

Good home learning in early years boosts your secondary school achievements

July 8 2019



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The positive effects of a rich home learning environment during a child's early years continue into adolescence and help improve test scores later in life, according to a new study published in *School Effectiveness and*

School Improvement.

This research shows pre-schoolers whose parents regularly read and talked about [books](#) with them scored better on math tests at age 12. The study, lead by Dr. Simone Lehl of the University of Bamberg, is one of the first to provide detail on the importance of [early years](#) home learning on children's development up to early adolescence.

Researchers studied 229 German children from age three until [secondary school](#) and participants' literacy and [numeracy skills](#) were tested annually in their three years of preschool (ages 3-5), and again when they were 12 or 13 years old.

They found that children gained from home stimulation in their preschool years in literacy, language and arithmetic skills which, in turn, led to higher outcomes in reading and [mathematical skills](#) in secondary school, regardless of the home learning environment then.

Dr. Lehl said: "Our results underline the great importance of exposing children to books for development not just in literacy but numeracy too: early language skills not only improve a [child](#)'s reading but also boost mathematical ability.

"Encouraging caregivers to engage with their children in direct literacy activities, shared book reading and advanced verbal interactions during reading, and to include language and mathematical content during these activities, should promote children's reading and mathematical abilities in secondary school. Such experiences lay a strong foundation for later school success."

Formal literacy activities not only boosted language skills and reading comprehension but also improved numerical skills. Book exposure and the quality of verbal interactions regarding mathematical content during

shared book reading (for example, talking about numbers and counting) when children were of preschool age were also associated with better math outcomes at age 12. The effect also worked the other way with the quality of parent-child interaction regarding mathematics also improving children's language skills.

Aspects of the children's home learning environment—formal literacy and numeracy activities, book exposure (parents owning books and reading to the child), and the quality of verbal parent-child interactions regarding language and mathematics—were also assessed and researchers ensured they accounted for background variables, such as gender, maternal education and socio-economic status, which affect the home learning environment in the results.

More information: *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, DOI: [10.1080/09243453.2019.1618346](https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2019.1618346)

Provided by Taylor & Francis

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