

## THE IMPACT OF BASIC SCHOOL-READINESS SKILLS ON 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADERS' READING DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS: A COHORT STUDY

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In the past few decades numerous national and international cross-sectional student assessment programmes focusing on students' reading achievement have been carried out. Results show that students in the beginning of elementary education read well, whereas in secondary schooling a major decline occurs in reading performance. The negative tendency calls for further research. The aim of the present study is to examine (1) Hungarian students' reading developmental patterns within the first two years of elementary education within and between two different cohorts, (2) to what extent the developmental levels of 6-year-olds' basic school-readiness skills affect reading performance in grade 2, and (3) to what extent the Hungarian school system is capable of levelling out student differences – within the framework of a longitudinal programme. Data show significant student improvement both within and between the cohorts. Furthermore, our findings confirm that students' basic school-readiness skills are strong predictors of later reading achievement.