

## THE IMPACT OF THE FAMILY'S CULTURAL CAPITAL ON YOUNG CHILDREN'S READING HABITS AND ATTITUDE

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On the basis of the results of international student assessments there is a great concern about the declining reading attitude among young people. At the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, in many countries, a great number of adolescents cannot read and do not like reading. Studies show that a positive home reading environment affects the reading attitude (e. g. *Kraaykamp*, 2001). Parents can support their children's reading socialization and form their reading attitude either by setting a good example through their own reading habits and preferences (*Leseman and de Jong*, 1998) or by persuading children that it is good and beneficial to read (*Mathewson*, 2004).

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of the family's cultural capital on reading habits and attitude among young children. The sample of the study represents the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders of 10 primary schools of 7 settlements, including the county seat, in Hajdú-Bihar county, Hungary (N=1,633). Students filled in a paper-and-pencil questionnaire on their reading habits and preferences and indicated their reading attitude on an attitude scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.87$ ). Parents' self-reports yielded information on demography and their own reading habits and preferences.

Data show that parental reading habits significantly influence the reading attitude of the age group ( $p<.05$ ). Parents' reading frequency has a positive impact on children's reading attitude. Reading preferences of the mothers have a stronger effect on children's reading attitude than that of the fathers. Children whose families practice reading as a regular family activity show a significantly more positive attitude towards reading ( $p<.05$ ). Attitude is also more favourable provided the source of reading material is the family home. Finally, the amount of money spent on reading by the family correlates with the change of children's reading attitude ( $r=.86$ ).

Consequently, schools, teachers and policy makers should inform parents about these effects in order that parents could be more aware of their influence on children's reading attitude, and would become more active and supportive in children's reading socialization.