50. Most parents say it is important for their child to read books in English in order to learn the language

Importance of Child Reading Books in English to Learn English

-  Extremely important
-  Very important
-  A little important
-  Not important



Data by Household Income Level

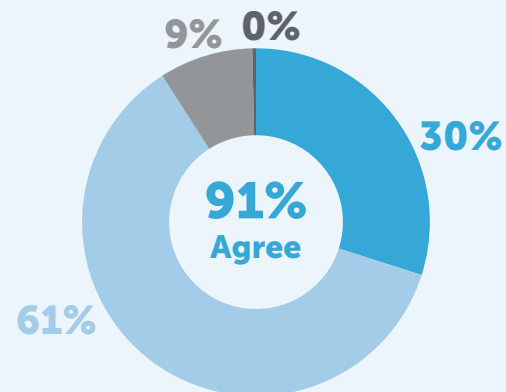


Higher-income parents are most likely to say it is extremely important

Base: Parent of child who has started to learn English/Parent who plans to have child learn English

Figure 51.
91% of parents agree reading books is the most effective way for their child to learn English

Agreement with Statement:
Reading books is the most effective way for my child to learn English



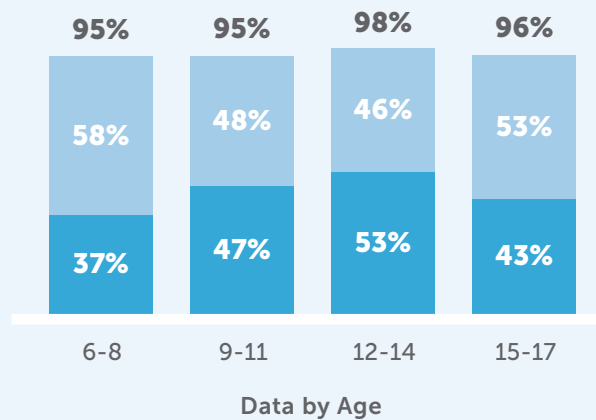
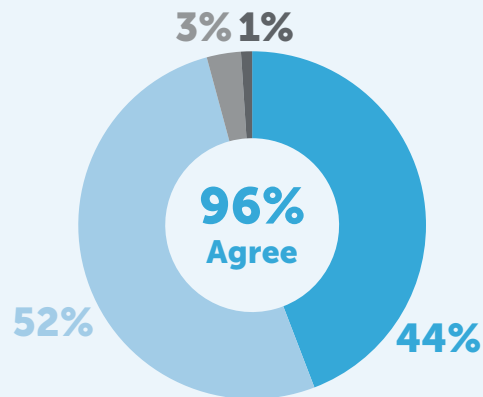
Base: Total Parents



Figure 52.
 Nearly all children agree that they should read more books in English if they want to speak English well

Agreement with Statement:
 I know I should read more books in English if I want to be able to speak English well

 Agree a lot
  Agree a little
  Disagree a little
  Disagree a lot






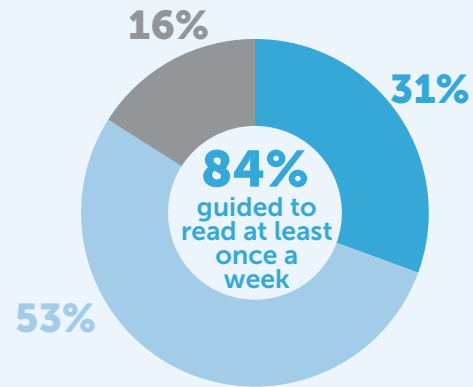
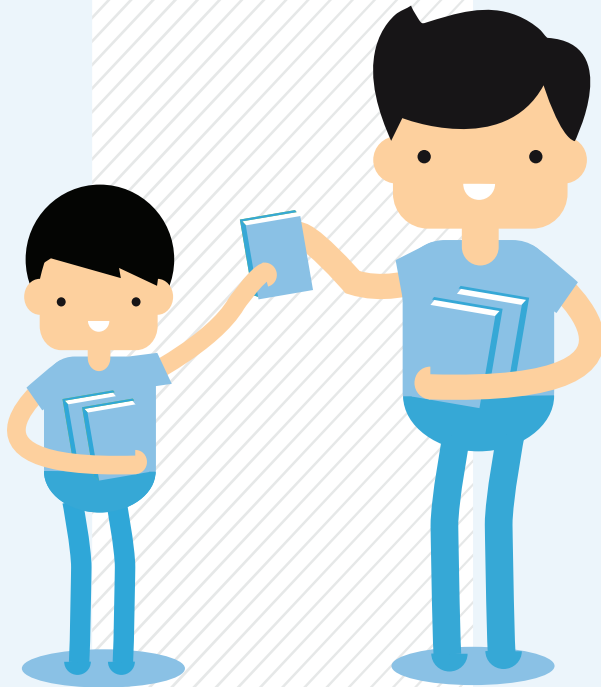
Children agreeing "a lot" to this statement peaks between ages 12-14

Base: Children ages 6-17 who have started to learn English

Figure 53.
84% of children learning English are guided to read in English at home on a weekly basis

Frequency Child is Guided to Read in English at Home

 **Frequent**
(5-7 days a week)  **Moderate**
(1-4 days a week)  **Infrequent**
(Less than 1 day a week)

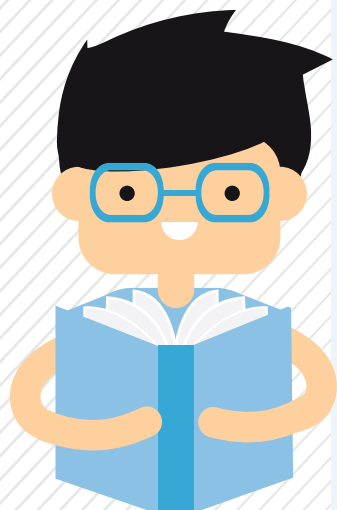


Base: Parent of child ages 0-14 who has started to learn English/ Parent plans to have child learn English

When it comes to children being guided to read English at home, print books play one of the biggest roles, across age groups

- ▶ At ages 12-14 reading materials like books (digital and print) are still the most common way that children are guided to read in English at home but tutoring also becomes more popular at this age - *See Figure 54.*
- ▶ With 84% of parents (whose child is learning English) saying their child is guided to read in English at home at least one day a week, it is clear most parents want to be involved with their child's learning of the language - *See Figure 53.*
- ▶ Despite the clear interest, there are challenges for most parents in helping their children with guided reading in English.
 - ▶ 95% percent of all parents agree they would be more engaged in their child's English learning at home if they were better able to speak and read in English themselves - *See Figure 55.*
 - ▶ Furthermore, of those parents who guide their children to read in English 5-6 days a week or less, the main barriers against doing so more often include: not fluent in/do not know English (37%), lack of time (30%) or they do not know how to guide their child (26%) - *See Figure 56.*
- ▶ Since the content gets more difficult over the academic years, most parents would find it challenging to continue guided reading with their children. This could also possibly explain the popularity of tutoring, especially with an English native speaker, among children aged 12 and above - *See Figure 54.*

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA



**Tutoring
becomes
more
popular as
children
grow older**

Figure 54. Digital and print reading materials are the two most common methods to guide children to read English at home

Methods Used to Guide Child to Read in English, by Age

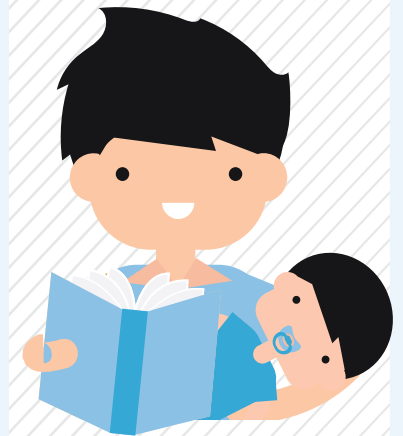
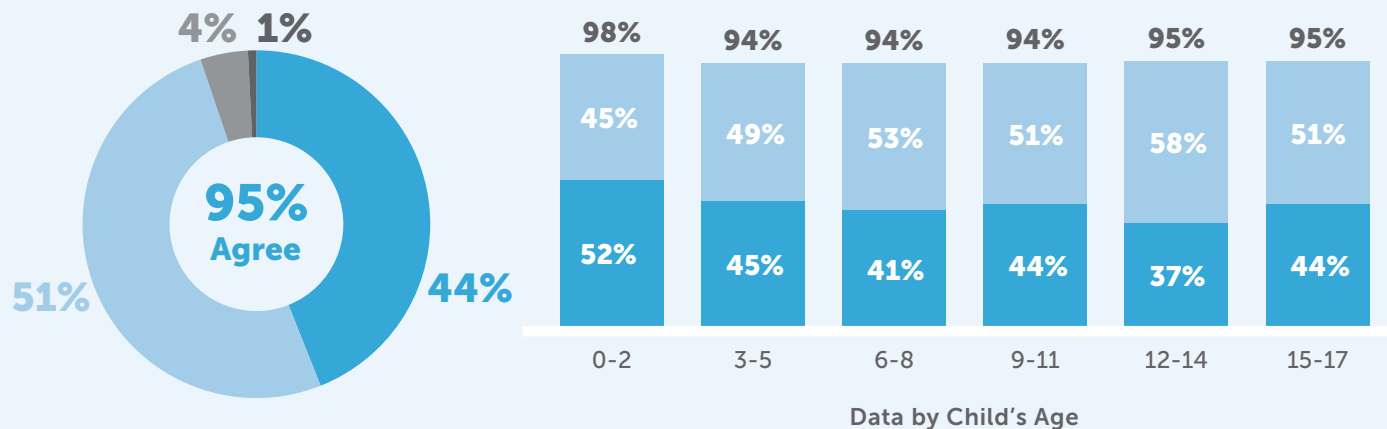
	TOTAL	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14
Digital reading materials such as e-books, animated books, audio books, read-aloud audio tracks	53%	52%	50%	53%	54%	56%
Print reading materials such as readers, picture books, chapter books, graphic novels	49%	55%	45%	47%	52%	47%
Print learning materials such as textbooks, workbooks, flash cards	47%	43%	50%	47%	45%	47%
Digital learning materials such as videos, games, podcasts, interactive whiteboard	37%	28%	40%	43%	39%	25%
Working with a tutor (online and/or home tuition) who is an English native speaker	29%	18%	27%	29%	32%	40%
Working with a tutor (online and/or home tuition) who is not an English native speaker	20%	12%	17%	22%	26%	22%

Base: Parent of children ages 0-14 currently guided to read English or has been guided to read at least 2-3 times per month in the past

Figure 55. Nearly all parents agree that having higher English proficiency would help them engage in their child’s English learning at home

Agreement with Statement:
I would be more engaged in my child’s English learning at home if I were better able to speak and read in English

 Agree strongly
  Agree somewhat
  Disagree somewhat
  Disagree strongly



Parents of children ages 0–2 agree the most with this statement

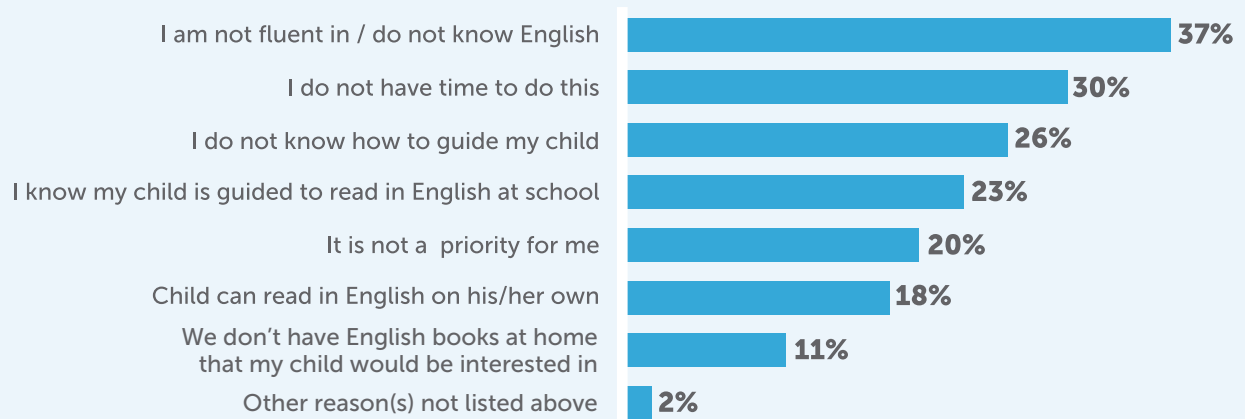
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA



A lack of English skills is more common in lower income households; a lack of time is more common in higher income households

Figure 56. A lack of English skills, time, or knowledge in guiding are the most common barriers to frequent guiding

Reasons Child is not Guided to Read in English More Frequently



	Less than ¥8,000	¥8,001 to ¥15,000	¥15,000 to ¥25,000	More than ¥25,000
I am not fluent in / do not know English	47%	41%	28%	30%
I do not have time to do this	23%	27%	35%	36%

Data by Household Income Level

Base: Parent of children ages 0-14 currently guided to read in English 5-6 days a week or less

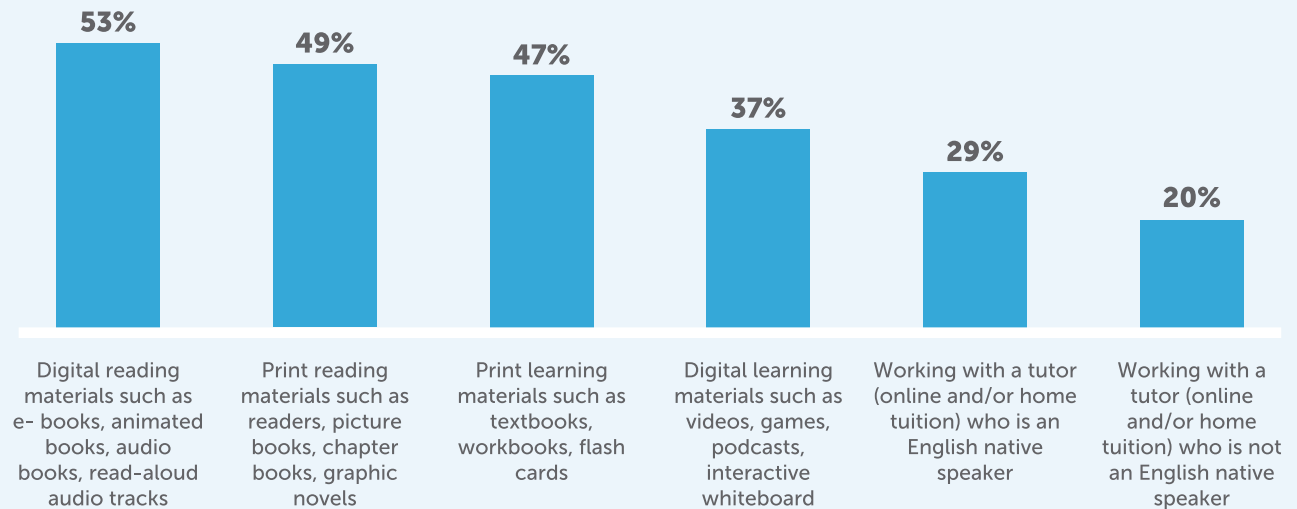
➤ Use of digital learning materials for guided reading peaks between the ages of 6-8

- ▶ At ages 0-2 only 28% of parents say their child is guided to read in English using digital learning materials (such as videos, games, podcasts and interactive whiteboards). This use of digital learning materials rises to 40% by ages 3-5 and falls back down to 25% around ages 12-14 - *See Figure 58.*
- ▶ When asked what age children should start using digital learning tools to learn English, only 24% of parents say children should start using digital tools to learn English before the age of six - *See Figure 59.*
- ▶ The average age preferred by parents for their child to start using digital tools to learn English is 6.3 years - *See Figure 59.*
- ▶ Hence, in order to encourage local learners, especially younger children below 6 years old, to be more keen in reading to learn English, print materials should remain as a staple, with digital components as a complementary or add-on.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 57. Print learning and reading materials are in the top three methods used to guide children in learning English

Methods Used to Guide Child to Read in English



Base: Parent of children ages 0-14 currently guided to read English or has been guided to read at least 2-3 times per month in the past

Figure 58. Digital and print reading materials are the two most common methods to guide children to read English at home

Methods Used to Guide Child to Read in English, by Age

	TOTAL	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14
Digital reading materials such as e-books, animated books, audio books, read-aloud audio tracks	53%	52%	50%	53%	54%	56%
Print reading materials such as readers, picture books, chapter books, graphic novels	49%	55%	45%	47%	52%	47%
Print learning materials such as textbooks, workbooks, flash cards	47%	43%	50%	47%	45%	47%
Digital learning materials such as videos, games, podcasts, interactive whiteboard	37%	28%	40%	43%	39%	25%
Working with a tutor (online and/ or home tuition) who is an English native speaker	29%	18%	27%	29%	32%	40%
Working with a tutor (online and/ or home tuition) who is not an English native speaker	20%	12%	17%	22%	26%	22%



Tutoring becomes more popular as children grow older

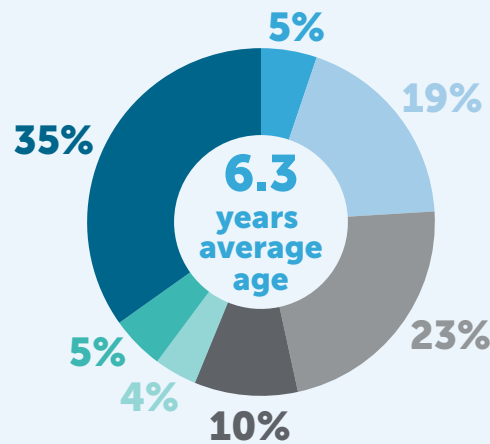
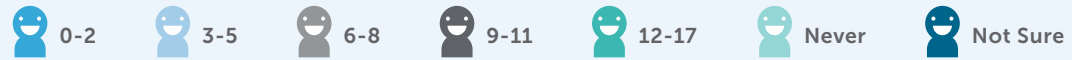
Base: Parent of children ages 0-14 currently guided to read English or has been guided to read at least 2-3 times per month in the past

Figure 59. Only 24% of parents think digital tools should be used before age six

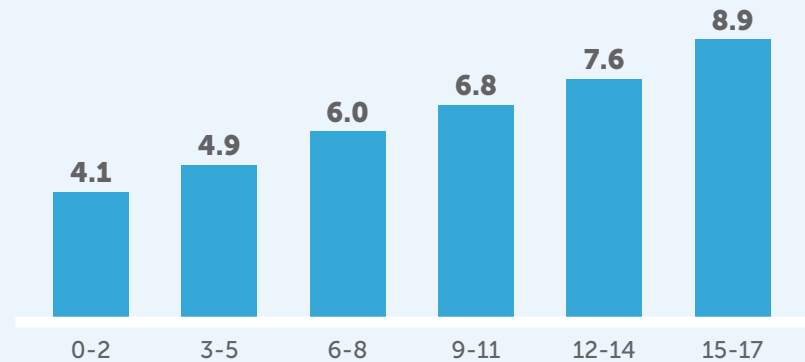


The average age of when “digital tools should be used” increases with age group

Age Parents Believe Children Should Start Using Digital Tools to Learn English



Average Age, by Child's Age



Base: Total Parents

► Parents recognize the importance of getting their child to start learning English early, but are often unable to do so due to lack of knowledge, resources and time

The ideal age parents have in mind for their children to start learning English is earlier than the actual age they start – See Figures 60, 61.

- ▶ There is a 1.3 years gap between the average ideal age (3.5 years old) and average actual age (4.8 years old) of children starting to learn English.
- ▶ This is likely due to the lack of knowledge, ability or time to kick-start the child’s English learning at a younger age. Hence it is likely most parents will wait until the child begins formal education to learn English and this also explains why “knowing their child is guided to read at school” becomes a more common reason among older children aged six and above - See Figure 62.

When it comes to guiding their child to learn English, support and guidance in English learning are still required by the majority of parents because many are not fluent in the language, want better knowledge in doing so and do not have the time.

- ▶ A lack of English skills is the top reason for not guiding their child to read more often (37%) and many parents claim that better personal knowledge of English would help them to be more engaged in their children’s English learning process - See Figures 62; 63.
- ▶ Many also do not have the luxury of time to guide their child to read, which could be the reason why the actual starting age to learn English is much later than the ideal starting age. Parents believe that their children would still be able to learn English when they start formal education (at age six) or in kindergarten (age five) in preparation for school - See Figure 60.
- ▶ Time-starved parents would require quick and bite-sized solutions, and products such as reading pen and audio podcasts that can facilitate self-learning for the child.
- ▶ In addition, parents would require more substantial guidance such as scaffolding, step-by-step guide, lessons and tips on how to guide their children at home to ensure what they are doing is right and on track

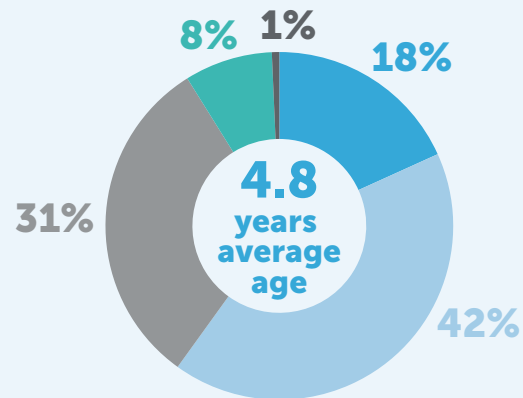
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA



Among the **18%** of parents whose child has not yet started to learn English, **46%** say their child will start learning it before age six and **54%** say this will happen at age six or later.

Figure 60. The average age children begin to learn English is at 4.8 years old

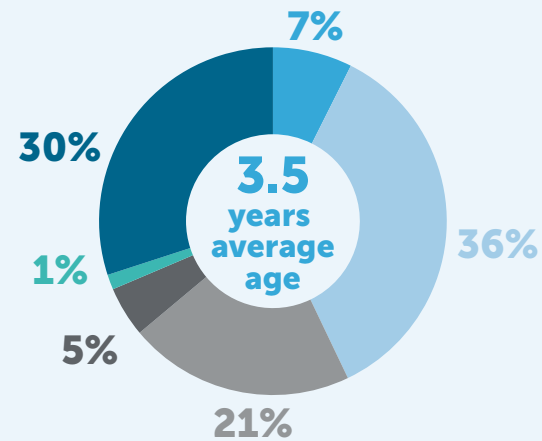
Age Child Began Learning English



Base: Parents of children who have started learning English

Figure 61. Parents believe the ideal age to start learning English is at 3.5 years old

Age Children Should Begin Learning English



* Averages are calculated based on those who provided a response/did not say "not sure."

Base: Parents of children who have started learning English/ plan to have children learn English



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 62. The parent's lack of English proficiency, time and guiding knowledge are top reasons child is not guided to read in English more frequently

Reasons Child is not Guided to Read in English More Frequently, by Age

	TOTAL	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14
I am not fluent in / do not know English	37%	36%	32%	39%	37%	44%
I do not have time to do this	30%	33%	31%	29%	27%	28%
I do not know how to guide my child	26%	25%	29%	26%	21%	26%
I know my child is guided to read in English at school	23%	13%	21%	24%	32%	26%
It is not a priority for me	20%	21%	22%	23%	16%	12%
Child can read in English on his/her own	18%	11%	13%	17%	23%	30%
We don't have English books at home my child would be interested in	11%	14%	13%	8%	10%	11%


Base: Parent of children ages 0-14 currently guided to read in English 5-6 days a week or less




Figure 63. Most parents agree their low English proficiency affects guiding their children to learn English

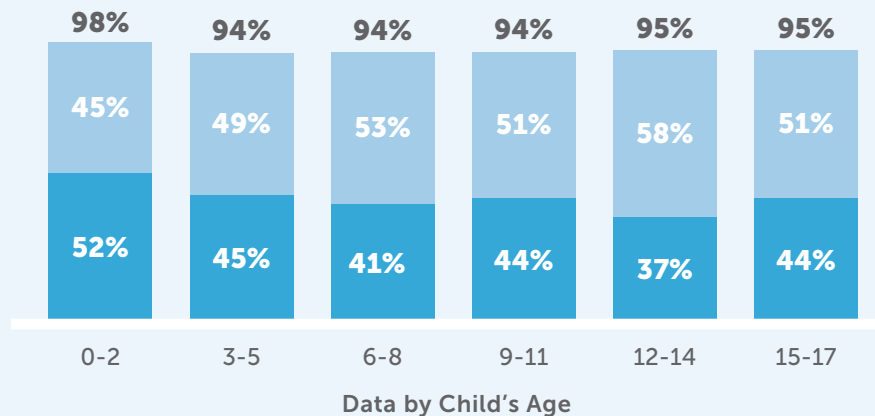
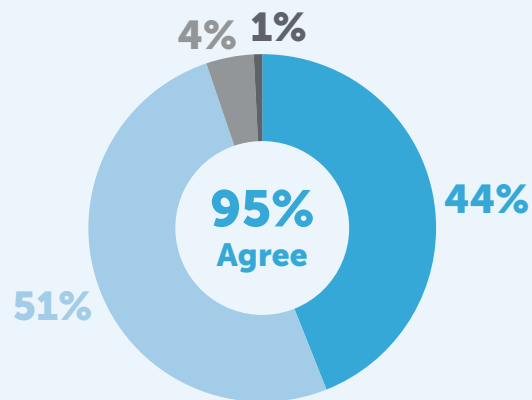
Agreement with Statement:
I would be more engaged in my child's English learning at home if I were better able to speak and read in English

 Agree strongly

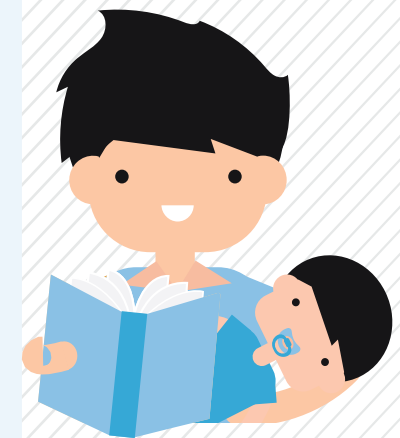
 Agree somewhat

 Disagree somewhat

 Disagree strongly



Base: Total Parents



Parents of children ages 0-2 agree the most with this statement

➤ Major guidance required in getting the right English books

Parents are also in need of guidance and support to get the right English books for their children because it seems that parents do not have adequate knowledge of getting the right type of reading materials suitable for their children.

- ▶ It is generally more difficult for children to find English books they like compared to books generally (52% vs. 40%). Parents also find it more difficult to find English books their child will like (58% vs. 40%).
- ▶ As for parents, they are well aware of this difficulty and want help to find the right books in English for their children - *See Figure 64.*
- ▶ Parents also appear to not know what type of books their children should be reading as they believe “story book” should be the top pick for children for all ages and Chinese children are heavily dependent on parental preferences - *See Figure 65.*
- ▶ 5 in 10 children agree they have trouble finding books in English that they like. Children in the lowest-income households have the most difficulty finding books in English (66%) - *See Figure 67.*

Children of different ages have different reading needs, so different age groups require different types of reading materials and there is no one-size-fits-all solution because children at a different age or stage would have a different reading level.

- ▶ Storybooks can come in different formats and reading levels, for instance, picture storybooks for younger children and chapter storybooks for older children, which explains why changes in children’s reading material preferences can be seen across the age groups. Our survey finds that picture books fall off in popularity after age 11, while chapter books and novels rise in popularity - *See Figure 68.*
- ▶ Children need various type of reading materials (eg picture books, graphic novels, readers, chapter books,

etc) as the exposure to various types of books can build their reading stamina, confidence and interest in order to become competent readers so the type of reading materials cannot be ignored.

- ▶ Picture books can be a good source to start since they are easy to understand and can be read together with the parents. This helps the children to build a solid foundation for independent reading. Fiction and non-fiction books can be used.
- ▶ There is a slight difference in English books they first loved between these age groups (6–11 vs 12–17); only global bestsellers (Harry Potter, Little Prince) and classics (Grimm's, Snow White, Jane Eyre, Alice in Wonderland) are the more prominent choices. This is also another indication of the lack of English-reading choices/variety for Chinese children - *See Figure 69.*

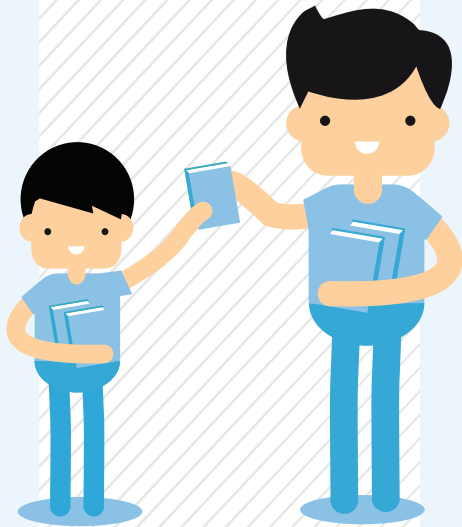
Besides, both parents and children have indicated the need for more books to learn English.

- ▶ Nearly all parents indicate a desire for more books that support English language development for children matching their child's age, with 4 in 10 showing the highest level of agreement - *See Figure 70.*
- ▶ 92% of children wish there were more books available to help them learn English - *See Figure 71.*

In terms of print versus digital books, children mostly prefer print books.

- ▶ 83% of children will always want to read books printed on paper even though there are e-books available - *See Figure 72.*
- ▶ 61% of children prefer print books over e-books. There is a greater preference for print books among younger age groups and girls - *See Figure 73.*

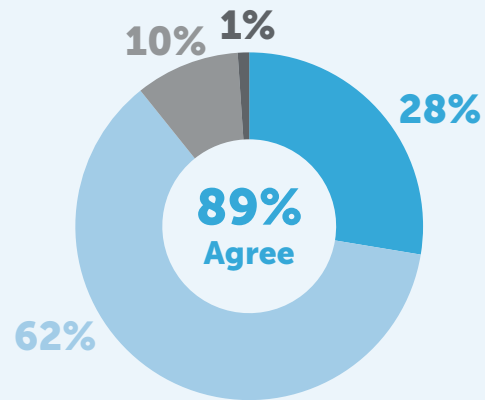
Figure 64. Almost 9 in 10 parents agree they need help in finding the right English books for their children



This remains consistent regardless of child's age, gender or household income.

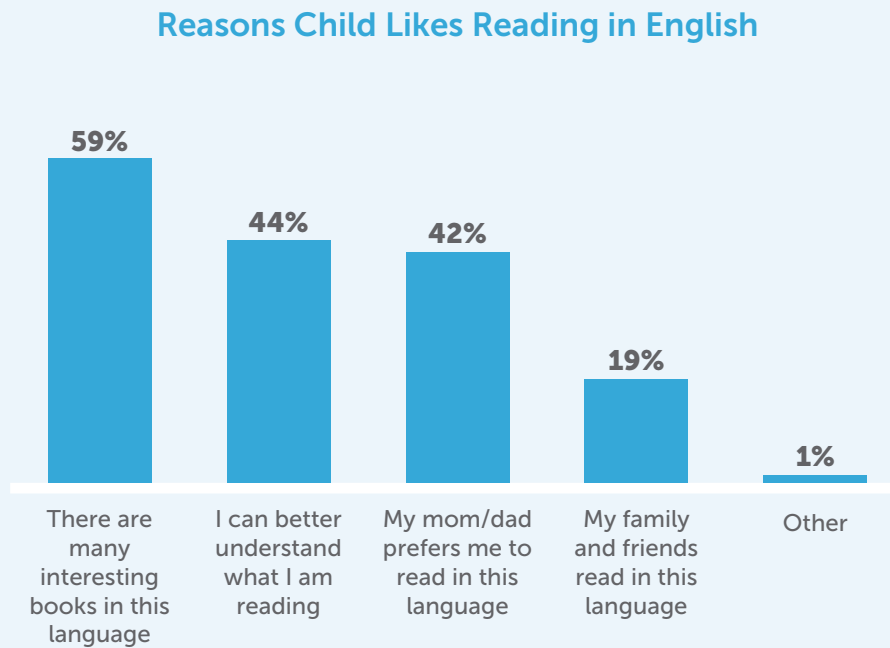
Agreement with Statement:
I need help finding the right books in English for my child

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly



Base: Parents of children who are learning or planning to learn English

Figure 65. Reasons child likes reading in English are often heavily dependent on parental preferences



Base: Child who loves/ likes reading in English

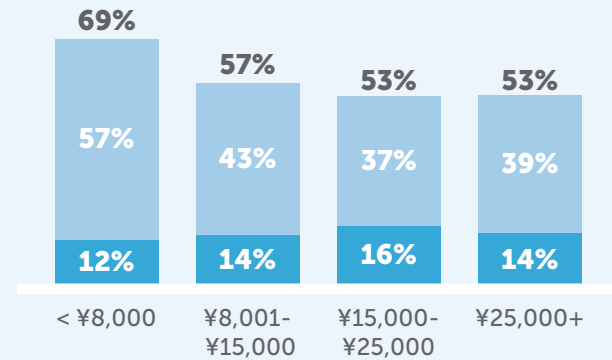
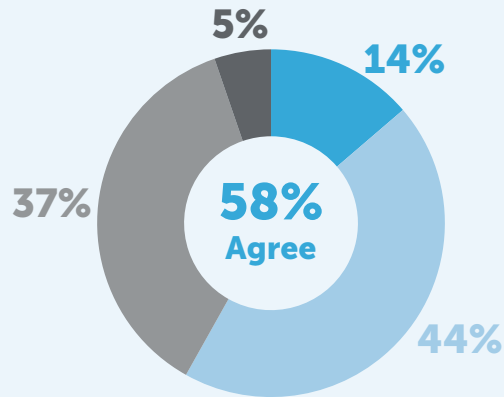


Those in the lowest-income households tend to agree the most with this statement

Figure 66.
Almost 60% of parents agree their child has trouble finding books in English they like

Agreement with Statement:
My child has trouble finding English language books he/she likes

-  Agree strongly
-  Agree somewhat
-  Disagree somewhat
-  Disagree strongly



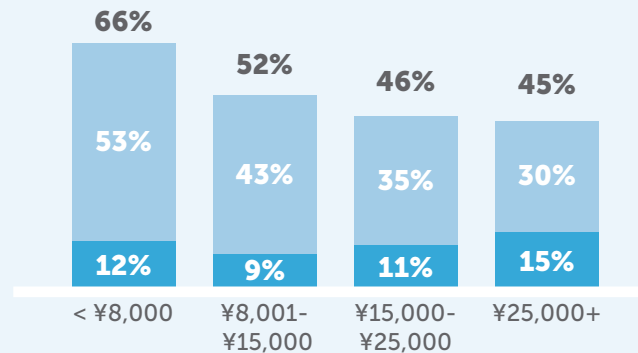
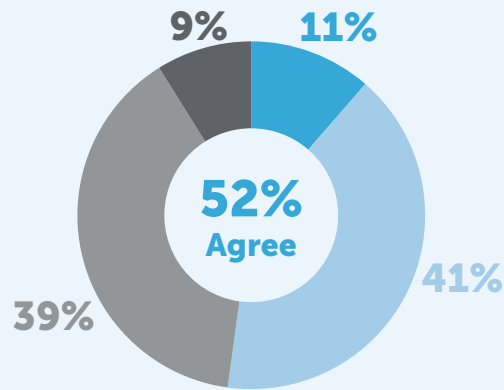
Data by Household Income Level

Base: Parents of children ages 6-17 who are learning or planning to learn English

Figure 67.
More than 50% of children find it challenging to find English books they like

Agreement with Statement:
I have trouble finding books in English that I like

 Agree a lot
  Agree a little
  Disagree a little
  Disagree a lot

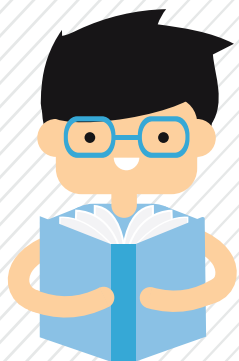


Data by Household Income Level



This is especially true for younger children and those in lower-income households

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



Picture books fall off in popularity after age 11, while chapter books and novels rise in popularity

Figure 68. Children of all ages enjoy reading English “story books”

Types of English Language Reading Materials Children Like the Most

CHILDREN AGES 6-8	CHILDREN AGES 9-11	CHILDREN AGES 12-14	CHILDREN AGES 15-17
Picture books 64%	Picture books 55%	Comic books 55%	Story books 62%
Story books 56%	Comic books 55%	Story books 53%	Comic books 45%
Comic books 48%	Story books 52%	Graphic novels 46%	Chapter books/ Novels 42%
Graphic novels 37%	Graphic novels 41%	Picture books 37%	Graphic novels 42%
Chapter books/ Novels 15%	Chapter books/ Novels 20%	Chapter books/ Novels 36%	Magazines 37%
Magazines 15%	Magazines 17%	Magazines 18%	Picture books 24%
Newspapers 10%	Newspapers 15%	Newspapers 14%	Newspapers 24%

Base: Children ages 6-17 who have started learning English

Figure 69. Only a slight difference in English books first loved among younger and older children

First Book in English Child Loved

Ages 6-11

Ages 12-17



Base: Children ages 6-17 who can read in English, 6-11 total mentions n=245, 12-17 total mentions n=164

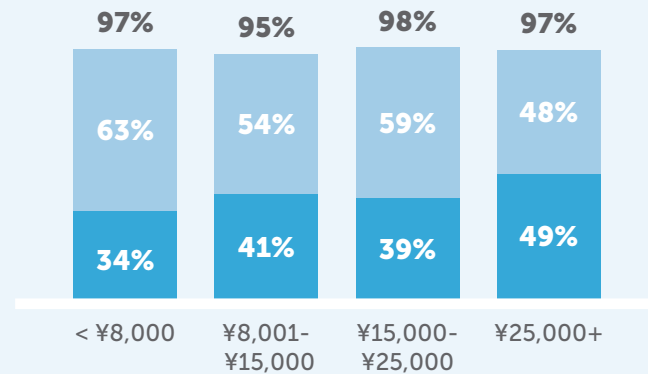
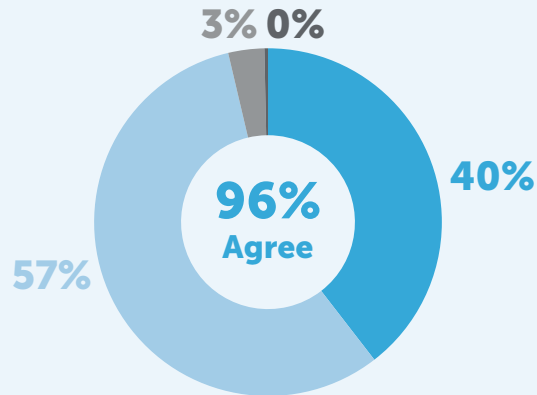
Figure 70. Nearly all parents desire more age-suitable books to develop their children’s English learning



Those in the highest-income homes are most likely to “agree strongly”

Agreement with Statement:
I wish there were more books available that support English language development for children of my child’s age

-  Agree strongly
-  Agree somewhat
-  Disagree somewhat
-  Disagree strongly



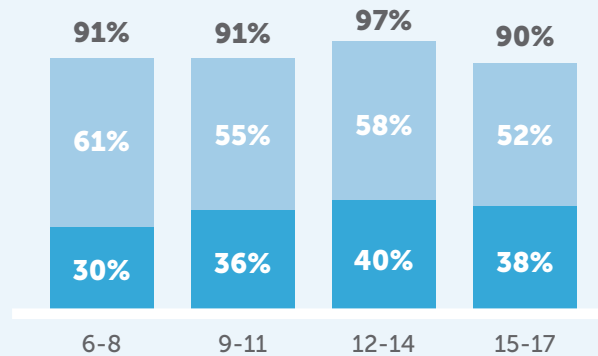
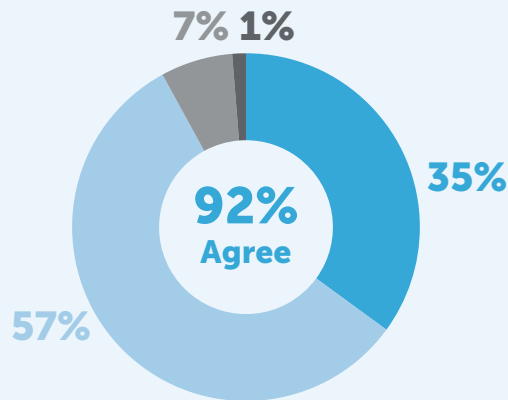
Data by Household Income Level

Base: Total Parents

Figure 71. Most children desire more books to help them learn English

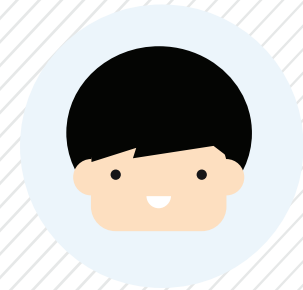
Agreement with Statement:
I wish there were more books available to help me learn English

 Agree a lot
  Agree a little
  Disagree a little
  Disagree a lot



Data by Age

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



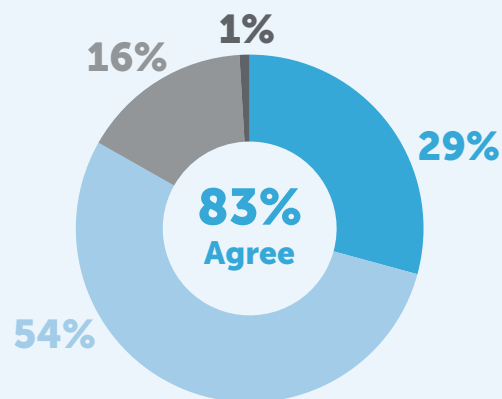
The percentage is especially high for the 12-14 age group



Figure 72.
Even though e-books are available, most children agree they will
always want to read books printed on paper

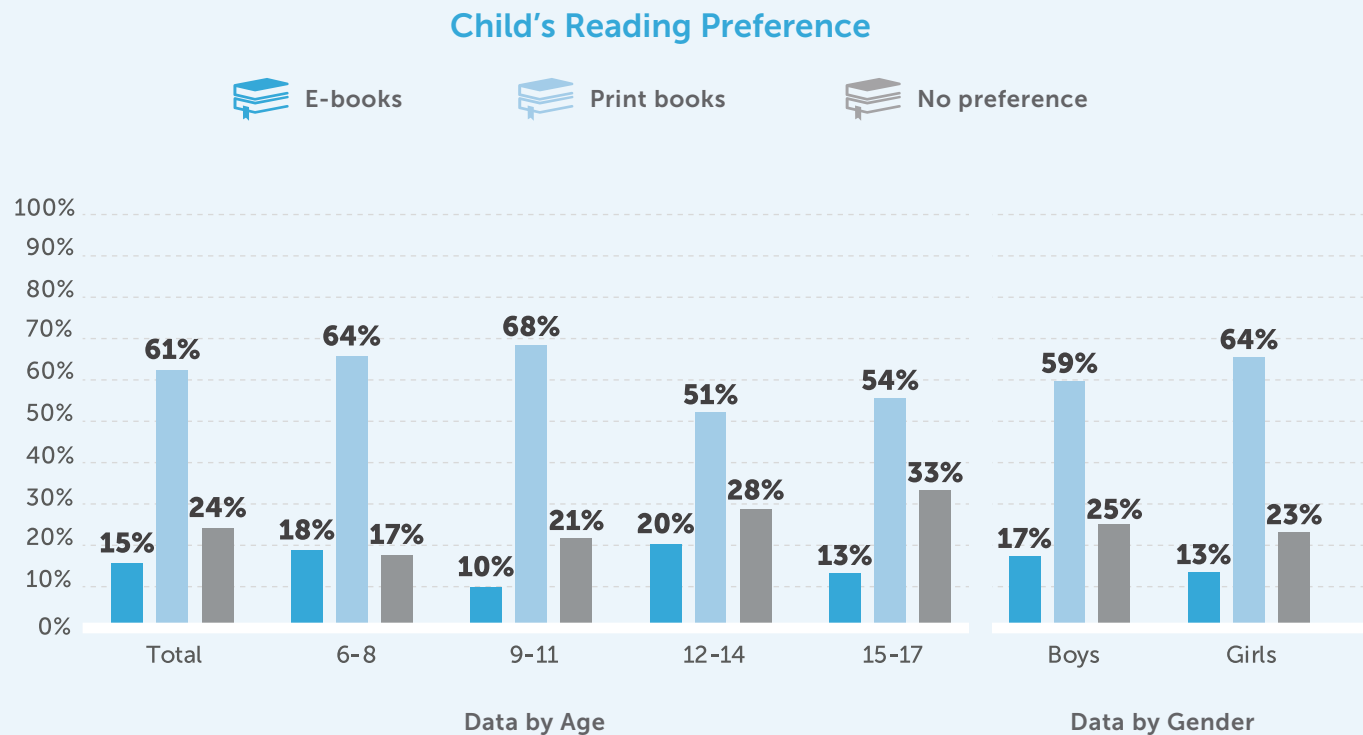
Agreement with Statement:
I'll always want to read books printed on paper
even though there are e-books available

 Agree a lot  Agree a little  Disagree a little  Disagree a lot



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

Figure 73.
61% of children prefer print books over e-books



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



➤ Chinese children are generally not starting to learn English early enough

On average, Chinese children start to learn English only at the age of 4.8 years, which is already towards the end of the crucial period of the first six years - See *Figure 74*.

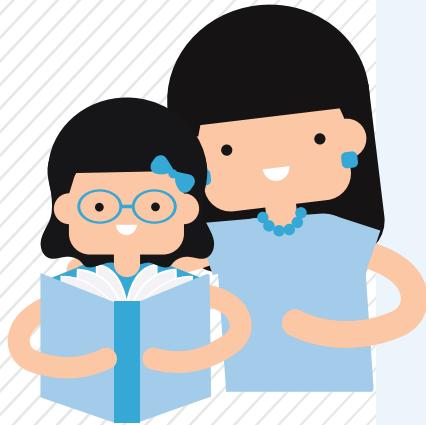
- ▶ The children would reach the language expression period from the age of three, making it possible for language learning. The child's brain has a high degree of plasticity before the age of three, which is another reason why the first three years are critical for language acquisition; on the psychological and cognitive fronts, the 3-6-years-old children are in an unconscious imitation period and the ease of language learning is at its peak. This is further proved by a famous child psychologist Skinner, who claimed that children acquire language through imitation and selective reinforcement (CRI, 2019).
- ▶ Dr. Patricia Kuhl of the University of Washington, a well-known linguist, shares a similar view. Based on years of research, she found that children before the age of seven are all geniuses for language learning and can learn any languages naturally; such language learning ability will decline from the age of seven (Xiao, 2016).
 - ▶ This is why adults are less efficient and effective in picking up a language as compared to young children as various studies have found. Research shows that children are more efficient in language learning than adults. Children's language learning efficiency can be 5 to 10 times higher than that of adults, and have the possibility to master a second language to mother tongue level (Xiao, 2016).
 - ▶ For adults, there are two main obstacles for their language learning. They are less committed and they are more afraid of making mistakes than children (Pipiti, 2020).
 - ▶ Another possible explanation for such difference is linked to memory. Two kinds of memory can affect human beings' learning, namely, declarative memory and procedural memory. Procedural memory helps us to learn grammatical rules in an unconscious way. What makes children more efficient in language acquisition can be explained by the fact that children's procedural memory is less likely to be interrupted by declarative memory; thus, they are fast learners in terms of language acquisition (Dickerson, 2014).

Besides, as reading trends generally begin to decline after age 12, starting at the average age of 4.8 to 5 years old would be more challenging for the child to become a fluent English language reader especially in an environment where English is not spoken nor used commonly unlike non-native regions where English is used as a second language.

- ▶ The child begins formal education at age six, and this means they have much lesser time and concentration for extracurricular learning or reading.
- ▶ A strong foundation should be laid and initiated earlier so that by the time the child turns 4–5, he or she has some solid fluency to cope at school and continue learning English as an extracurricular activity.

Thus, to grasp the golden opportunity for language learning, immediate actions should be taken to educate parents about starting their child to read early within age 0–3 (first 3 years) for better success of English fluency.

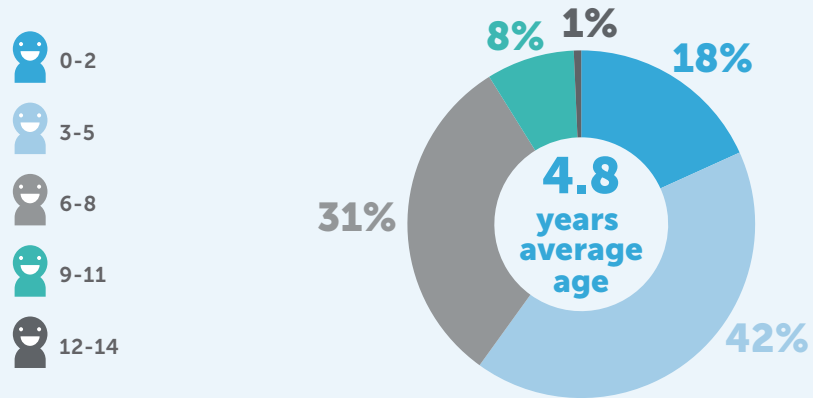
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA



Among the 18% of parents who say their child has not yet started to learn English, 46% say their child will start learning it before age six and 54% say this will happen at age six or later.

Figure 74. The average age that children start learning English is nearly five years old

Age Child Began Learning English



Base: Parents of children who have started learning English

"Once my child learns English, I hope that s/he will be able to master the language well, speak it comfortably in social settings, do well in college entrance exams, and get a good job that provides a good and stable income."

— Parent

A young girl with short black hair and black-rimmed glasses is smiling and looking down. She is wearing a patterned top. The background is a warm, orange-toned blur. The text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

TAKEAWAYS:

**SUCCESS FACTORS OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNING IN CHINA**

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

KEY FINDINGS

To recap the key findings and highlights of our survey, we have summarized the takeaways for you.

1) READ TO LEARN

- ▶ Parents/families that hold high regard for reading to learn English tend to show more positive reading habits - *See Figures 75, 76.*
- ▶ They would have more English books (an average of 22 books) at home - *See Figure 77.*
- ▶ Parents would guide their children to read English more frequently - *See Figure 77.*
 - ▶ 48% who believe "Reading English to learn English is EXTREMELY important" guide children to read 5–7 times per week vs 19% who believe it is less important.
- ▶ As a result, children would read in English more frequently (36% reads 5–7 times per week) and they enjoy reading in English (76% love or like reading in English a lot) - *See Figure 77.*
- ▶ Children are more likely to begin learning to read in English before the age of 6. – *See Figure 78*
- ▶ Furthermore, these children more frequently develop a love of reading in English and display a preference for reading and speaking in English. – *See Figure 78*
- ▶ Consequently, these would lead to greater English learning success for these children.

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 75.
Almost 9 in 10 parents agree reading books is important to learn English

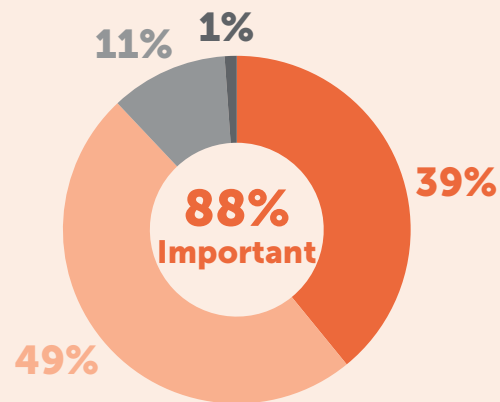
Importance of Reading Books in English to Learn English (Parent)

 Extremely important

 Very important

 A little important

 Not important



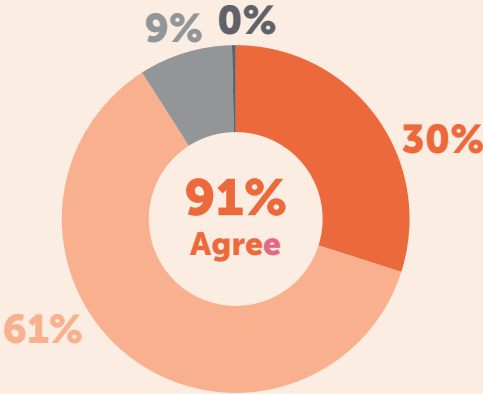
Base: Parent of child who has started to learn English/ Parent plans to have child learn English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 76.
91% of parents agree reading books is the most effective way to learn English

Agreement with Statement:
Reading books is the most effective way for my child to learn English

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly



Base: Total Parents

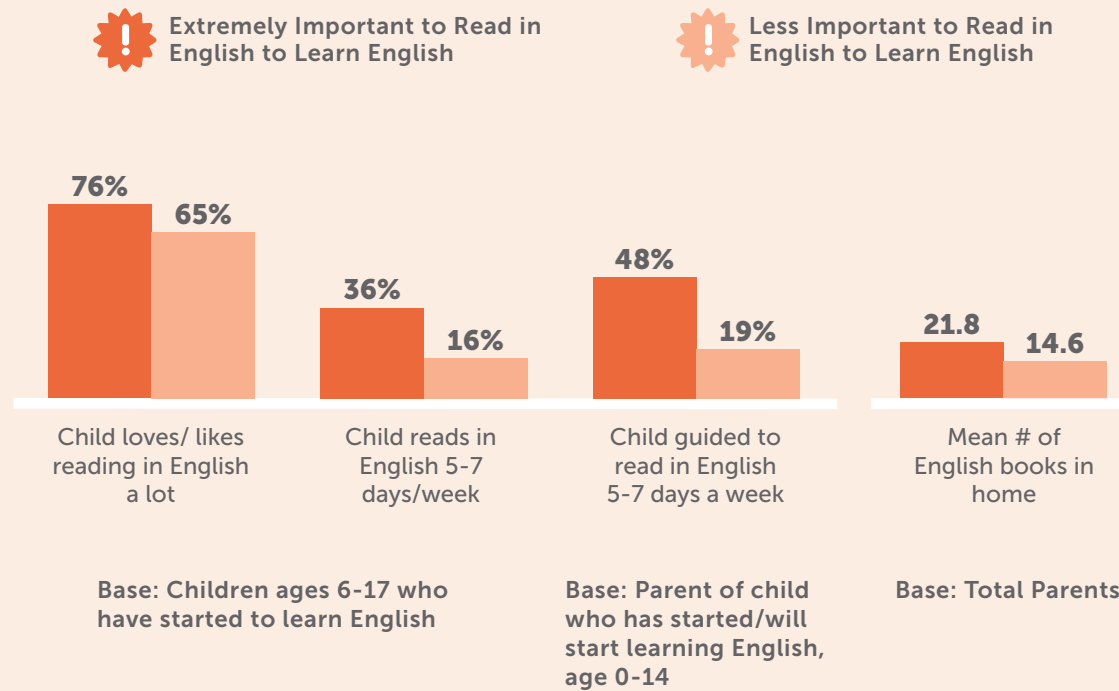


TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 77.

Children whose parents place more importance on reading in English are more likely to enjoy it and are more frequently guided to read in English

Key Measures by Parent's View on Importance of Reading in English to Learn English



TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA



Children whose parents place more importance on reading began learning English and able to read in the language at a slightly younger age

Figure 78. Children whose parents place less importance on reading are less likely to love reading in English

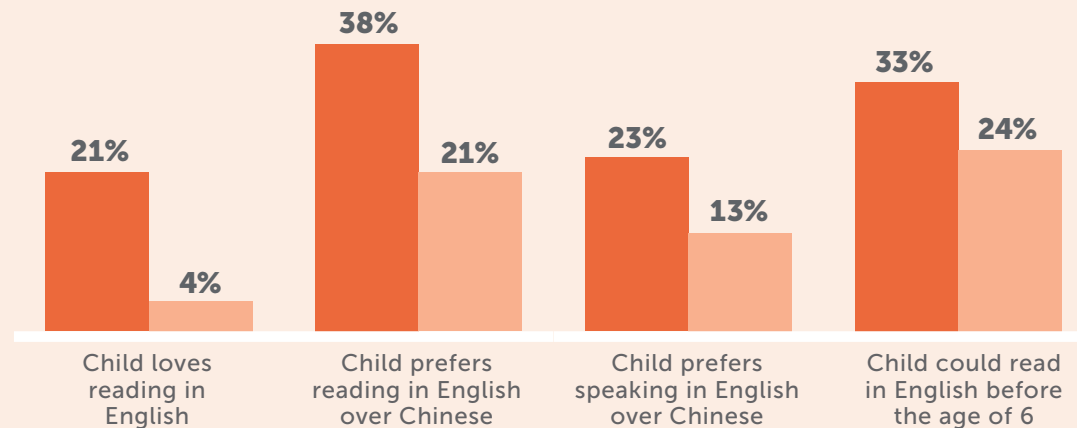
Key Measures by Parent's View on Importance of Reading in English to Learn English



Extremely Important to Read in English to Learn English



Less Important to Read in English to Learn English



Base: Children ages 6-17 who have started to learn English
Base: Parent of child who has started learning English
Base: Parent of child who can read in English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

KEY FINDINGS

2) ECONOMIC STATUS

- ▶ Children from lower-income families appear to be slightly disadvantaged compared to their more affluent counterparts when it comes to English language learning as they are not guided to read as often, do not have many English books at home, find more challenging to get the right books, and generally do not find reading in English as enjoyable as affluent children do although they are aware that reading books is important to learn English.
- ▶ While children across income groups like reading in English for learning, the least affluent children are most likely to say this - *See Figure 79.*
- ▶ The gap between actual and ideal starting ages is the largest for less affluent children - *See Figures 80, 81.*
- ▶ They are not guided to read at home as often as their more affluent counterparts probably due to lack of parental resources, skills and education, and time capacity to do so - *See Figures 82, 83.*
- ▶ Less affluent children have fewer English books in their households – an average of 23% English books in their households compared to 30% or more among families with a household income of ¥8,000 or more - *See Figure 84.*
- ▶ Less affluent parents and children both find it more challenging to find books children like to read, even more so for English books. - *See Figures 85, 86.*
- ▶ Read-aloud is not as enjoyable for both parents and children in such households and not practiced as frequently - *See Figures 87, 88, 89.*
- ▶ Children of lower-income families generally do not read, in both the local language and in English, as much as affluent children do - *See Figures 90, 91.*
- ▶ They enjoy reading in English less - *See Figure 92.*
- ▶ They do not feel as accomplished after finishing a book - *See Figures 93, 94.*
- ▶ They are not as likely to strongly agree they should read more books outside of school - *See Figure 95.*
- ▶ Hence they do not desire for more books in English as much as affluent families do - *See Figures 96, 97.*

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

- ▶ Interestingly however, this does not mean less affluent parents do not see the importance of English as a global language and skill or do not want the children to learn English.
 - ▶ Less affluent families do see English as a global language, and just as important as a means of communication with other people - *See Figure 98.*
 - ▶ Interestingly, they also want their children to learn English to gain reading ability - *See Figure 98.*
 - ▶ Children in lowest-income households show the most gap in between the actual and ideal starting ages in learning English – *See Figure 99.*
 - ▶ More affordable products, packs and programs can be customized. Another way is to work with institutions and associations in China to offer learning subsidies for less affluent families to help them achieve their aspirations for their children.

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 79. The desire to learn and improve their English skills is the main reason children like reading in English

Main reasons children like reading in English

	TOTAL	LESS THAN ¥8,000	¥8,001 TO ¥15,000	¥15,000 TO ¥25,000	MORE THAN ¥25,000
Learning (Net)	31%	43%	31%	24%	34%
I can learn English/improve my English skills	21%	24%	24%	16%	22%
I can gain more knowledge/learn different things	6%	9%	4%	7%	6%
Stories/Content (Net)	22%	10%	25%	28%	18%
Interesting/entertaining story/content	7%	1%	8%	9%	9%
Expand horizons/learn more about the world/about culture/other cultures	16%	17%	16%	10%	26%
It's interesting/entertaining/I'm interested in it	13%	14%	11%	14%	10%
Specific Skills (English reading skills, socialization, vocabulary, grammar)	6%	1%	8%	8%	1%

Base: Children 6-17 who love or like reading in English a lot

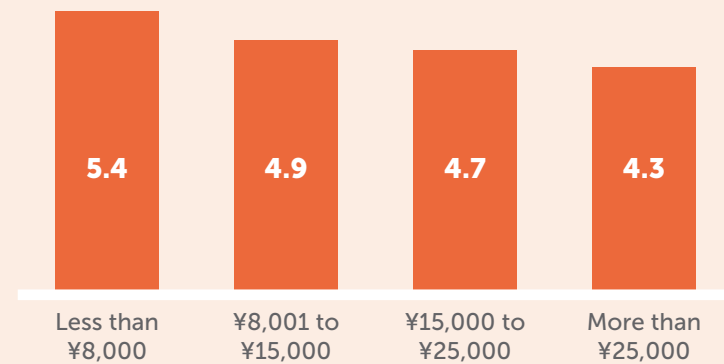
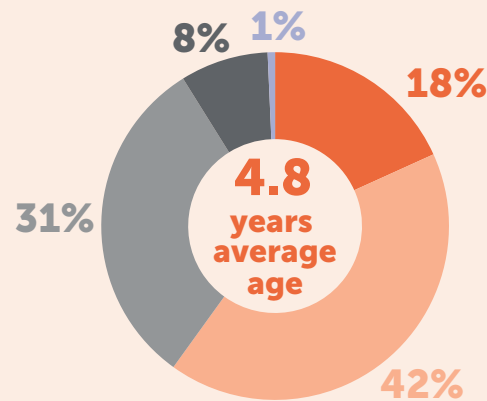


TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 80. Children in lower-income households generally begin learning English at an older age



Age Child Began Learning English

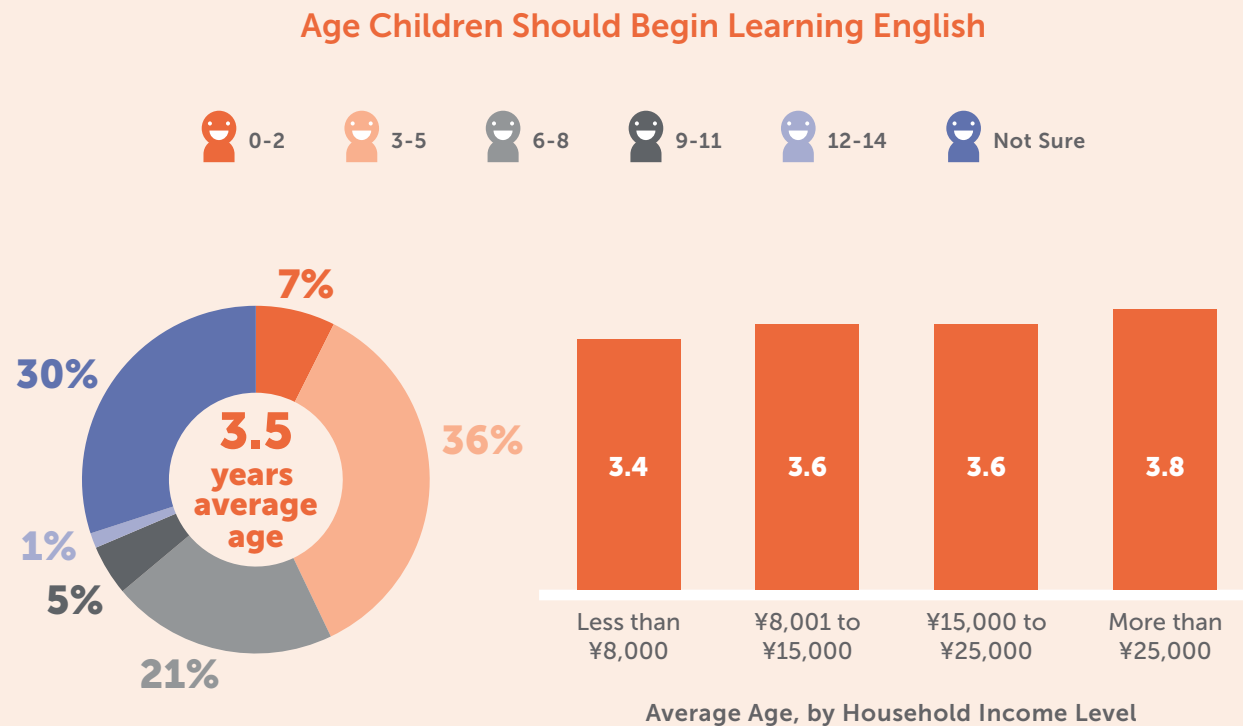


Average Age, by Household Income Level

Base: Parents of children who have started learning English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 81. Children in lowest-income households show the most gap in between the actual and ideal starting ages in learning English



Most children in the lowest-income households learn English at an average age of 5.4 but parents believe they should have begun at age 3.4.

* Averages are calculated based on those who provided a response/did not say "not sure."
Base: Parents of children who have started learning English/Plan to have children learn English




TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

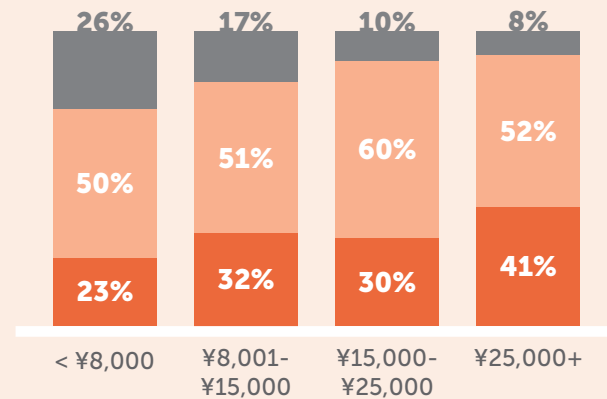


**Frequent
guiding is more
commonly seen
in higher-income
homes**

Figure 82. Children in the lowest-income households are less frequently guided to read

Frequency Child is Guided to Read in English at Home

 **Frequent**
(5-7 days a week)  **Moderate**
(1-4 days a week)  **Infrequent**
(Less than 1 day a week)



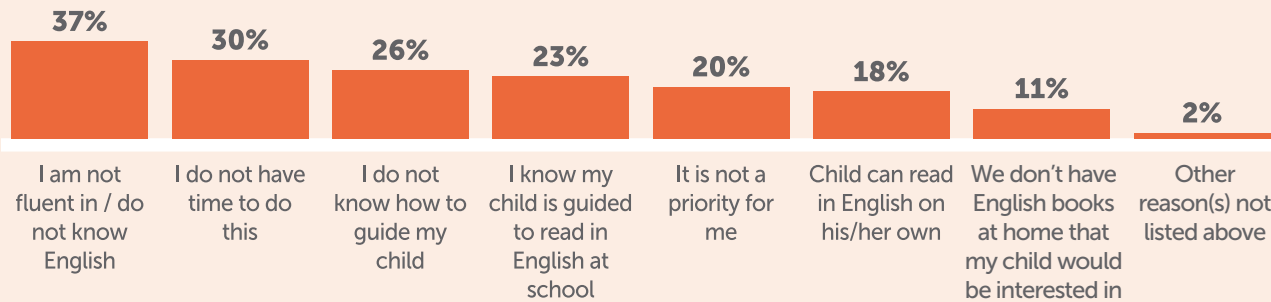
Data By Household Income Level

Base: Parent of child ages 0-14 who has started to learn English/Parent plans to have child learn English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 83 - Lack of parental resources, skills and education, and time among reasons child is not guided to read in English more frequently

Reasons Child is not Guided to Read in English More Frequently



	LESS THAN ¥8,000	¥8,001 TO ¥15,000	¥15,000 TO ¥25,000	MORE THAN ¥25,000
I am not fluent in / do not know English	47%	41%	28%	30%
I do not have time to do this	23%	27%	35%	36%

Data by Household Income Level

Base: Parent of children ages 0-14 currently guided to read in English 5-6 days a week or less



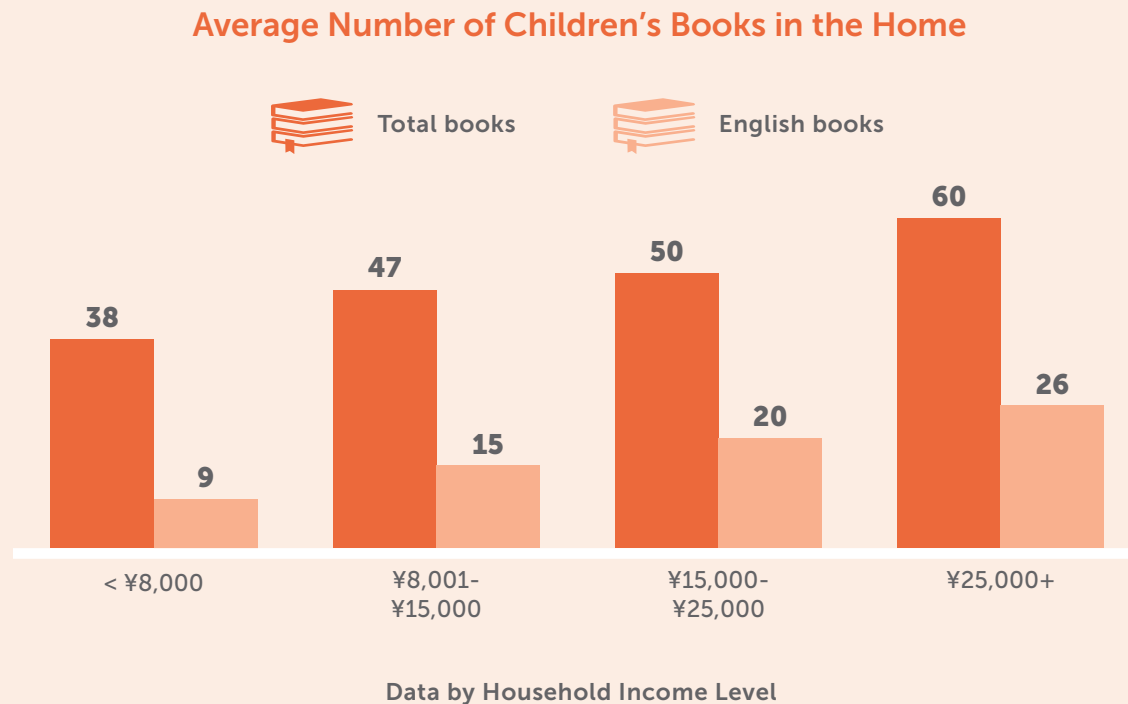
A lack of English skills is more common in lower income households; a lack of time is more common in higher income households

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA



The ratio of English books to total books also increases with household income level

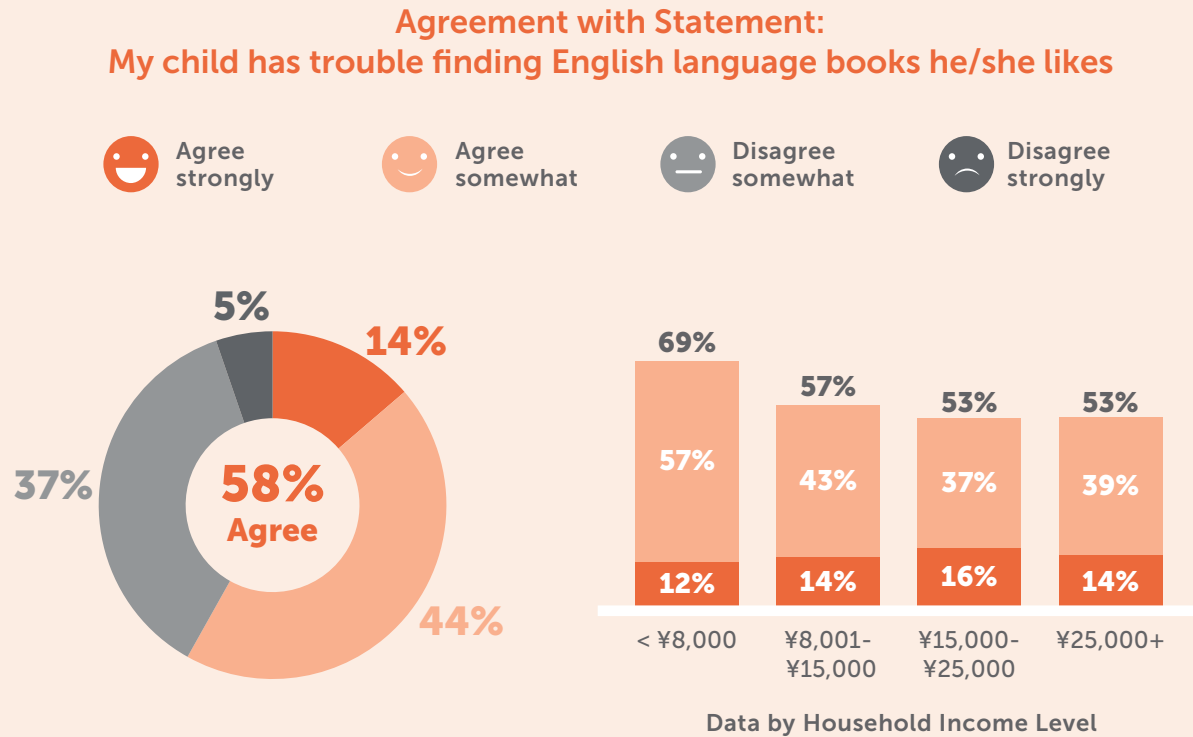
Figure 84. The number of books in a household increases with household income level



Base: Total Parents

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 85. Almost 60% of parents agree their child has trouble finding books in English they like



Those in the lowest-income households tend to agree the most with this statement

Base: Parents of children ages 6-17 who are learning or plan to learn English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

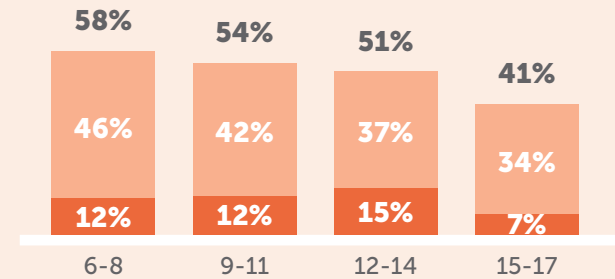
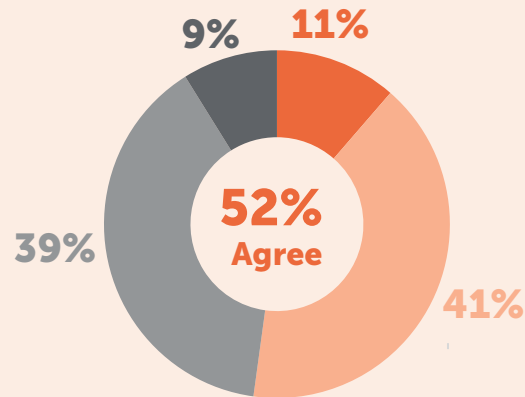


Younger children also have more difficulty finding books they like

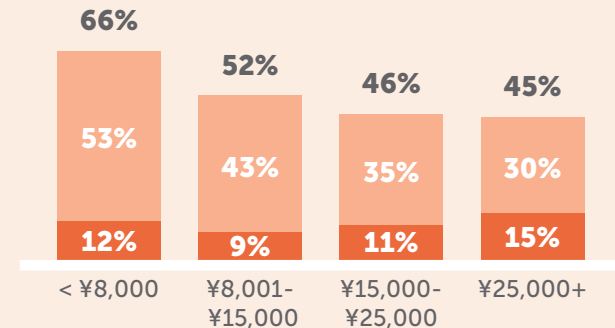
Figure 86. Children in the lowest-income households have the most difficulty finding English books they like

**Agreement with Statement:
I have trouble finding books in English I like**

Agree a lot
 Agree a little
 Disagree a little
 Disagree a lot



Data by Age



Data by Household Income Level

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

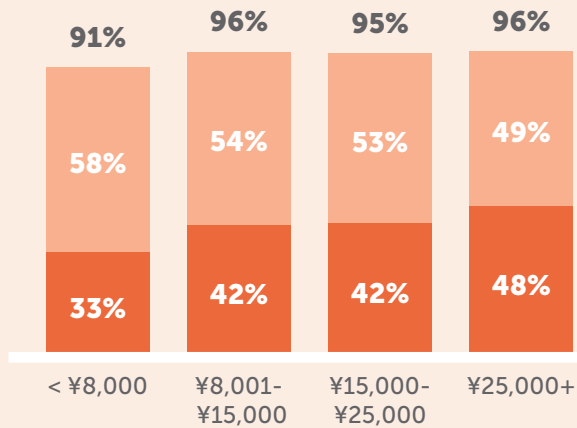
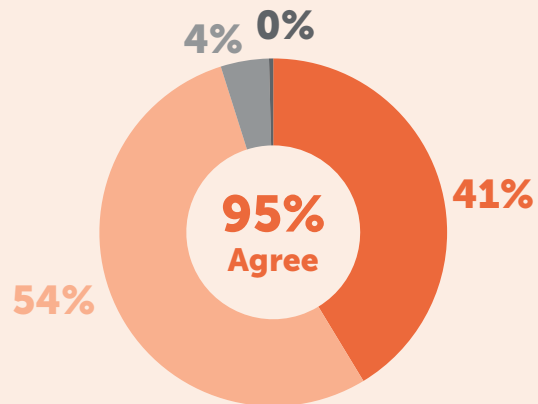
Figure 87. Parents in higher-income households are more likely to agree strongly that read-alouds are special times with their children

Agreement with Statement: Reading aloud is (or was) a special time with my child

-  Agree strongly
-  Agree somewhat
-  Disagree somewhat
-  Disagree strongly

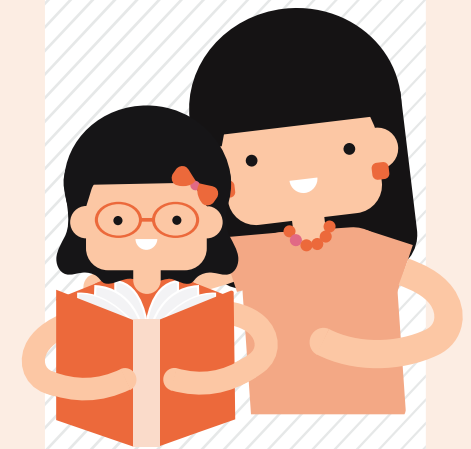
	FREQUENT (5-7 DAYS A WEEK)	LESS FREQUENT (4 DAYS A WEEK) OR FEWER
Net: Agree strongly/somewhat	96%	94%
Agree strongly	48%	35%
Agree somewhat	48%	59%

Data by Reading Frequency of Parent



Data by Household Income Level

Base: Parents of children 0-14, who ever read aloud to child



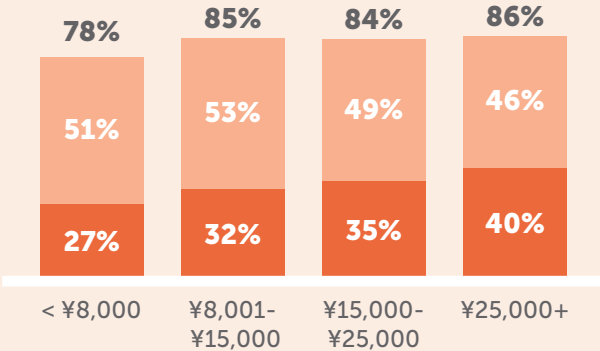
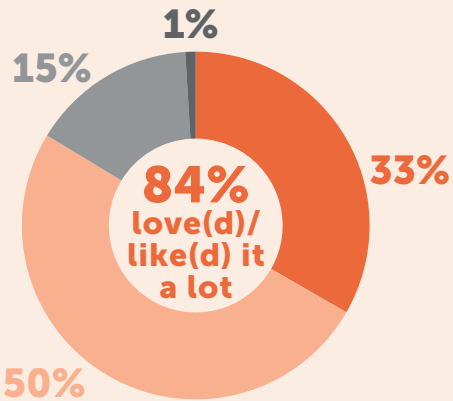
The sentiment also increases for parents who read more frequently

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 88. More children in higher-income households enjoy(ed) being read aloud to

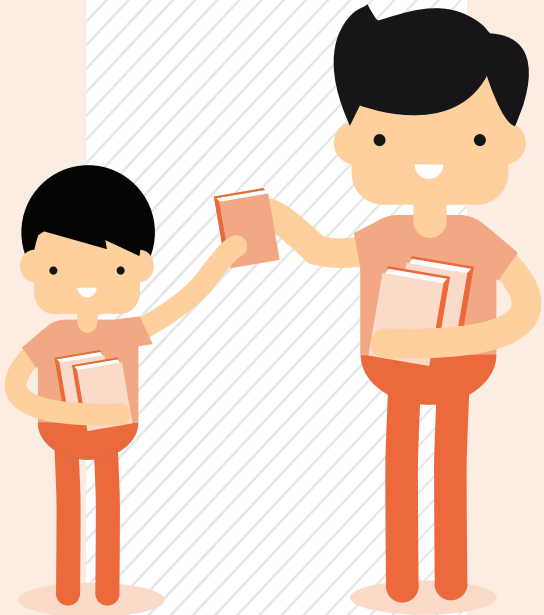
Child's Enjoyment of Being Read Books Aloud at Home

❤️ I love(d) it
 👍 I like(d) it a lot
 👍 I like(d) it a little
 👎 I don't/didn't like it at all



Data by Household Income Level




Base: Children ages 6-17 who currently are or were read books aloud

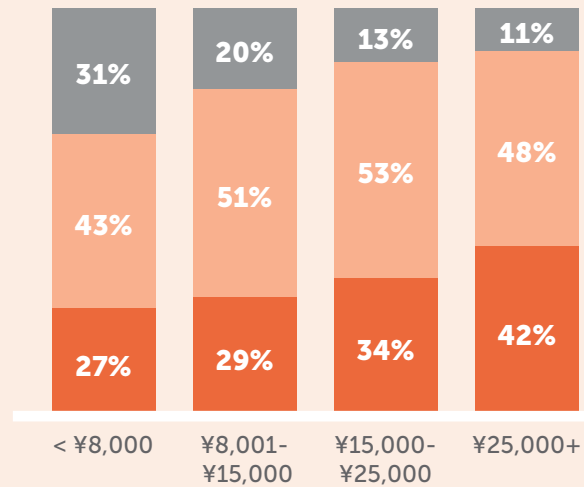
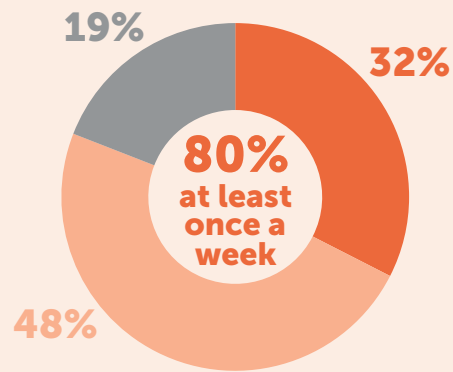


TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 89. Children are more frequently read aloud to in higher-income households

Frequency Child is Read Books Aloud to at Home

 **Frequent**
(5-7 days a week)
  **Moderate**
(1-4 days a week)
  **Infrequent**
(Less than 1 day a week)



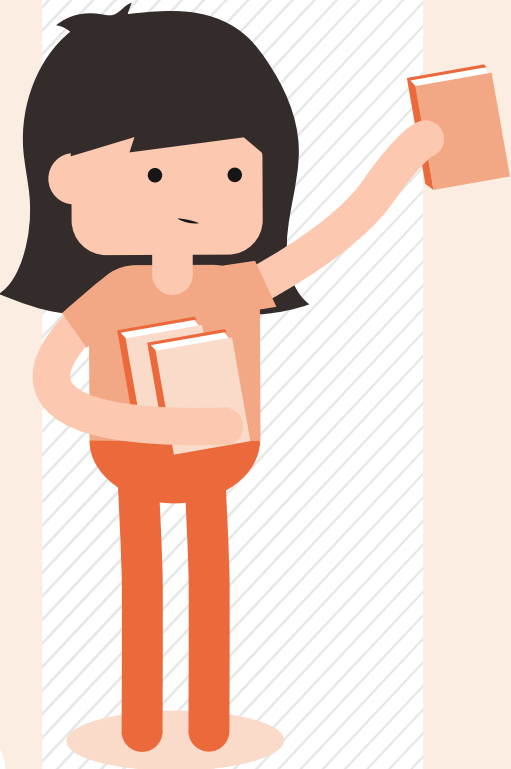
Data by Household Income Level

Base: Parents of Children Ages 0-14






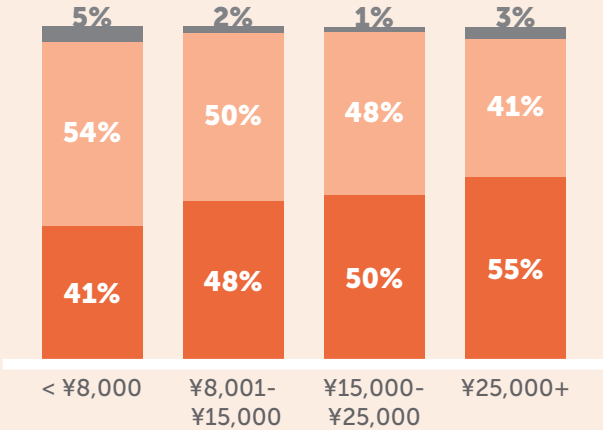
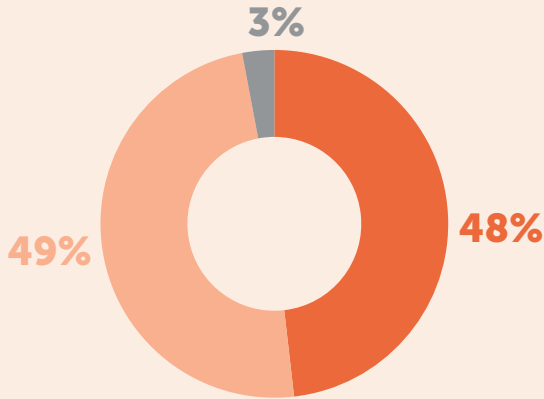
TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 90. Children in higher-income households read for fun more frequently



Child's Reading Frequency

 **Frequent** (5-7 days a week)
  **Moderate** (1-4 days a week)
  **Infrequent** (Less than 1 day a week)



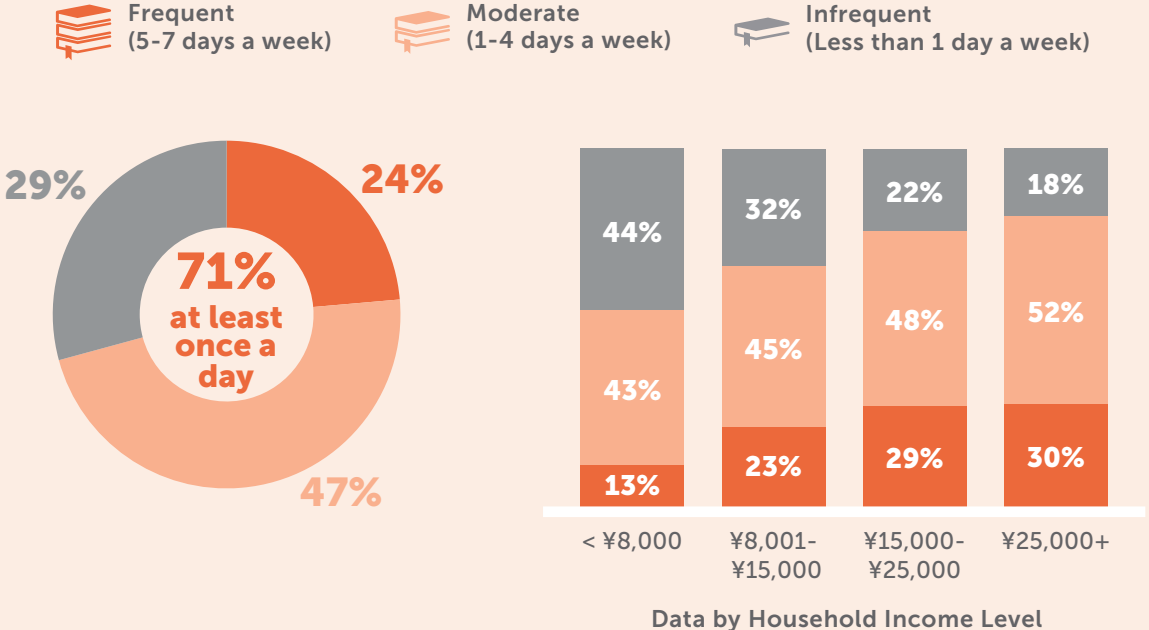
Data by Household Income Level

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 91. Children in higher-income households read English books more frequently

Child's Reading Frequency of Books in English




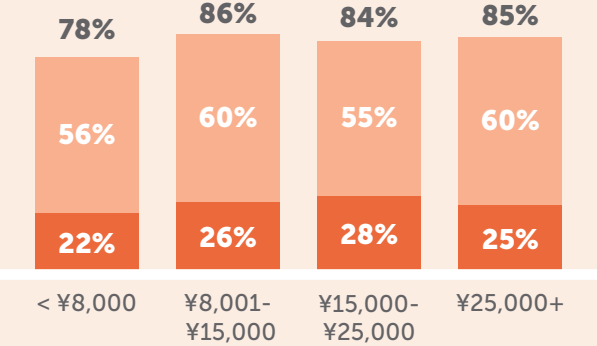
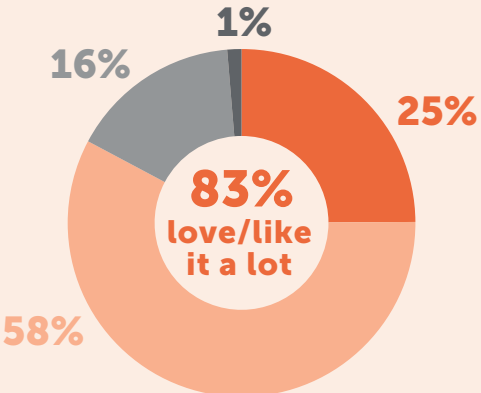
Base: Children ages 6-17 who have started to learn English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 92. Children in lowest-income households generally love/like reading but not as much as those in higher-income households

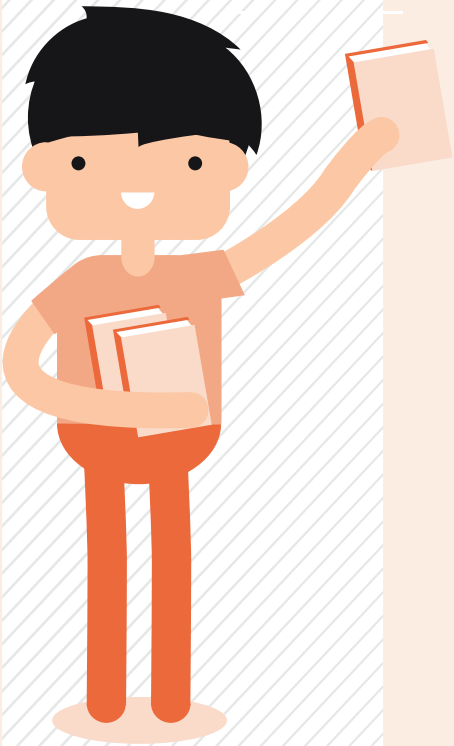
Enjoyment of Reading for Fun (Child)

 I love it
  I like it a lot
  I like it a little
  I don't like it at all



Data by Household Income Level

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

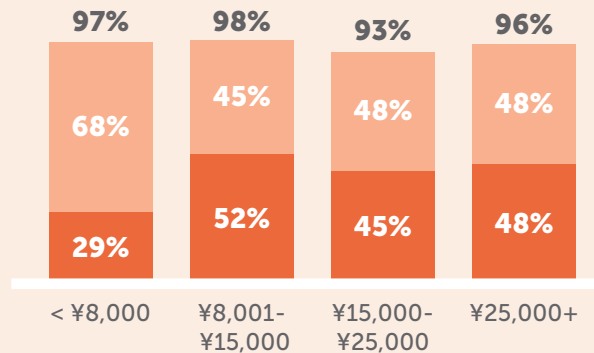
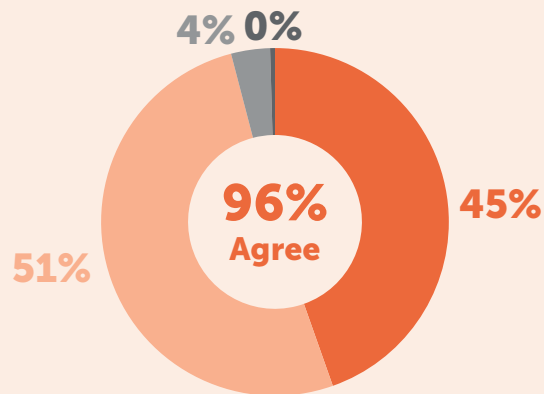


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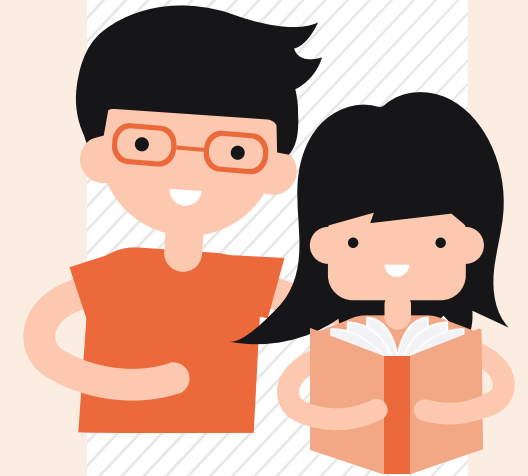
Figure 93. Nearly all children feel proud and accomplished upon completing a book

Agreement with Statement:
I feel proud and have a sense of accomplishment when I finish reading a book

 Agree a lot
  Agree a little
  Disagree a little
  Disagree a lot



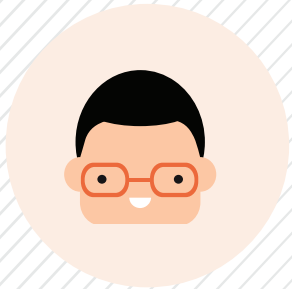
Data by Household Income Level



Those in the lowest income households are least likely to agree strongly with this statement

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

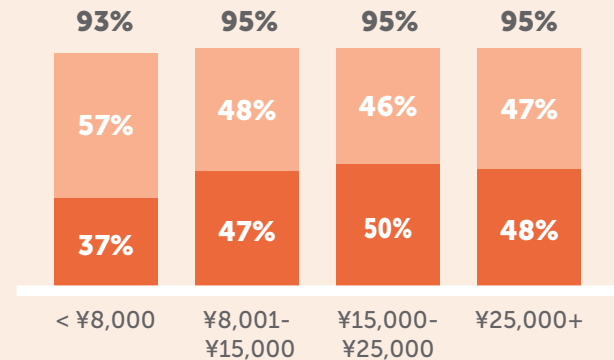
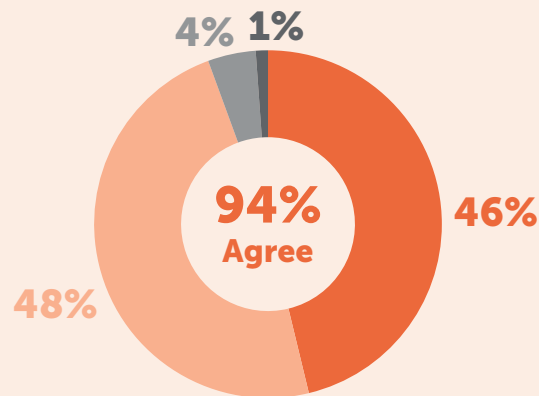


While equally likely to agree overall, children in the lowest income households are least likely to "agree a lot"

Figure 94.
94% of children feel proud and accomplished upon completing an English book regardless of household income level

Agreement with Statement:
I feel proud and have a sense of accomplishment when I finish reading a book in English (asked if child started learning English)

Agree a lot
 Agree a little
 Disagree a little
 Disagree a lot

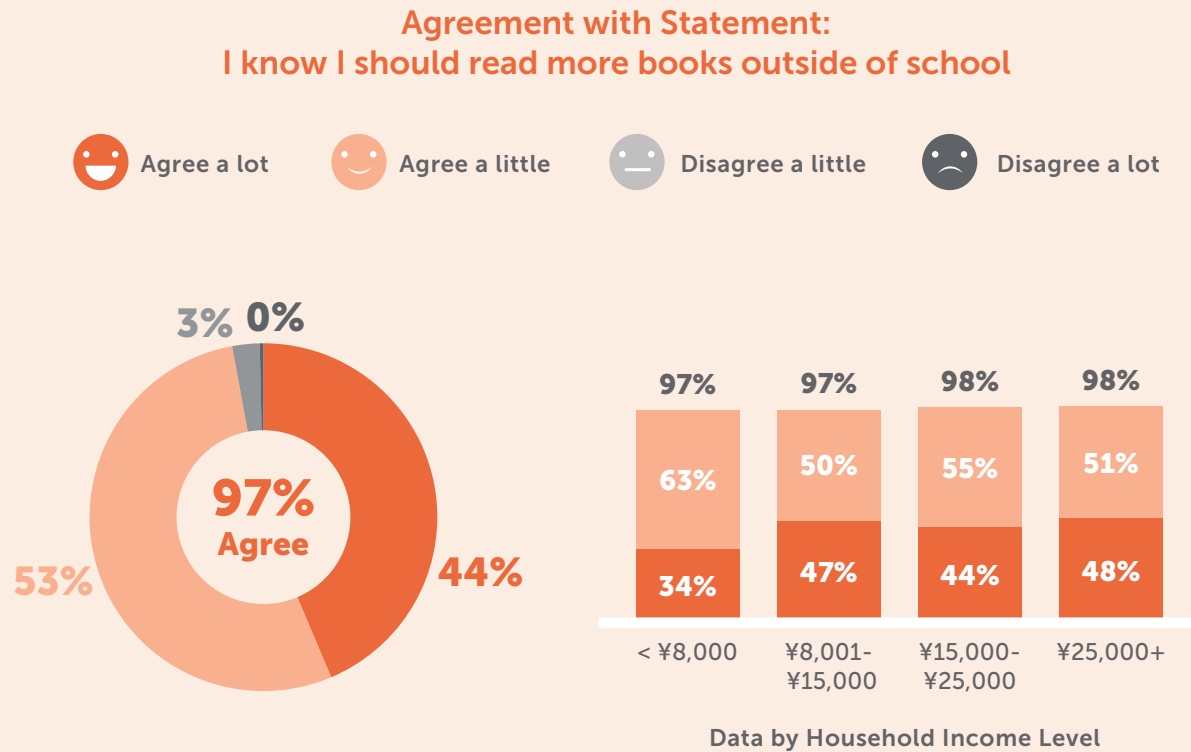


Data by Household Income Level

Base: Children ages 6-17 who have started to learn English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 95.
Children in higher-income households tend to “agree a lot” that reading outside of school is important



Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



While nearly all agree, children in the lowest income households are less likely to “agree a lot”

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

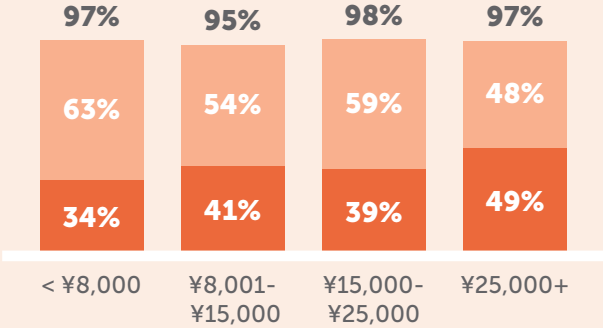
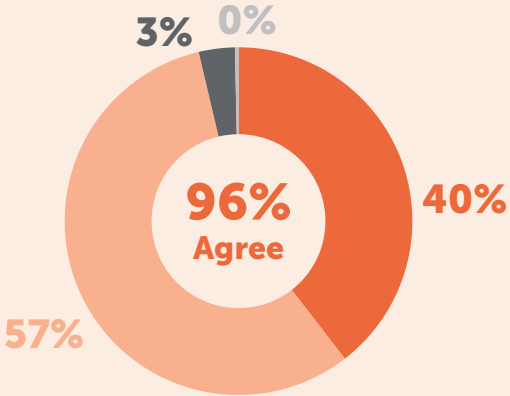


Parents in the highest income households are the most likely to agree strongly

Figure 96. Almost all parents wish there were more age-suitable books available to support English language development for their children

Agreement with Statement:
I wish there were more books available that support English language development for children of my child's age

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly



Data by Household Income Level

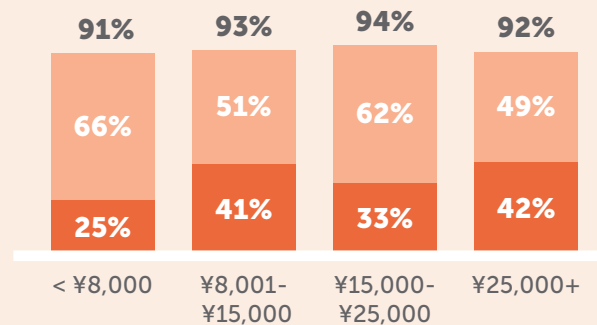
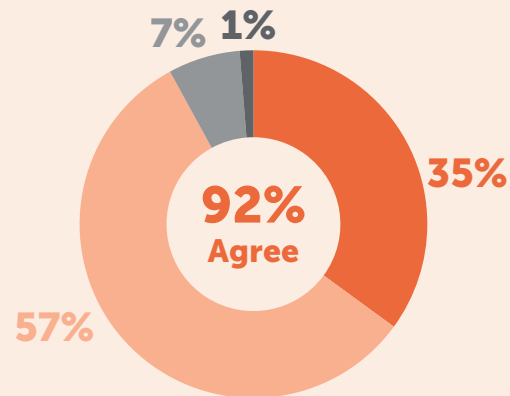
Base: Total Parents

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 97. Children in lowest-income households are less likely to “agree a lot” in wishing for books available to help them learn English

Agreement with Statement:
I wish there were more books available to help me learn English

 Agree a lot
  Agree a little
  Disagree a little
  Disagree a lot



Data by Household Income Level

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17



TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 98. Parents in lower-income households also see the importance of English as a global language, as means of career development, and communication with others

	LESS THAN ¥8,000	¥8,001 TO ¥15,000	¥15,000 TO ¥25,000	MORE THAN ¥25,000
General importance/utility (Net)	50%	54%	53%	60%
English is a widespread/global/versatile/an international language/lingua franca	16%	18%	16%	15%
Learning a foreign language is good/important	8%	11%	11%	8%
As another skill/ability/tool	3%	3%	5%	10%
It's important (unspecified)	7%	4%	5%	6%
Specific Uses (Net)	41%	41%	50%	42%
For job/career/future prospects/development/earning more money	17%	21%	28%	23%
For broadening horizons/understanding the wider world/culture	12%	10%	11%	10%
For academic advancement/for examinations	8%	11%	10%	6%
Being able to go abroad/study/travel abroad	2%	5%	7%	6%
Specific Skills (Net)	29%	30%	31%	25%
As a means of communication/socialize/communicate with other people	15%	21%	21%	13%
Reading ability	11%	7%	12%	9%
Speaking ability	6%	6%	8%	6%

Base: Parents who say it is important to learn English

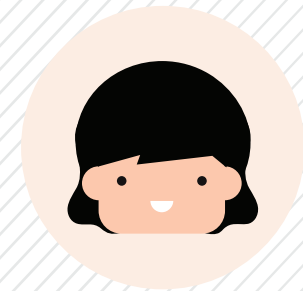
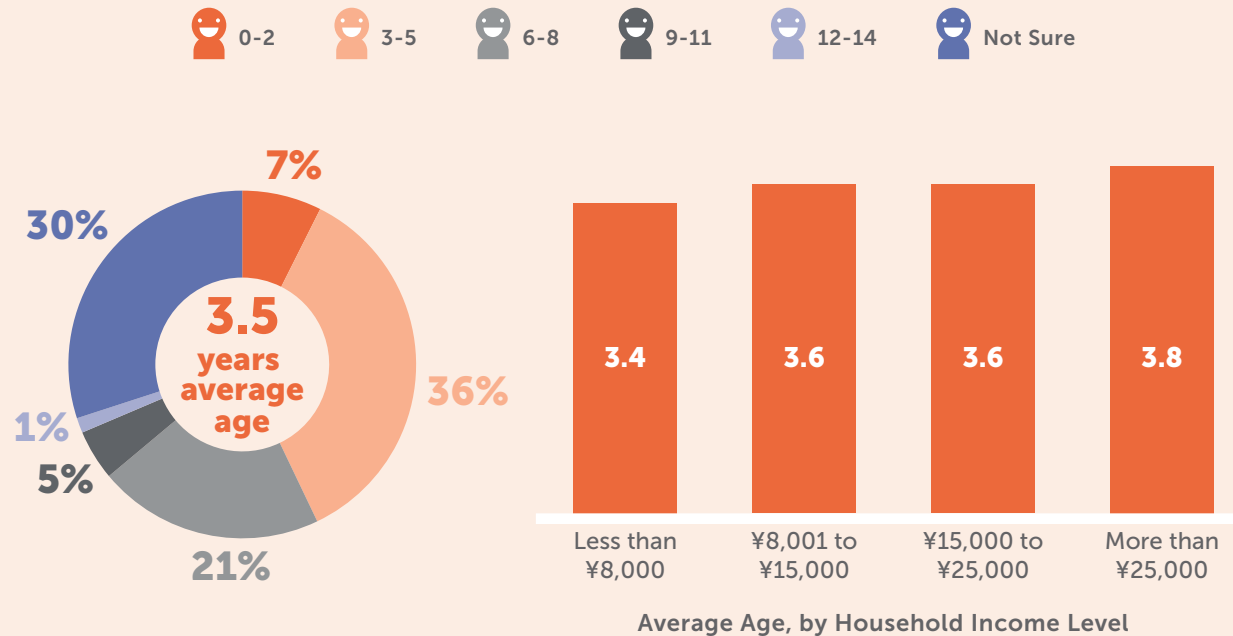
Data by Household Income Level



TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 99. Children in lowest-income households show the most gap in between the actual and ideal starting ages in learning English

Age Children Should Begin Learning English



Most children in the lowest-income households learn English at an average age of 5.4 but parents believe they should have begun at age 3.4

* Averages are calculated based on those who provided a response/did not say "not sure."
Base: Parents of children who have started learning English/Plan to have children learn English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

KEY FINDINGS


3) START AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE / START YOUNG

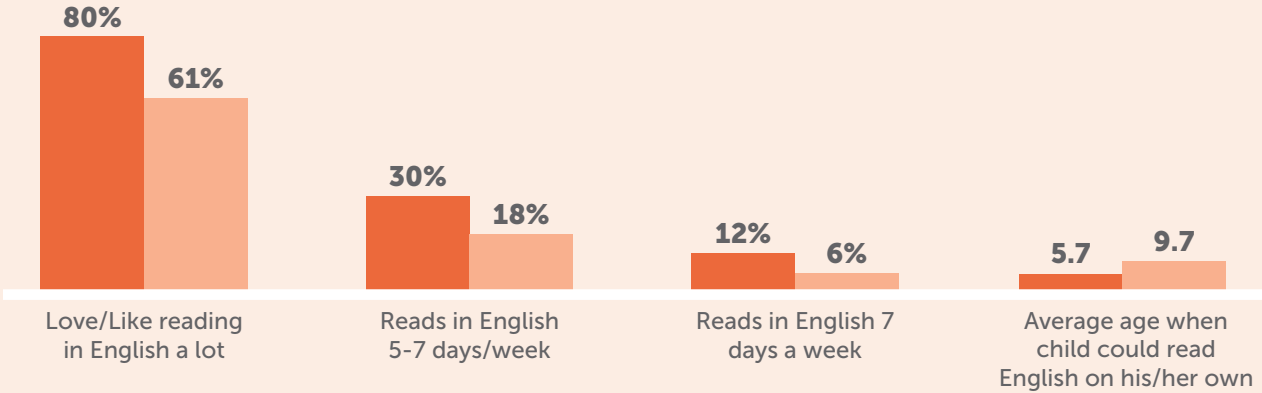
- ▶ The earlier the Chinese children start learning English, the better the likelihood of success they get. This can possibly be explained in the following aspects:
 - ▶ Firstly, children read in English more frequently - *See Figure 100*
 - ▶ Those who started learning English below six years old read more regularly than those who started at age 6 and up.
 - ▶ For those who read 5–7 times per week, 30% are aged below six.
 - ▶ Secondly, children enjoy reading in English more - *See Figure 100*. 79% aged below six love/like reading a lot compared to 61% of those aged six onwards.
 - ▶ Thirdly, children are able to read in English at an earlier average age - *See Figure 100*. Those who started learning below age six are able to read on their own at an average age of 5.69, while those aged six and above only begin to read independently at an average age of 9.71.

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 100. Children who learn English earlier are more likely to enjoy reading and read more frequently

Key Measures by Age Child Began Learning English

 Began Learning English Between 0-5  Began Learning English 6 or Older



Base: Children ages 6-17 who have started to learn English
Base: Parent of child who can read in English

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

KEY FINDINGS

4) VARIETY AND THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

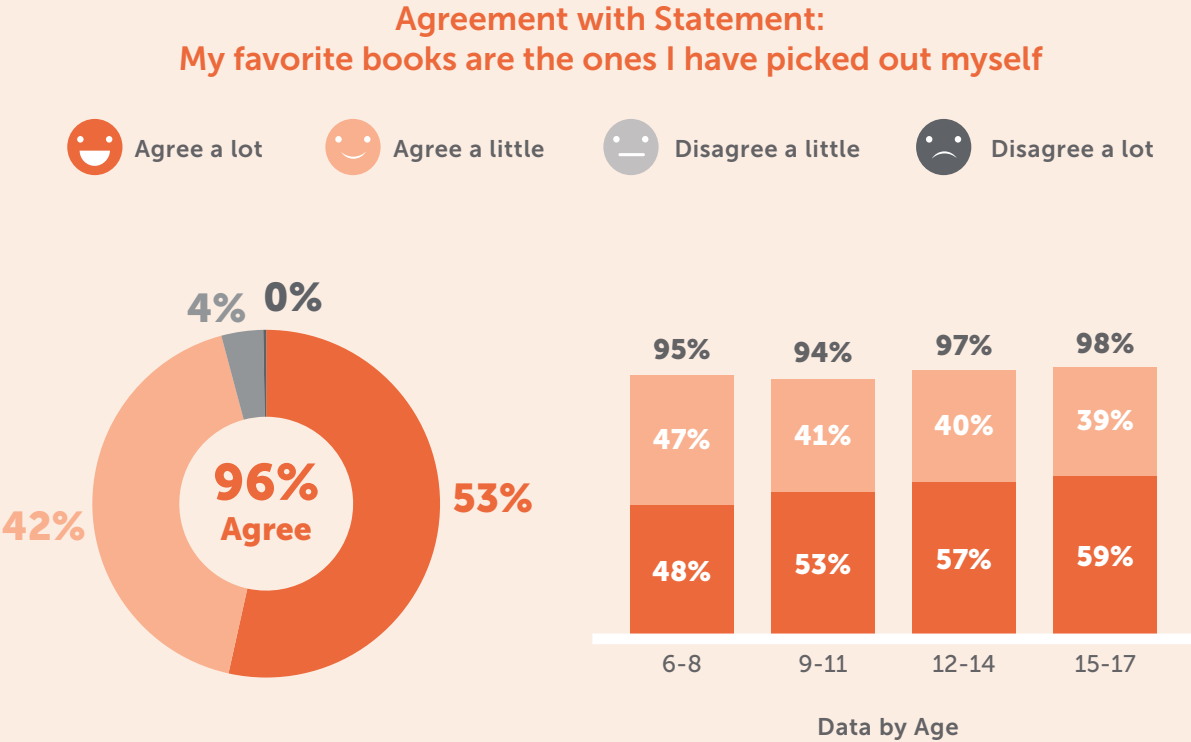
- ▶ Like every other child, Chinese children also want the freedom to choose what they want to read, and in doing so they are more likely to enjoy what they read, have a better sense of success and like reading better. This is where variety and choices play important roles.
- ▶ Books chosen by children themselves are more likely to be finished and end up being their favorites - *See Figure 101.*
- ▶ They gain a sense of accomplishment when they finish a book and are likely to continue reading which in turn develop higher language fluency - *See Figure 102.*
- ▶ Hence, choices and variety are just as important for Chinese English-language learners if we want them to pick up reading in English and take a liking to reading in English.

5) READING IN ENGLISH MADE REWARDING

- ▶ Since a strong sense of success and accomplishment is important for Chinese children, it is important to make reading in English a rewarding experience to them as well.
- ▶ They feel accomplished when they finish reading a book - *See Figure 102.*
- ▶ A supportive reading environment, and initiatives that measure, show and reward reading progress such as reading journal, reading contest, certificates, and prizes, should be created.
- ▶ An international proficiency reward system or a reading program that rewards every progress made/ book read are also good complements.

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 101. Children’s favorite books are the ones they have picked out themselves



This sentiment increases with child’s age

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

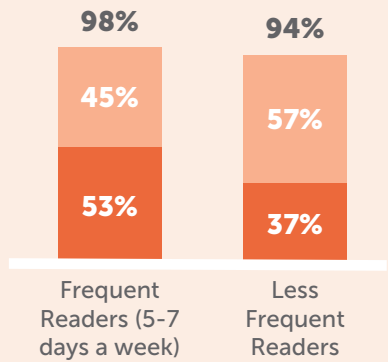
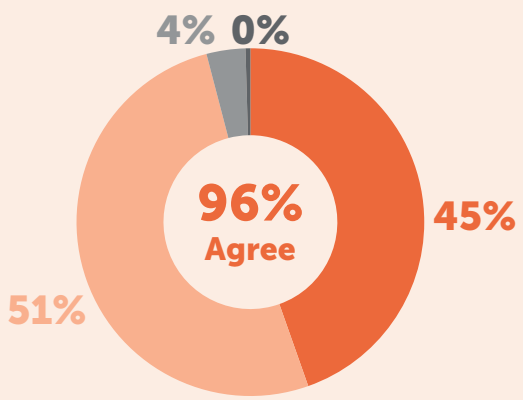
Figure 102. Children feel accomplished when they finish reading a book



Frequent readers are more likely to agree "a lot" with this statement

Agreement with Statement: I feel proud and have a sense of accomplishment when I finish reading a book

- Agree a lot
- Agree a little
- Disagree a little
- Disagree a lot



Data by Reading Frequency

Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

KEY FINDINGS

6) READ-ALoud LIKELY TO GUARANTEE BETTER LEARNING SUCCESS RATE

- ▶ Read-aloud is a common practice which Chinese parents and children enjoy, and it usually begins at an early age (below two years old).
- ▶ As discussed earlier, read-aloud effectively boosts reading fluency, prepares the baby's brain for language and literacy skills, and builds word-sound awareness, motivation, curiosity & memory (Huang, 2010). Furthermore, it boosts parent-child bonding. That explains why read-aloud is commonly seen around the globe and why Scholastic advocates strongly for read-aloud.




7) PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

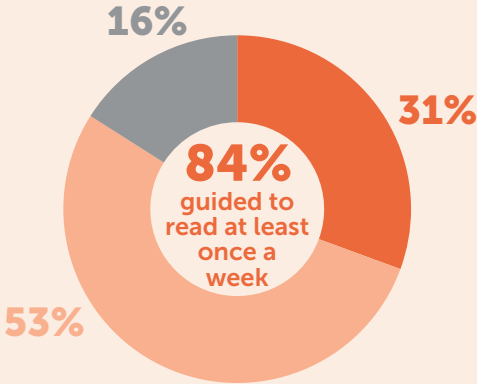
- ▶ When parents are active and involved in their children's learning process, the children are likely to make better progress.
 - ▶ Our survey shows that 84% of the parents guide children to read in English at home at least once a week - *See Figure 103.*
 - ▶ Since parents are role models, their opinion of reading English to learn matters strongly for the children as well.
 - ▶ In addition, the parents remain a key source of reading encouragement even when the children are growing older - *See Figure 104.* The children read in English more frequently when their parents prefer them to do so - *See Figure 105.*
 - ▶ Children whose parents frequently guide them to read in English are more likely to be frequent readers in English and be able to read in English independently.

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 103.
84% of children are being guided to read at home on a weekly basis

Frequency Child is Guided to Read in English at Home

-  **Frequent**
(5-7 days a week)
-  **Moderate**
(1-4 days a week)
-  **Infrequent**
(Less than 1 day a week)



Base: Parent of child ages 0-14 who has started to learn English/ Parent who plans to have child learn English



TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

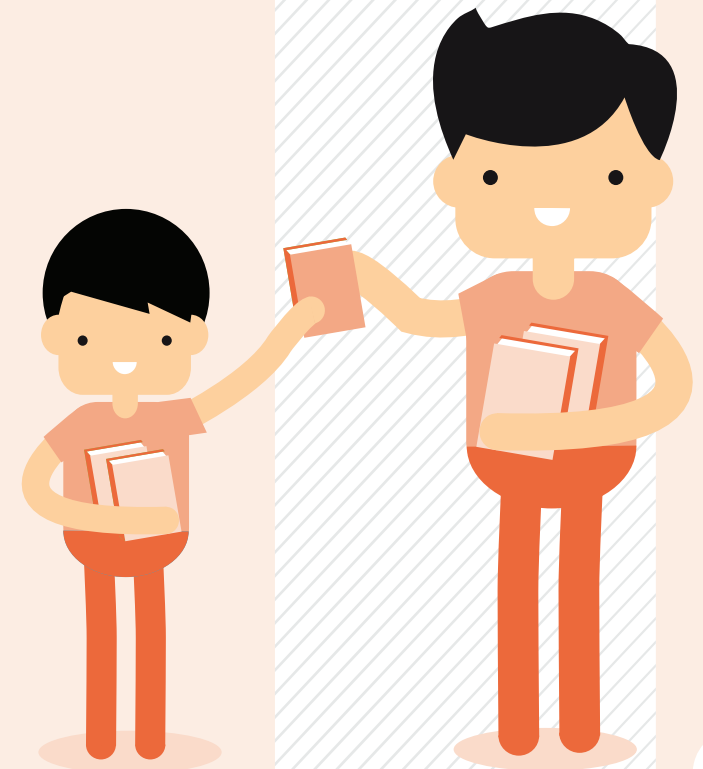
Figure 104.
Parents are the top source of reading encouragement

Encouragement from parents and teachers generally increases with age

Sources of Reading Encouragement

	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17
Parent/guardian	87%	88%	90%	91%
Teachers	67%	68%	73%	79%

Data by Age






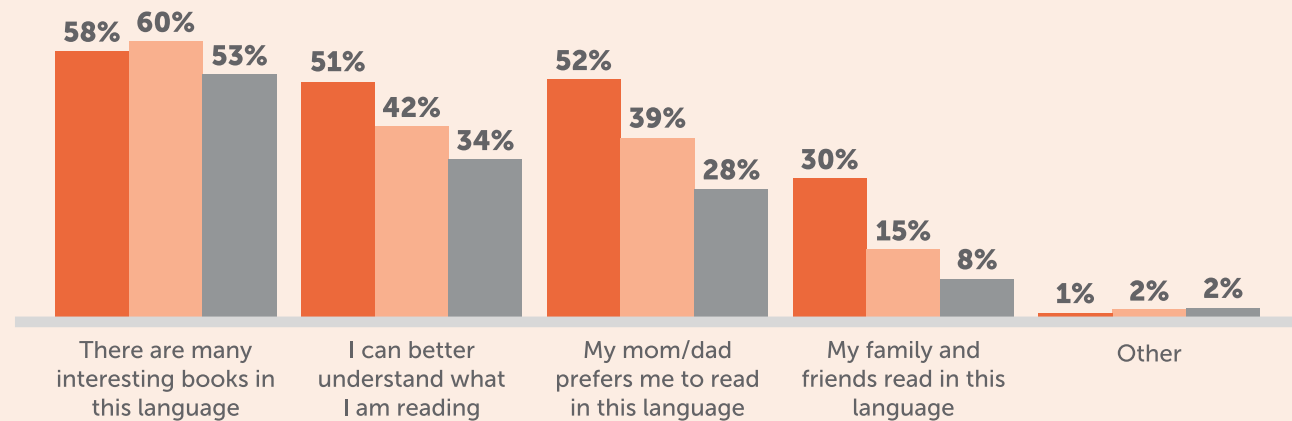
Base: Total Children Ages 6-17

TAKEAWAYS: SUCCESS FACTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHINA

Figure 105. Frequent readers are more likely to say they like reading in English because their parents prefer it

Reasons Child Likes Reading Books in English, by Frequency of Reading Books in English

 Frequent (5-7 days a week)  Moderate (1-4 days a week)  Infrequent (Less than 1 day a week)



Base: Child loves/likes reading in English



8) CONFIDENCE AND FLUENCY OF THE PARENTS

- ▶ Lack of English skills is the top reason parents do not guide their children to read in English often.
- ▶ Thus, supportive measures and tools such as scaffolding guides, audio aids, milestone checklists, and FAQs can be used to help parents and boost their confidence to guide their children in English learning, as they are crucial in the child's learning process.
- ▶ Take the milestone checklist as an example. At the preschool level, children utilize and demonstrate developing language and literacy skills in three major ways: orally, written language and early reading skills. Pre-reading and early literacy milestones to include in a reading development checklist include an interest in looking at and choosing books, the ability to answer and ask basic questions about a story after listening to it, the ability to read his or her own name in print, the ability to identify letters and sound out simple words, and lastly, the ability to comprehend and make predictions about a story's sequence of events (Pachucki, 2017).

9) GUIDANCE FOR SELECTION OF SUITABLE READING MATERIALS

- ▶ Another challenge for both parents and children is to find suitable English reading materials that the children would like to read.
- ▶ Parents often have inadequate knowledge about the right types of reading materials.
- ▶ To overcome this challenge, proper guidance can be provided to assist the parents to choose the right reading materials required for their children (eg Reading Roadmap/Checklists according to age, Lit Pro).

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

➤ STUDY METHODOLOGY

- ▶ The study was managed by YouGov, fielded between April 1, 2020 and April 21, 2020. The total sample size of 1,210 parents and children includes:
 - ▶ 509 parents with children aged 0–5
 - ▶ 701 parents with children aged 6–17, plus one child aged 6–17 from the same household. Children aged six years and older were required to be enrolled in school.
- ▶ Parents of children aged 6–17 completed their survey questions first before passing the survey on to one randomly selected child in the target age range. The survey sample was sourced and recruited by YouGov.
- ▶ To ensure proper demographic representation within the sample, final data were weighted according to YouGov’s benchmark distributions of parents of children aged 0–17:
 - ▶ Within each City Tier (1, 2, 3/4/5), weights were applied to balance child gender within each of the five age groups (0–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, 13–17), parent age, gender, household income level and education.

➤ ADDITIONAL STUDY METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Some survey language was modified in age-appropriate ways to ensure comprehension among children aged 6–8.
- ▶ Parents were invited to help young children read the survey but they were asked to allow children to independently answer all questions. At the end of the survey, children were asked to record the degree to which a parent helped them with the survey. Consistent with prior research, an analysis comparing the responses of children with and without parental involvement showed no significant differences.
- ▶ Data may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
6–8	33%
9–11	29%
12–14	17%
15–17	21%

GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS	
Total Boys	54%
Total Girls	46%

AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
0–2	40%
3–5	60%

GENDER OF CHILD THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN 0–5 ANSWERED ABOUT	
Total Boys	53%
Total Girls	47%

AGE OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
18–29	57%	11%
30–39	41%	56%
40–49	1%	23%
50+	1%	10%

GENDER OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Male	43%	56%
Female	57%	44%

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OBTAINED BY PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Vocational college education or less	30%	27%
University First Degree	46%	51%
University higher degree/ Professional higher education	24%	23%

NET HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER MONTH	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than ¥8,000	24%	20%
¥8,001 to ¥15,000	26%	28%
More than ¥15,000	42%	46%
Mean	¥17,340	¥18,434

CITY TIER LEVEL OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Tier 1	23%	23%
Tier 2	38%	38%
Tier 3/4/5	39%	39%

APPENDIX C: SUBGROUP SAMPLE SIZES

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS

6–8	245
9–11	198
12–14	120
15–17	138
Grand Total	701

GENDER OF CHILD RESPONDENTS

Boys Aged 6–17	388
Girls Aged 6–17	313

AGE OF CHILD RESPONDENTS WITHIN GENDER

Boys Aged 6–11	244
Girls Aged 6–11	199
Boys Aged 12–17	144
Girls Aged 12–17	114

AGE OF CHILD THAT PARENTS ANSWERED ABOUT

Parents of Children Aged 0–5	509
Parents of Children Aged 0–2	224
Parents of Children Aged 3–5	285
Parents of Children Aged 6–17	701
Parents of Children Aged 0–17	1210

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Less than ¥8,000	129	145
¥8,001 to ¥15,000	147	219
More than ¥15,000	206	310

READING FREQUENCY OF CHILD AGED 6–17	
Frequent Readers (read books for fun 5-7 days a week)	341
Less Frequent Readers (read books for fun 4 or fewer days a week)	360

CITY TIER LEVEL OF PARENT RESPONDENTS	PARENTS OF 0–5 YEAR-OLDS	PARENTS OF 6–17 YEAR-OLDS
Tier 1	118	170
Tier 2	209	260
Tier 3/4/5	182	271

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