

University of Groningen

Is the twig bent as the tree is inclined? Children and parents interacting with school-distributed literacy assignments

Akkermans-Rutgers, Marlot; Doornenbal, Jeannette; Kassenberg, Annelies; Bosker, Roel; Doolaard, Simone

Published in:
Psychology in the schools

DOI:
[10.1002/pits.22452](https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22452)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2021

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Akkermans-Rutgers, M., Doornenbal, J., Kassenberg, A., Bosker, R., & Doolaard, S. (2021). Is the twig bent as the tree is inclined? Children and parents interacting with school-distributed literacy assignments. *Psychology in the schools*, 58(2), 377-399. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22452>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Is the twig bent as the tree is inclined? Children and parents interacting with school-distributed literacy assignments

Marlot Akkermans-Rutgers^{1,2}  | Jeannette Doornenbal¹ |
Annelies Kassenberg¹ | Roel Bosker² | Simone Doolaard²

¹Professorship Youth, Education, and Society, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, The Netherlands

²GION Education/Research, Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

Correspondence

Marlot Akkermans-Rutgers, Professorship Youth, Education, and Society, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Zernikeplein 9, 9747 AS, Groningen, The Netherlands.
Email: m.akkermans@pl.hanze.nl

Abstract

In this study, we analyze in-depth interviews conducted with 26 Dutch third-graders as well as interviews with one of each child's parents. The children attended one of six schools, each with a relatively large population of families with a low socioeconomic status, where home-based literacy assignments aimed at increasing children's enjoyment of reading were distributed for a duration of 3 years. The aim of this study is to gain knowledge of distinctive interaction characteristics of child-parent dyads regarding at-home literacy, to learn how these characteristics can help educational professionals and researchers answer to the needs of children and parents when designing and distributing at-home reading assignments. Based on the attitudes towards reading and the skillset of child and parent(s), we distinguished three reader-profiles: (1) Autonomously motivated readers, (2) Incompatible readers, and (3) Generational non-readers. The practical implications of our research are that, to be appealing, at-home reading assignments should be differentiated, nonrepetitive, and concrete, complete, and structured. Prerequisite implications are that both children and parents value regular positive feedback on their

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2020 The Authors. *Psychology in the Schools* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC

at-home literacy activities and that, in approaching parents, it appears to be advisable to take them for what they are: parents, not substitute teachers.

KEYWORDS

elementary schools, literacy, parental involvement

Parental involvement is a well-studied topic because of its potential positive effect on children's school performance (e.g., Epstein, 1991; Fan & Chen, 2001). There are several forms of parental involvement: home-based (parents helping their children with school-related activities at home), school-based (such as chaperoning on field trips) and home-school conferencing (such as parents communicating with teachers). However, only home-based involvement has been found to have a significant effect on the achievements of children (Bakker et al., 2013; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Lusse, 2013; Pomerantz et al., 2007). Research has demonstrated that reading is the educational domain that benefits most from home-based parental involvement, especially at the start of a child's formal literacy education (Bokdam et al., 2014; Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005; Sacker et al., 2002) and, most specifically, when parents help their children to develop reading habits (Castro et al., 2015).

An important reason for stimulating parents to become involved in their child's educational development is to reduce the *achievement gap* among school children (Lee & Bowen, 2006). It is argued that this achievement gap could be partly due to parents' school-related at-home involvement (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003). Research has shown that migrant parents, as well as parents with a low socioeconomic status (SES), have a higher tendency to provide their children with a poor home literacy environment (HLE; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Niklas & Schneider, 2013; Van Steensel, 2006). For these families especially, what is called for is an active invitation from school to become involved in their child's reading development. At the same time, schools indicate that reaching these families is often problematic, meaning that external assistance in accomplishing a partnership would be useful (Bokdam et al., 2014).

Research has shown that children raised in families oriented towards the view that literacy is a source of entertainment are better readers than those from families that view reading as "just" a set of skills to be acquired (Baker, 2003). A child's motivation to read has been demonstrated to be a significant precursor of reading behavior and reading proficiency (Mol & Bus, 2011; Wigfield et al., 2016). This implies that it is advisable to invest in the role of parents as partners in enhancing their child's enjoyment of reading. However, interventions aimed at increasing a child's motivation to read are usually implemented within schools, not in home environments (Van Steensel et al., 2016).

A child's motivation to read can be promoted by taking three basic psychological needs into account: the need for autonomy, the need for competence, and the need for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Van Steensel et al., 2016). It cannot be assumed that, when supporting their reading child, parents spontaneously act in accordance with these needs (Baker, 2003). Parents can be very vigilant in encouraging accurate oral reading, for example, often perceiving reading as something that simply has to be learned—whether you like it or not—as opposed to something that is fun to do (Baker, 2003; Evans et al., 2003). Baker et al. (2001) argue that providing parents with knowledge on literacy subjects should make them feel comfortable in their role as literacy supporters: they learn about the kind of interactions that are likely to be beneficial to their child and about the importance of their involvement. This can be accomplished by tutoring parents, thus giving parents the skills to provide a specific kind of literacy assistance (Sénéchal & Young, 2008). But the empowerment of parents also takes place on a more practical level, namely through the distribution of appropriate materials.

Bailey (2006) states that homework should be designed to foster parent-child collaborations, as that maximises its effectiveness. Tracey and Young (2002) and Baker (2003) further argue that children—especially those who are

below-average readers—should be provided with entertaining, instructional-level texts, rather than grade-level texts, to read at home. Their studies indicate that reading at the “frustration level of difficulty” enhances parental error corrections and the child’s level of resentment. Reutzel et al. (2005) state that educators should provide parents with reading materials for home use, as well as subsequently instructing them on *how* to use those materials. The overall conclusion shared by all these studies is that it is important for parents to be empowered through knowledge and materials, and that it is the pleasurable character of reading together that causes children to develop positive views on reading (Baker et al., 2001).

In the current study, we analyze in-depth interviews conducted with 26 Dutch third-graders, as well as interviews with one of each child’s parents. For 3 years, six schools with a relatively large population of low SES families distributed home-based literacy assignments that are aimed at increasing the child’s enjoyment of reading. Through this study, we strive to add to the voluminous body of literature on at-home literacy in two ways. First, we focus on the interaction between children and their parents while engaging in school-initiated, at-home literacy activities—to our knowledge, this dyadic approach is a novelty, with no precedent in this line of research. Second, we draw lessons from their experiences that can help educational professionals and researchers to better answer to the needs of children and parents when designing and distributing literacy assignments.

1 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, we will discuss four factors that potentially influence the interaction between a child, his or her parent, and at-home reading activities.

1.1 | Parental ethnotheories

Parental ethnotheories stand for the specific set of cultural beliefs that parents adhere to (Harkness et al., 2010; see also Bourdieu, 1977; Poolman et al., 2018; Williams & Gregory, 2001). They are the combination of implicit ideas parents have on children, themselves as parents, and families overall, which thus influence the way they organize their daily lives, their routines, and those of their children. This includes their children’s academic lives, for the parental belief system is fundamentally intertwined with views on children as learners and their environments for learning. As it is the construct of often subconscious and implicit ideas and opinions on parenting, it is highly likely to be influenced by a parent’s own upbringing (Belsky et al., 2009).

Culture influences the way in which children are socialized into becoming users of language, both oral and written (Espinoza, 2005). One’s affinity with literacy is therefore also susceptible to intergenerational transferability. It is especially parents with poor reading skills who are at risk of transferring their lack of affinity with written text to their children. Cooter (2006) refers to this transmission of low literacy as “intergenerational illiteracy”: “A sociocultural phenomenon whereby illiterate parents inadvertently sponsor home conditions that may seriously hinder their children’s reading and writing development, thus perpetuating a cycle of illiteracy.” (Cooter, 2006, p. 698).

1.2 | Parental literacy skills

Parental literacy skills are related to a parent’s own competence as a reader and his or her ability to facilitate interaction with written texts for his child. Van Steensel (2006) distinguishes three Home Literacy/Learning Environment (HLE) profiles: rich, child-directed, and poor. In families with a rich HLE-profile, the child participates in a wide variety of literacy activities. Child-directed HLEs are characterized by a frequent exposure of children to

literacy activities, but only due to the child's own initiative. In families with a low HLE, there is little engagement in literacy activities. Van Steensel's results demonstrate—in accordance with those of Niklas and Schneider (2013)—that as the parents' level of education increases, the share of rich HLEs grows (and that of poor HLEs drops).

An important possible influencer of the HLE parents provide their children with is the parents' feeling of competence. Parental self-efficacy (PSE) can be related to a parent's sense of parenting competence (Jones & Prinz, 2005; see also Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). A parent's confidence in his or her ability to support his or her child can influence the extent of at-home involvement: when a parent with a higher level of PSE experiences parenting success and a high functioning child, it may further increase the sense of PSE. A vicious circle may be established when a lower level PSE parent struggles with parenting, experiences frustration and a nonoptimally functioning child, and, therefore, have his or her sense of self-efficacy further undermined (Jones & Prinz, 2005).

1.3 | Parental expectations and aspirations

Pomerantz et al. (2007) state that “the beliefs parents have about children's potential may determine the character of their involvement in children's schooling” (p. 387). Parents' expectations and aspirations may impact their child's academic success in a significant way. Lee and Bowen (2006) demonstrate that, out of five types of parental involvement (at home and at school), what most strongly predicts a child's academic achievement is his or her parents' educational expectations ($\beta = 0.23$. See also Castro et al., 2015 and Boonk et al., 2018).

1.4 | Child's literacy skills

Studies have shown that there is an interplay between a child's reading ability and the home support provided by his or her parents. Parents intuitively tailor their feedback to the (perceived) needs of their reading child (Dunston et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2003). Moreover, a child's reading skill can have an evocative impact on parents in their at-home literacy support (Silinskas et al., 2012). Causality is also a major issue here: Whereas it may be the case that a child is a poor reader *despite* the parent's ongoing attempts to elevate his or her reading skill, it may equally be the case that the child is a poor reader *due to* a lack or absence of (positive or effective) support. In regard to this, it is important to stress that a child's reading skills should be divided into *actual* and *perceived* reading skill. Msengi (2007) has demonstrated that estimates of a child's reading skills and the child's reading test results are often incongruent.

1.5 | Research questions

This study is designed on the basis of one main question and three subquestions:

Main question: What are the distinctive interaction characteristics of child-parent dyads regarding at-home literacy, and how can knowledge of these characteristics help researchers and educational professionals answer to these dyads' needs when designing and distributing at-home reading assignments?

Subquestion 1: Is it possible to inductively identify reader-profiles by scoring child-parent dyads on theoretical concepts that have been shown to influence the interaction between a child, his or her parent, and at-home reading activities? If so, what profiles can be identified, and what dyadic interaction characteristics are distinctive of these profiles (and the theoretical concepts)?

Subquestion 2: How do the child-parent dyads in each of the identified reader-profiles compare when it comes to their evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments?

Subquestion 3: How do the child-parent dyads in each of the identified reader-profiles compare when it comes to the parents' SES and the children's actual literacy skill?

2 | THE PRESENT STUDY

This study is part of an overarching research project on the cooperation between elementary schools and parents during the years in which children learn to read and start to become more advanced readers (in first, second and third grade). For three school years (2015–2016 to 2017–2018), a Dutch version of the originally American parental involvement module of Success for All (SfA) was implemented at six Dutch elementary schools.

2.1 | Success for all

SfA is an evidence-based, whole-school reform model that has consistently demonstrated high levels of reading performance in schools serving large numbers of underprivileged students from high poverty areas (Borman et al., 2007; Quint et al., 2015; Slavin & Madden, 2012). It is a program containing eleven components, including a reading program that employs ability grouping, tutoring, cooperative learning, and a parental involvement module. SfA has shown its effectiveness in the United States as well as the United Kingdom (Borman et al., 2007; Slavin et al., 2009).

2.2 | Parental involvement module

The parental involvement module of SfA consists of seven essential elements, including house calls, informal morning meetings, and a Parent and Family Involvement Team. The essential element that is the most prominent is the read-and-respond activity: For 20 min a day, every child should be given the opportunity to read at home to a positive listener—usually a parent—whose sole purpose is to praise the child's reading progress. The read-and-respond activity serves two objectives: (1) to practice reading, and (2) to develop a love for reading. The school provides children and parents with specific materials (texts and assignments) and information on at-home reading, to help them engage in the read-and-respond activity (Success for All Foundation, 2013). The provided information and materials are designed around the three aforementioned psychological needs that promote children's motivation to read.

2.3 | Description of the intervention

The six participating schools are situated in or around the city of Groningen, in the north of the Netherlands. Each school is located in or adjacent to city districts labeled as “impulse areas”: areas that are defined by a combination of high unemployment rates and low income (Dutch Ministry of Education Cultural Affairs and Science, 2016).

In Grade 1, parents were prepared for their role as positive, valuable supporters through an informative and interactive meeting, in which the objectives of at-home reading were clarified, and the materials discussed. Similar meetings were organized at the start of each following school year, and letters were distributed in the course of each year to remind them of the objectives. Teachers were actively encouraged to restate the objectives on a regular basis, in a manner they deemed appropriate.

Six weeks into the first grade, the children started reading “read-together books” in class: short stories that include sentences in large letters to be read by the child, and smaller letters to be read by a more experienced reader (*the need for relatedness*). After 5 days of practicing (*the need for competence*), the book became the child's

property and was brought home, along with a booklet containing five stimulating questions and activities. Some questions were meant to stimulate text-to-self connections (e.g., “Which of the leading figures would you like to be?”) or discussions (e.g., “Would you recommend this book to a friend?”), whereas others were designed to simply help them enjoy the process of reading (e.g., “Read your favorite passage under a blanket with a flashlight”). The questions and activities were not just applicable to the read-together books: Parents were advised to let the child choose another book if reading the read-together book became too repetitive (*the need for autonomy*) or if, for example, they preferred to read children’s books in another language.

In Grades 2 and 3, instead of the read-together books, the children started reading conventional children’s books in class. For this reason, it became too expensive for the schools to provide the children with books to take home. Still, a “logbook” was distributed, containing weekly reading activities to be executed at home. The child could always choose between two activities and did so on the basis of which was the most enjoyable or which most suited the book they were reading. These logbooks stimulated the reading of texts other than narrative books, in whichever language they choose. Every morning or once a week, the booklets and logbooks were discussed in the classroom. By bringing the completed assignment back to school, the children could earn points for their team and thus gain specific privileges (such as picking a YouTube video to watch during lunch break).

3 | METHOD

3.1 | Participants

In June, July, and August of the school year 2017/2018, in-depth interviews were conducted with 26 children in Grade 3, and separate interviews were held with one of each child’s parents. The interviewees were selected by a senior researcher and a research assistant, to let the principal investigator (PI) conduct the interviews without any prior knowledge. The following two inclusion criteria were adhered to: (1) The children were in the third grade at one of the six schools that had adopted SfA’s parental involvement module and had had at least 2 years’ experience with the read-and-respond activity, and (2) From each of the seven participating classes, two children with a I-score on reading comprehension (far above the average), two children with a III-score (average), and four children with a V-score (far below the average) were selected at random. In some of the classes, there were no children with a I-score. In those cases, the children with the highest II-score were selected instead. We decided to include more children with a V-score than children with average or above-average reading skills, because we are specifically interested in the interactions of poor readers and their parents with at-home literacy activities. In all classes, the standardized reading comprehension tests 2.0 and 3.0 were administered halfway through third grade. These are tests created by the Dutch Central Institute for Test Development (CITO), which are used by about 90% of Dutch elementary schools and assessed by COTAN (responsible for assessing the quality of tests used in the Netherlands) as “good” for five criteria, “sufficient” for one criterion, and “not applicable” for one criterion (Ledoux et al., 2009; Toetsgids, 2015).

Of the eight children that had been selected from each class, we opted to interview four: one with a I-score, one with a III-score, and two with a V-score, chosen at random. For each child that was interviewed, we also conducted a separate interview with one of his or her parents. The remaining four names functioned as backups, to be called upon in the event that one of the first-chosen children was unreachable or unwilling to cooperate. Students from one of the six schools had previously been ruled out, because SfA was solely taught in Grade 1. After the two rounds of selection, we were left with 28 dyads and 28 “backup-dyads.” The research assistant erased all references to the children’s reading scores and provided the PI with a “clean” list, solely containing the names of the children. We were ultimately able to interview 26 children (8 girls and 18 boys, ages 8–9) along with 26 parents (24 mothers and 2 fathers). The two missing interviews were not conducted—in one case because both the first-chosen dyad and the backup-dyad was unwilling to cooperate, and in the other case because both were unreachable via

email or telephone. During the parent interviews, the parents were asked for permission to interview their child, which all the parents granted.

3.2 | Procedure

The PI conducted in-depth interviews to explore the interviewees' insider perspective through individual and personal experiences. To give the interviews the flow of a regular conversation, the PI did not work with a fixed set of questions but with two interview guides: one for the parent interviews and one for the child interviews. The child interview guide was divided into four main topics: (1) home situation (e.g., "Who is living with you?"), (2) self-evaluation as a reader (e.g., "Pick a number from 1 to 10; 1 meaning I am a very bad reader, 10 meaning I am a very good reader." "Could you elaborate on the number you chose?"), (3) evaluation of reading (e.g., "Pick a number from 1 to 10; 1 meaning I absolutely don't like it and 10 meaning I love it." "Could you elaborate on the number you chose?" "How do you feel when you are reading?" (followed by a self-chosen answer, or referral to emoticons brought by the PI: happy, proud, content, angry, bored, sad)) and at-home reading experiences (e.g., "Pick a number—etc." "Can you describe what it looks like when you are reading at home?"), and (4) evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments (e.g., "What are your experiences with the at-home reading assignments?").

The parent interview guide was divided into four main topics: (1) evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments (e.g., "What are your experiences with the at-home reading assignments?"), (2) information provided by the school on at-home literacy (e.g., "Did you immediately know what was expected of you when your child brought home the reading assignments?"), (3) parental expectations and aspirations (e.g., "How do you expect your child to do in the future, at home or in school?"), and (4) actions and attitudes related to at-home reading (e.g., "How do you feel about at-home reading?" "Do you or does your child ever initiate reading at home?" "Can you give an example?"). Additionally, through a short questionnaire, the parents were asked for SES-details (level of education of both themselves and the second parent, if applicable), to provide relevant background information.

At the end of both the parent and child interviews, the interviewee was asked to reflect on the conversation and provided with the opportunity to elaborate on any topics not yet thoroughly discussed.

3.3 | Data analysis

All 52 interviews were recorded digitally and then transcribed verbatim as Word documents. These transcripts were loaded into Atlas.ti (version 8.0)—software that is widely used for qualitative data analysis.

3.3.1 | Coding

We created a deductively constructed preliminary coding scheme, consisting of the four possible factors of influence derived from our theoretical framework. We added one hypothesized code: evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments. Using this coding scheme, the PI coded one-third of the transcripts (for explanatory remarks on the one-third mark, see Hennink et al., 2015).

After coding one-third of the transcripts, one code was altered and one was added. We narrowed down the code "parental ethnotheories," for this proved to be a concept too comprehensive to include. For the sake of targeting the parental belief system concerning written text, we instead focused on "basic literacy attitude parent" as a small but for this study essential aspect of the overarching concept of parental ethnotheories. One inductive code was added: basic literacy attitude child. This concept appeared to be intertwined with parents' and children's

interactions, both with each other and with the distributed literacy assignments. It also formed a logical counterpart to “basic literacy attitude parent.”

Regarding the literacy skills of the children, we coded the children's references to their *perceived* reading ability, as well as their parents' perception of their child's reading ability.

However, since Msengi (2007) has shown that estimates of a child's reading skill and the child's reading test results are often incongruent, we also took the child's *actual* reading test results (in Grade 3) into account. It is important to stress that we will not (and cannot) make any statements regarding causality between children's reading skills and parents' interaction with their child and/or the home-based literacy assignments.

3.3.2 | Intercoder reliability

To test the intercoder reliability, a second researcher coded 10% of the transcripts, randomly chosen from the transcripts that were already coded by the PI. A plateau of 89% reliability was reached for the parent interviews, and 94% for the child interviews. After that, the PI and the second coder discussed their coding discrepancies and reconciled all initial disagreements, reaching 100% intercoder agreement. The PI then coded all remaining transcripts.

3.3.3 | Scoring and clustering

The 26 dyads were scored on the following attributes: basic literacy attitude parent, parental skills, parental expectations and aspirations, basic literacy attitude child, and *perceived* literacy skills child as uttered by the child. The children's and their parents' perception of the child's literacy skills did not always align: The parents' perception matched the actual literacy skills of the child in each case, whereas in some instances the children's perception was contradictory to their actual reading skills. We opted to use the child's perception during the process of profiling, to maintain the balance between parents' self-evaluation of their skills on the one hand, and children's self-evaluation of their skills on the other. Table 1 represents the criteria we adhered to.

After scoring, we clustered the dyads that had similar scores. We concluded that the factor “parental expectations and aspirations” did not discriminate. Of the 26 parents, 21 had (moderately) positive expectations of and aspirations for their child, four parents were unclear, and just one was explicitly negative about her daughter's capabilities. As this factor did not affect the clustering, it was excluded. To validate the process of scoring and clustering, regular calibrating sessions were held by the four coauthors.

4 | RESULTS

The process of clustering dyads with similar scores facilitated an orderly analysis of the data from the interviews. We merged the six clusters into three main clusters, each containing two subclusters. These clusters could indeed be treated as reader-profiles—the dyads within each cluster verbalized similarities with respect to their interaction with at-home literacy assignments—and thus as an inductively identified interpretational framework. Through thorough discussions and repeated *close reading* of the transcripts, we formulated names to characterize each reader-profile: (1) Autonomously motivated readers with subprofiles (a) *Intrinsically motivated families* and (b) *Well-internalized extrinsically motivated families*, (2) Incompatible readers with subprofiles (a) *Parent positive, child negative* and (b) *Parent negative, child positive*, and (3) Generational non-readers with subprofiles (a) *First- and second-generation migrant families* and (b) *Non-reading families*. The results of this process—scoring, clustering/profiling, naming—are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 1 Overview of scoring-criteria

| Basic literacy attitude parent | | |
|--|---|--|
| + | +/- | - |
| Parent has a positive view on reading and reads regularly | Parent has a (moderately) positive view on reading, but is not a frequent reader | Parent has a negative view on reading |
| Parental skills | | |
| + | +/- | - |
| Parent is a (moderately) trained reader, facilitates reading for child, has confidence in own ability to support reading child | Parent's reading skills are mediocre, tries to facilitate reading for child, has (moderate) confidence in own ability to support reading child | Parent has low reading skills, difficulties with facilitating at-home reading for child, and low confidence in own ability to support reading child, now and in the future |
| Parental expectations and aspirations | | |
| + | +/- | - |
| Parent expects child to do well at school, does not foresee any major problems | Parent describes child as 'not a child who likes to go to school' but does not foresee any major problems. Or: child's progress surprises parent. Or: parent thinks child is a moderate student, but has no problem with that | Parent is negative about child's abilities and future school success |
| Basic literacy attitude child | | |
| + | +/- | - |
| Speaks positively about reading and grades it with an 8 or higher | Speaks moderately positive about reading and grades it with a 6 or 7 | Speaks negatively about reading and grades it with a 5 or lower. Or: scores high, but is verbally very negative about reading |
| Perceived literacy skills child | | |
| + | +/- | - |
| Thinks of himself as a skilled reader and grades his skills with an 8 or higher | Thinks of himself as a moderately skilled reader and grades his skills with a 6 or 7 | Thinks of himself as an incapable reader and grades his skills with a 5 or lower |

To answer the second half of our first subquestion, we will discuss the reader-profiles in detail, by describing distinctive interaction characteristics regarding at-home literacy on the basis of the attitude- and skill-related concepts identified in our theoretical framework.

We then focus on the dyads' evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments, to answer the second subquestion. Last, we discuss details on the parents' educational level and the actual reading skills of the children, thus answering subquestion 3. Table 3 provides information on SES, actual reading skills of the children, and the participants' evaluation of the provided literacy assignments.

In-text citations have been freely translated from Dutch to English. Names and possibly recognizable situations have been altered. To clearly mark out the dyads from each of the three main reader-profiles, the first letter of both the children's and the parents' names corresponds with the initial letter of the profile they belong to.

TABLE 2 Scoring, clustering, and profiling of dyads

| (Altered) name parent & name child | Basic literacy attitude parent | Parental skills | Basic literacy attitude child | Perceived literacy skills child |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cluster 1: Autonomously motivated readers (intrinsically motivated families) | | | | |
| Madeline & Milo | + | + | + | + |
| Megan & Marc | + | + | + | + |
| Matthew & Mac | + | + | + | + |
| Mallory & Michael | + | + | + | + |
| Myla & Morgan | + | + | + | + |
| Mabel & Mylee | + | + | + | + |
| Cluster 2: Autonomously motivated readers (well-internalized extrinsically motivated families) | | | | |
| Maria & Maddox | +/- | + | + | + |
| Maiya & Manon | +/- | + | + | + |
| Meryem & Maleek | +/- | + | +/- | +/- |
| Mara & Manuel | +/- | + | + | + |
| Margaret & Marcel | +/- | + | + | + |
| Maxine & Mariah | +/- | + | +/- | + |
| Cluster 3: Incompatible readers (parent positive, child negative) | | | | |
| Isabelle & Ian | +/- | + | - | - |
| Ivy & Ibrahim | +/- | + | - | + |
| Indi & Ismael | + | + | - | - |
| Ines & Ivan | + | + | - | + |
| Cluster 4: Incompatible readers (parent negative, child positive) | | | | |
| Irene & Isaac | - | +/- | + | + |
| Imogen & Isla | - | - | + | + |
| Iris & Ida | - | +/- | + | + |
| Cluster 5: Generational non-readers (first- and second-generation migrant families) | | | | |
| Gizem & Gulistan | +/- | - | + | +/- |
| Gharam & Gohar | +/- | - | +/- | +/- |
| Ghilas & Gazala | +/- | - | +/- | - |
| Cluster 6: Generational non-readers (non-reading families) | | | | |
| Gwen & Gabriel | - | +/- | - | + |
| Gemma & Gary | - | +/- | - | +/- |
| Gabrielle & Gavin | - | +/- | - | + |
| Genna & Geoffrey | - | +/- | - | +/- |

4.1 | Dyadic interaction characteristics, evaluation of distributed materials, SES, and actual literacy skills of the children

4.1.1 | Autonomously motivated readers

This profile comprises twelve dyads with a high appreciation of reading. To make a clear distinction between the dyads who read for enjoyment and those that read because they feel reading is an important skill to master, we adhered to the terminology commonly used within self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006): intrinsically motivated and well-internalized extrinsically motivated. The intrinsically motivated readers engage in the activity of reading for its own sake: out of excitement, enjoyment, or interest. Well-internalized extrinsically motivated readers understand the personal relevance of reading as it serves a personally

TABLE 3 SES, actual reading skills of the children, and evaluation of distributed literacy assignments

| (Altered) name parent & name child | Level of education interviewed parent ^a | Level of education second parent ^a | Actual literacy skills child ^b | Evaluation of distributed literacy assignments ^c |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Autonomously motivated readers (intrinsically motivated families) | | | | |
| Madeline & Milo | 9 | 8 | I | C: + P: + |
| Megan & Marc | 9 | 7 | III | C: + P: + |
| Matthew & Mac | 8 | 8 (= mother) | I | C: +/- P: +/- |
| Mallory & Michael | 8 | 8 | I | C: +/- P: +/- |
| Myla & Morgan | 8 | 8 | I | C: +/- P: +/- |
| Mabel & Mylee | 8 | 9 | I | C: + P: + |
| Autonomously motivated readers (well internalized extrinsically motivated families) | | | | |
| Maria & Maddox | 8 | 7 | V | C: + P: +/- |
| Maiya & Manon | 7 | 99 | III | C: 99 P: +/- |
| Meryem & Maleek | 7 | 7 | I | C: +/- P: +/- |
| Mara & Manuel | 99 | 99 | II | C: 99 P: +/- |
| Margaret & Marcel | 4 | 3 | II | C: - P: + |
| Maxine & Mariah | 7 | 4 | V | C: +/- P: + |
| Incompatible readers (parent positive, child negative) | | | | |
| Isabelle & Ian | 8 | 7 | V | C: +/- P: +/- |
| Ivy & Ibrahim | 7 | 3 | V | C: - P: - |
| Indi & Ismael | 7 | 7 | V | C: - P: + |
| Ines & Ivan | 7 | 7 | V | C: - P: +/- |
| Incompatible readers (parent negative, child positive) | | | | |
| Irene & Isaac | 7 | 4 | V | C: +/- P: - |
| Imogen & Isla | 1 | 99 | V | C: +/- P: + |
| Iris & Ida | 7 | 3 | III | C: + P: +/- |

(Continues)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

| (Altered) name parent & name child | Level of education interviewed parent ^a | Level of education second parent ^a | Actual literacy skills child ^b | Evaluation of distributed literacy assignments ^c |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Generational nonreaders (first- and second-generation migrant families) | | | | |
| Gizem & Gulistan | 3 | 4 | V | C: +/- P: + |
| Gharam & Gohar | 4 | 2 | V | C: 99 P: + |
| Ghilas & Gazala | 4 | 8 (=mother) | V | C: + P: + |
| Generational nonreaders (nonreading families) | | | | |
| Gwen & Gabriel | 99 | 99 | I | C: - P: - |
| Gemma & Gary | 7 | 7 | III | C: + P: +/- |
| Gabrielle & Gavin | 7 | 7 | V | C: 99 P: - |
| Genna & Geoffrey | 7 | 99 | III | C: - P: + |

Note: ^aLevel of education (translated from the Dutch educational system): 1 = primary education; 2 = technical secondary vocational education; 3 = lower secondary vocational education, category 2; 4 = lower secondary vocational education, category 3; 5 = higher secondary education; 6 = preuniversity secondary education; 7 = intermediate vocational education; 8 = higher vocational education; 9 = university. 99 = missing data.

^bActual literacy skills child: I = far above average; II = above average; III = average, V = far below average.

^cEvaluation of assignments: C = child; P = parent. + = positive; +/- = partly positive, partly negative; - = negative; 99 = no recollection.

endorsed goal (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). These two forms of autonomous motivation are often combined to form a composite category (e.g., Vansteenkiste et al., 2004).

Intrinsically motivated families (6 dyads)

These dyads are fond of reading and enjoy the activity. Both the parents and the children have positive basic literacy attitudes. Madeline speaks about the importance of books in their home: "Books really are everywhere in our house; we never throw away a book. They are very important to us." When asked how he feels about reading on a scale of 1 (*very negative*) to 10 (*very positive*), her son Milo indicated a score of 9. He feels proud when he is reading, because he is so good at it. Myla shares that she was able to read even before she went to preschool, and succeeded to teach her daughter Morgan to read at a young age as well. They both enjoy reading a lot. Morgan grades reading with a 10: "I feel satisfied when I read, I just love it. I think to myself: 'Yes! We're going to read.' I prefer reading at home to reading at school, because at home it's much quieter."

Regular library visits and the parent reading to his or her child are what characterizes these dyads. Megan (a single mother of three) states: "Every week, we all go to the library to refresh our book supply. That's just a standard excursion in our weekly routine, which we all enjoy." Her son Marc mostly reads to gather information, which is very enjoyable to him: "When you can't read, you can't learn. You must read at home, because if you only read at school, you will not become better at it. I read a book once, an atlas about all sorts of interesting stuff: lava, the core of the earth, land, animals. I really liked it." Third-grader Michael shares that he grades reading with a 9.5, because it cheers him up when he is sad. He frequently reads to himself but is also frequently read to by his parents.

His mother Mallory states: "We are not allowed to miss a single evening, or our children will fervently let us know that not reading is not an option."

Engaging in literacy activities is a part of these dyads' lives. Matthew is a children's book author who takes pride in transferring his love for written text to his sons: "I live the example, so they can mimic me." His son Mac shares that reading makes him feel happy and calm and that he "just enjoys it a whole lot." He often has the privilege of being the first to read his father's drafts. All children within this profile are competent readers, according to both themselves and their parents.

Evaluation of materials. These dyads' evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments is positive. Mabel: "All of a sudden, we gained insight in what she was doing at school and how quickly she was developing her reading skill. I really enjoyed that, we didn't have that with our older children." Mabel's daughter Mylee says to enjoy filling in the assignments, "especially the logbooks". However, all dyads stress that the assignments could have been more challenging. Mallory: "We always obediently filled in the bookmarks and logbooks, but because it was so easy for Michael, he started liking the assignments less. The constant rereading of the read-together books was torture for him, because he remembers everything he sees and hears." Michael prefers the logbooks over the bookmarks: "I like that I'm allowed to choose which assignment I'm going to work on."

SES and actual reading skills. All interviewed parents have completed higher vocational education or university. Apart from one (Marc), who scores average, all children score far above average on the reading comprehension test.

Well-Internalized extrinsically motivated families (6 dyads)

These dyads value reading because they consider it a useful and important skill. Despite these dyads' high evaluation of reading, they do not read frequently. Third-grader Manon states: "When I don't feel like doing something else, I just read. It is important to know how to read, because if you want to bake a pie, you need to be able to read how long to put it in the oven. The only time I dislike reading, is when I'm doing something else I really like." Her mother Maiya is fond of the *idea* of books, above all else: "I don't read very often. But even as a child, I would go to the library with my mother to pick up books. Even if I didn't read them, I still liked having them in my house and returning them to the library after a couple of weeks."

The parents stimulate at-home reading for their children by imposing literacy rules. Meryem is strict when it comes to library visits. "We regularly visit the library. They [*her three children, MA*] must pick several books they will actually read. I don't want them to just pick some random books and do nothing with them at home." Margaret states: "I let my children read out loud. When I'm cooking I'll say: 'Go on, read. Speak up a bit, so I can hear you.' And then we've done our duty." In one of the distributed literacy assignments, the 'rule' was to read ten pages of a book per day. That example has become a fixed number for Maria: "I like to have something to go by: ten pages seems appropriate. Although sometimes, the pages have drawings on them as well." Her son Maddox prefers reading to himself instead of reading out loud, a development she attributes to his advancing reading skill. But Maddox shares: "I like to read on my own, not with my mother. She will say: 'No, that's not what it says, read it again.' That annoys me."

Maleek, Meryem's son, grades his own reading skill the lowest: with a 6 (although he is the only one with a CITO test result i.e. far above average). Meryem is moderately positive about his skills: "He's an okay reader, but his spelling is awful." The other children and parents are all positive about their (child's) literacy.

Evaluation of materials. These dyads' evaluation is that the materials are useful, but not enjoyable per se. Mara: "I think it's good for children to be more conscious of reading. The problem with Manuel is that, while he does enjoy reading, making all the assignments was just not for him." Maxine states that "these assignments are just something you do, it's part of the deal. I'm a you-just-have-to-do-it kind of person." Margaret can relate: "Marcel always makes the assignments, because I tell him to. It's good for him, it's something school provides us with. All school things are

nonnegotiable.” Marcel states: “I really disliked it. It helped me, but I really did not enjoy it. I only would have liked it if my team had the most points. But that never happened.”

SES and actual reading skills. Margaret is the parent with the lowest level of education, having completed lower secondary vocational education (category 3). Her son Marcel scores a “II.” Maria has the highest level of education: She completed higher vocational education. Her son Maddox scores a “V,” which is far below average. Maiya, Meryem, and Maxine all completed intermediate vocational education. Maiya’s daughter Manon scores a ‘III’, Meryem’s son Maleek scores a “I,” and Maxine’s daughter Mariah scores a “V.” Mara did not share her educational level with us. Her son Manuel scores a “II.”

4.1.2 | Incompatible readers

The seven dyads within this profile have divergent outlooks on reading: Either the parent enjoys it and the child does not, or the child enjoys it and the parent does not.

Parent positive, child negative (4 dyads)

This subcategory is characterized by parents with a positive basic literacy attitude, and children with a negative one. Mother Ines states: “I read a lot and love doing it.” Her son Ivan refers to himself as a “non-reading-child”: “I really don’t like to read. I’m a non-reading-child. I especially hate it when I *have to* read. Being a good reader is not important to me. I just don’t care.” The parents within this subcategory would like for their children to become enthusiastic about reading, and thus try to motivate them by actively searching for books that match the child’s interests. Ibrahim shares: “Reading is not my favorite activity. When my mom says: ‘Come on, let’s read a book,’ I always do the silly walk, because I really don’t feel like reading. I like karate, but books about karate are super difficult and don’t have any graphics in them. So, my mom and I asked the lady at the library if they had books about karate. She said: ‘No, but we can order one for you.’ We had to wait a week until the book arrived, it came all the way from China.” With his mother Ivy, he read the entire book. Still, reading is not an important skill to him: “I won’t need it. I’ll become a truck driver, just like my dad.”

For Ian and Ismael, their antipathy towards reading is related to their reading skill. Ian grades his skill with a 5: “I don’t like reading, because it’s my worst school subject.” His mother Isabelle states: “Ian is a bad reader. He scores far below the average.” Ismael grades his reading skill with a 4. His mother Indi shares: “Ismael is dyslexic, just like his dad. Reading has always been a struggle for him.” Ismael adds: “I only read at home when my mom and dad tell me to. I really don’t like it. I feel so alone when I have to sit in my room to read.” All mothers within this profile describe their sons as incompetent readers. However, Ibrahim and Ivan score their own skills with an 8.

Evaluation of materials. These dyads had a hard time working with the distributed literacy assignments. It often led to tension in the households. Ivy is outspokenly negative about the Grade 1 materials: “The bookmark... what a rotten thing. Ibrahim does not want to occupy himself with schoolwork when he’s at home, so filling in that bookmark often resulted in a big argument.” Ibrahim agrees: “I think those assignments are extremely boring. I don’t like doing them. It makes me mad at my mom. She tells me to do the assignments and I’m like: ‘No! No!’ At home, I just want to have fun and not think about school anymore.” Indi and Ismael’s struggle with the assignments is mostly related to Ismael’s dyslexia. Indi: “Reading the read-together books was a real hell for him at times. For dyslexic children, the books can be difficult. Sometimes, he would just throw his book through our living room because he was so frustrated. There were times I had to put one of those books back together. He would say: ‘I can’t do it, I’m stupid!’”

SES and actual reading skills. All mothers have completed intermediate or higher vocational education. All children score far below the average on the CITO reading comprehension test.

Parent negative, child positive (3 dyads)

Although these parents have a strained relationship with reading, all having a negative basic literacy attitude, their children do like to read. Mother Imogen states that she does not experience joy when she is reading on her own or with her daughter: "My own parents never stimulated me to read, I really don't like reading. I read one book: Heidi. That's all. I'm dyslexic." Her daughter Isla says she reads at home on a regular basis. When asked to grade reading, she gives it a 10: "I feel happy when I read, and I read at home with my mom because my teacher told me to. And now I read every night. Mommy tells me I'm doing well, I think she's proud of me."

Personal experiences have shaped these parents' negative feelings towards literacy. Whereas her daughter Ida uses reading to relax, and thus grades it with an 8, Iris is less positive: "When I was young, I was really bad at reading comprehension, I despised it."

Irene relates: "I was never good at reading comprehension. In high school, it took me so long to finish my homework, I hated it." She wants to help her son Isaac avoid the struggles she had, so she asked his teacher for extra practice materials. Isaac appreciates the at-home reading sessions with his mother: "I feel satisfied when I read. And my mom likes it when I read to her, it makes her really proud."

Both Irene and Iris say to have read to their children when they were younger. Irene: "Reading to my child is good for his development, I heard that somewhere. That's why I always did that." Imogen is the only parent within this subcategory who has a negative score on parental skills. Her reading skills are low, due to dyslexia, a lack of training, and a lack of affinity with reading. She also has low confidence in her own ability to support her daughter Isla in the long term: "Isla sometimes asks: 'Mom, do you want to read a book with me?' 'Well, okay, if it's an easy book that is fine by me.' I am relieved she reads easy books. Her sister's high school books are way too difficult for me." Imogen discourages Isla when she wants to read a bulky book: "Sometimes, when we are in the library, she wants to pick the very thick books. I tell her: 'Girl, you can't read those. Pick a smaller book, it will be finished earlier.'" Her expectations of her daughter are low: "She wants to become a schoolteacher. She'll never achieve that goal, I'm sure." Isla, just like all the other children within this subcategory, is positive about her own reading skills.: She evaluates herself as a good reader and grades her skills with an 8, as does Isaac. Ida grades her skills with a 9.

Evaluation of materials. The dyads' evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments varies. Whereas the children are all (moderately) positive, the mothers give varying evaluations. Irene: "The read-together books, so not my thing. Too much repetition, too many silly assignments. Too little reading comprehension exercises." Her son Isaac adds: "My mother didn't like the bookmarks, since we had to fill them in every day. She was happy when I went to second grade, for that meant I didn't bring these bookmarks home with me anymore." The logbooks work better for this dyad, but Isaac almost always fills them in on his own.

For Imogen, the literacy assignments helped her and her daughter with at-home reading, despite her earlier reluctance: "When I first saw the materials, I was like: 'No, do we really have to do this?' But the more we worked with them, the better I liked it. They made us read together more often, and Isla initiated doing the assignments." Isla: "I didn't like the bookmarks very much, because we had to fill them in every day and my mother forgot it most of the time. But the logbooks were okay. I made the assignments by myself, and if I didn't understand something, I would ask my mom." Imogen regrets that, after Grade 2, the assignments were no longer distributed by the school: "Nowadays, we don't read together at home."

SES and actual reading skills. Imogen is the parent with the lowest level of education: She only completed primary school. Her daughter Isla scores far below average on the reading comprehension test. Irene and Iris both completed intermediate vocational education. Irene's son Isaac scores a "V," and Iris' daughter Ida scores a "III."

4.1.3 | Generational non-readers

This profile comprises seven dyads from families in which reading is uncommon.

First- and second-generation migrant families (3 dyads)

The parents within this subcategory all come from Middle Eastern or Northern African countries, described by them as cultural areas in which reading is not a common activity. None of the parents read to their children in their native language (all children have a low command of their parents' mother-tongue), and all of them have difficulty reading in Dutch. Gizem is a Kurdish mother who can't read or write in her native language. Her daughter Gulistan has the most positive outlook on reading out of all the children within this subcategory. She grades reading with an 8. Gulistan most specifically enjoys reading when she is bored, then it makes her happy again. The only time reading is annoying to her, is when she is doing something else she likes a lot: "I really do not enjoy reading when I'm playing outside and having fun, and my mother calls me inside to read."

Ghilas is an Algerian father whose parents cannot read or write: "My parents are illiterate; they were never able to read with us. Moreover: Reading is not a part of Algerian culture. When I want to be updated on the news, I watch YouTube." Still, he works hard to help his daughter Gazala with school-related subjects such as reading, though that is not a simple task for him: "My wife is not very good at Dutch, and my children don't speak our native language well. When she says something in Dutch, she says it wrong. And this rubs off on the children. So, I help the kids when it comes to reading, but I'm also not fluent in Dutch. I think I'll be able to manage until Grade 3 or 4, but after that it will become too difficult for me." His daughter grades reading with a 7. She does not necessarily dislike reading, but says she only reads at home when her parents urge her to. Gazala: "Sometimes I don't like reading, because it's hard for me. But I do read a lot at home, because my parents tell me to. I like girly books with large letters. I grade reading with a 7 when I'm reading such a book. But when I'm playing outside and I must come inside to read, I grade it with a 4." She says she likes it very much when her dad helps her with reading assignments.

Gharam is a Moroccan mother whose story is similar to that of Ghilas. Her parents are illiterate too, and she describes reading as an uncommon activity in Morocco as well: "The first word of our prophet was 'reading'. We are called 'the people of reading'. But who reads? No one. My husband never reads. I like to read, but Dutch books for adults are too difficult for me." Her dream is for her daughter Gohar to become a capable reader, and that is why she stimulates at-home reading. Gohar: "I think, at home, I read three days per week on average, because my parents tell me to. I usually don't feel like it when they tell me to read, but once I'm doing it, it's okay." She grades reading with a 7 and her reading skills with a 6.5. Gulistan grades herself with a 7. Gazala is the only child who estimates her reading skills as unsatisfactory, grading her skills with a 5: "Because it's just hard for me."

Evaluation of materials. Gulistan and Gazala are (moderately) positive about the distributed literacy assignments and frequently fill them in. But the parents are the most positive, describing the materials as very helpful when it comes to being involved in their child's literacy development at home. Ghilas: "I loved the first-grade package. All in one: a book and a bookmark with questions. A question for Monday, one for Tuesday... and so forth. Very structured. I was pleased with the assignments, as they provided me with the opportunity to help my daughter more. Sometimes I have trouble picking an activity that suits her. I like to help my children. When I read with them, I feel good about myself. I've kept all the assignments for my four-year-old son. Parents in the Netherlands start reading with their child at a very young age. I never did that with Gazala, I didn't know. With her, I was too late. But with my little one [*his son, MA*], I think I'm on time. These [*the second-grade logbooks, MA*] were more difficult, because we didn't get a book to read. Just the questions. I'm sorry to say I paid less attention to these assignments."

SES and actual reading skills. The parents have completed lower secondary vocational education, category 2 (Gizem) or category 3 (Gharam and Ghilas). All children score far below average on the reading comprehension test.

Non-reading families (4 dyads)

The dyads within this subcategory, who are all of Dutch descent, come from families in which reading is highly uncommon. Growing up, the parents were never read to or stimulated to read. Unless it is necessary, these parents never read, and when they do, it is not something that brings them joy. Gemma shares that she can relate to her son Gary: "I understand how he feels, that he doesn't want to read at home after a whole day at school. I never motivate him to, either, because it just isn't something I'm interested in. My own parents never stimulated me either." Third-grader Gary grades reading with a 4, because he often has trouble understanding difficult words. Mother Genna shares: "I'm not a reader. If I don't have to, I'd rather not do it. My parents never used to read with me." Her son Geoffrey has a strong opinion on reading: "I grade reading with a 1. It bores me." However, he does like books about gaming or soccer. "Funny comic books are also okay, when I'm reading one of those books, I grade reading with a 6." Gabrielle, Gavin's mother, states: "If you ever see me with a book, you know I'm not okay." Her parents never read to themselves or to her, and Gavin's father dislikes reading due to dyslexia. Gavin rates reading with a 4: "I really don't like difficult words." He has also recently been diagnosed with dyslexia, and thinks reading is a very unpleasant activity. However, he enjoys being read to, and wants to master the skill of reading: "I love it when my mom reads to me. But I should be able to read myself, because if I can't, I'll never get a job."

Despite their own distaste for reading, the parents try to facilitate at-home reading for their children. Gwen thinks that schools focus too much on reading, but still, she stimulates her son to read: "Schools overdo it. I'm not a reader, my parents are no readers, but still I have always stimulated Gabriel. Before he learned to read by himself, I read to him. And later, I bought books for beginning readers, through which he started to learn how to read." Genna visits the library every 8 weeks with Geoffrey and always used to read to him. Because, as she explains: "It is also quality time, reading to your child. I never experienced that myself, my parents never stimulated me. I do want that for my kids. I think sometimes a little push in the right direction can make a big difference."

All the children perceive their literacy skills to be moderate or high. Geoffrey scores his skills with a 6, Gary with a 7, Gavin with a 9, and Gabriel with a 10 ("Do I really have to read again? I can do it already!").

Evaluation of materials. The dyads all describe a similar process: Working with the materials started out fine, but later became less inspiring. Gwen: "At the beginning of Grade 1 it was new and okay to do, but gradually it became monotonous. We started to forget the bookmark more often. Or it was just lying crumpled up in Gabriel's backpack." Gabriel adds that he does not like doing the assignments, for he'd rather be doing something else. To him, doing the assignments is a repeat of things he has to do at school. Genna sums up an observation made by more parents: "It is a shame that we never received any feedback from the teacher." That diminishes her and her son's motivation for filling in the assignments.

SES and actual readings skills. Gemma, Genna, and Gabrielle all completed intermediate vocational education. Gemma's son Gary and Genna's son Geoffrey both score a "III." Gabrielle's son Gavin scores a "V." Gwen did not share her educational level with us. Her son Gabriel scores far above average.

5 | CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 | Reader-profiles

Scoring the dyads' utterances on basic literacy attitude and skills led to the distinguishing of three indicative reader-profiles encompassing six subprofiles, thus providing an innovative interpretational framework for analyzing dyadic home-based literacy interactions. Our analyses show that a negative attitude does not always imply a lack of skills, and that a positive attitude does not always imply an abundance of skills. Moreover, well-developed or

less-developed skills do not always imply a more or less positive reaction to distributed literacy assignments. However, a negative basic literacy attitude does always imply a skeptical or downright negative attitude towards distributed literacy assignments, and a positive basic literacy attitude does always imply a positive stance towards such assignments. Therefore, gaining insight into parents' and children's basic literacy attitude could be seen as a first and very important step towards answering to the receivers' needs when distributing home-based literacy assignments aimed at boosting a child's enjoyment of reading.

5.2 | Interaction with and evaluation of the distributed literacy assignments

We can conclude that the *intrinsically motivated* dyads' interaction with the distributed literacy assignments is a positive one: They appreciate the school's effort to promote at-home reading. In their experience, however, the assignments are not sufficiently challenging. As for the *well-internalized extrinsically motivated* dyads, they seem prone to a somewhat rigid interaction with the distributed literacy assignments. They are very conscientious about doing the assignments. They seem to think that—since it is something the school provides them with—it *must* be important to fill in the assignments, regardless of whether the activity is enjoyable or not. For the *parent positive, child negative* dyads, working with the assignments is a challenge: The negative basic literacy attitude of the child has led to an antipathy towards engaging in literacy activities at home. Parental initiative for filling in the assignments often results in a conflict between the child and the parent, thus diminishing both the parent's and the child's motivation for filling in the assignments. In the *parent negative, child positive* dyads, it is a struggle for parents to maintain a positive stance regarding the distributed assignments, as their own experiences with reading are unpleasant. However, when the child initiates filling in the assignments, the parents often overcome their own resentment and help their child. The *generational nonreaders* benefit most from the distributed literacy assignments. These parents strive to do right by their child, but do not know what to look for when it comes to finding appropriate supporting materials. The distributed literacy assignments boost their sense of self-efficacy, and—in the case of migrant families—create a bridge between their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds and that of Dutch parents. The dyads within the *non-reading families* struggle due to a negative basic literacy attitude of both the child and the parent. Still, when the materials were first distributed, these dyads started working with the assignments in good spirits. As time went on, however, the declining literacy attitude of the child, monotony of the assignments, and (in some instances) lack of teacher feedback strongly diminished their enthusiasm.

5.3 | Socioeconomic status

Regarding SES, our information shows that the variety in parental educational level is large. Two subprofiles demonstrate some form of SES-consistency: The *intrinsically motivated* parents are those with the highest level of education within the dataset, whereas the *generational nonreaders* are the ones with the lowest level of education. Imogen is the least educated parent. Contrary to the other parents within the dataset, both Imogen and the *generational nonreaders* have a negative score on the parental skills factor, implying that in these specific cases there is a relation between parental skills (expressed in low reading skills, difficulty facilitating at-home reading for the child, and a low sense of self-efficacy) and a low educational level. This observation is in accordance with the results of Van Steensel (2006) and Niklas and Schneider (2013). An interesting finding is that these low SES-parents evaluate the distributed literacy assignments very positively. Due to their low skillset, they appreciate the help and structure offered by the school in the shape of the at-home reading assignments. No longer distributing the assignments led to an immediate decrease of at-home reading.

5.4 | Reading skills child

Regarding the perceived and actual literacy skills of the children, just three of the 26 children score their skills with a 5 or lower (and thus score a minus on perceived literacy skills child): Ian, Ismael, and Gazala. These three children all have CITO reading comprehension test scores that are far below average. This finding is in accordance with the conclusion of Gubbels et al. (2017) that a low confidence regarding one's reading capabilities often goes hand in hand with actual low reading skills. However, the other ten children with a "V"-score view themselves as (moderately) capable readers. That implies that for these children, their perceived reading skill is incongruent with their actual reading skill (a finding in accordance with Msengi (2007). Important to note in this respect are Isaac, Isla (*parent negative, child positive*) and Maddox (*well-internalized extrinsically motivated*) who score a "V" on the reading comprehension test but think of themselves as very capable readers *and* have a positive basic literacy attitude. This could imply that, despite their reading comprehension test results being far below average, their perception of themselves as a good reader boosts their enjoyment of reading.

Of the thirteen children with a "V"-score, just three express an explicitly negative basic literacy attitude—including Ian and Ismael, who also score their reading skills negatively. For them only, a negative basic literacy attitude is related to a low sense of reading ability *and* an actual low reading score. For the other eleven children, there appears to be no relation between basic literacy attitude and perceived and/or actual reading skill. As for the other half of the dataset: Out of the 13 included children with a I, II, or III score, just three express a negative basic literacy attitude. These three children all come from *non-reading families*. This implies that, for these children, their average to far-above-average actual reading skill is inconsistent with their negative basic literacy attitude. It might be possible that their parent's negative basic literacy attitude has rubbed off on these children, thus affecting their reading emotion (for more on parental emotional contagion in reading, see: Nalipay et al., 2020).

5.5 | Limitations of the current study

Four limitations of the study must be considered. The first limitation is that the number of participants within this study is limited. The profiles should therefore not be considered as "stable," but rather as indicative. Second, although some of the parents we interviewed referred to other, outspokenly negative parents, we did not encounter them during our interviews. It might be the case that the four dyads we were not able to reach belonged to this negative group.

A third limitation of this study could be the chosen methodology of in-depth interviews and short questionnaires. That might have been a demanding research method, especially for the migrant parents. When interviewed, they were asked to verbally express their ideas and beliefs on reading, and although there is no specific indication of any interviewee discomfort, the chosen approach might have restricted their ability to go into detail or elaborate on specific subjects. The questionnaire might have caused difficulties, especially for parents who were educated elsewhere. It may have been difficult to translate their level of education to a comparable level within the Dutch education system. At-home observations and/or help with filling in the questionnaire might have yielded other results.

Fourth, it might be advisable to further consider the strong links between enthusiasm, enjoyment, and motivation. It could be insightful to connect motivational profiles to all the reader-profiles we distinguished, instead of just the *autonomously motivated* reader-profile.

5.6 | Implications

From the interviews, three practical implications and three prerequisite implications can be induced regarding how to encourage a positive interaction between children, parents, and at-home reading assignments. These implications should help to show educational professionals and researchers how they can answer to the needs of parents and children when designing and distributing such assignments.

5.6.1 | Practical implications

The interaction of the dyads with the distributed literacy assignments demonstrates that, in order for at-home reading assignments to appeal to children and parents with various skillsets and attitudes, the assignments should be: (1) differentiated (especially for *autonomously motivated readers*, who crave challenging assignments); (2) non-repetitive (especially for *incompatible readers*, who need varying stimuli to stay motivated); and (3) concrete, complete, and structured (especially for the *generational nonreaders*, who benefit from an all-in-one package).

Most of the children included in this study think reading is an important skill they would like to master, but despite the aim of the read-and-respond activity to specifically boost a child's enjoyment of reading, only few of the interviewed children can relate to the reading-for-enjoyment concept. Reading, to most children, is a school-related skill that must be conquered to be a socially and culturally participating adult in the future (a finding in accordance with Baker, 2003). However, the children did verbalize clear ideas on how to make an at-home reading activity (more) enjoyable. From their utterances, we were able to distill four preconditions for a pleasant at-home reading activity: (1) The book should be fun to read (a finding i.e. in accordance with Baker, 2003). That could imply that the book speaks to the child in terms of genre, covers a subject they are interested in, and/or is written in a funny/exciting/girly/... style that suits the child. (2) The book should be easy to understand. An overkill of difficult words that hinder the child's reading comprehension can seriously diminish a child's enjoyment of reading. (3) The timing of the reading session should be well thought out. All the children express resentment at having to read while they are in the middle of having fun doing something else. Reading, for most children, is a quiet activity that should be done at a time of day when no other activity will distract them, possibly just before bedtime. (4) A reading-together session should not be defined by the correcting of miscues (a finding i.e. in accordance with Baker [2003] and Tracey and Young [2002]). Some children go as far as to avoid reading out loud altogether when at home, due to the fact that their parents correct them so often.

5.6.2 | Prerequisite implications

The prerequisite implications affect teachers and school managers. First, it has become clear that both children and parents value regular positive feedback on their at-home literacy activities (especially the *generational nonreaders*). Children and parents have stated that a lack of teacher feedback diminishes their motivation to interact with the assignments at home.

Second, frequent communication between children, parents, and teachers about the at-home assignments could also provide the teacher with an extra opportunity to emphasize the objective of the materials (which is of specific importance for *incompatible readers*, where either the child or the parent struggles with a negative basic literacy attitude). We have experienced that it cannot be repeated often enough: Although the aim of fostering a love for reading is at the heart of SfA's vision, we failed to clearly transfer this vision to the children and parents working with the assignments.

Last, in approaching parents, it appears to be advisable to take them for what they are: parents, not substitute teachers. This is of special importance to the *incompatible readers*, whose negative basic literacy attitude (either of the child or the parent) is often intertwined with an aversion to engaging in school-related activities at home.

5.6.3 | Implications for further research

As mentioned above, the profiles that arose from our analyses are not to be considered as stable, but as indicative. To stabilize the profiles, it could be helpful to enlarge the dataset. Furthermore, it would be insightful to combine the results of this study with longitudinal test results of the included children and a control group, to investigate

whether children in some profiles evolve their reading skills more quickly than those in other profiles. Last, a plea for further research: This study has shown that children, even as young as those we interviewed, are extremely capable of verbalizing their needs and preferences. We would like to argue that including children's voices in research on parental involvement for beginning readers yields insightful results and should, therefore, become more customary.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are thankful to Dorien Petri for her consultation.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflict of interests.

ORCID

Marlot Akkermans-Rutgers  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3419-1488>

REFERENCES

- Bailey, L. B. (2006). Interactive homework: A tool for fostering parent-child interactions and improving learning outcomes for at-risk young children. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 34(2), 155-167. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-006-0114-y>
- Baker, L. (2003). The role of parents in motivating struggling readers. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19, 87-2003. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10573560390143049>
- Baker, L., Mackler, K., Sonnenschein, S., & Serpell, R. (2001). Parent's interactions with their first-grade children during storybook reading and relations with subsequent home reading activity and reading achievement. *Journal of School Psychology*, 39, 415-438.
- Bakker, J., Denessen, E., Dennissen, M., & Oolbakkink-Marchand, H. (2013). *Leraren en ouderbetrokkenheid. Een reviewstudie naar de effectiviteit van ouderbetrokkenheid en de rol die leraren daarbij kunnen vervullen [Teachers and parental involvement. A review on the effectiveness of parental involvement and the role teachers can play]*. Radboud University.
- Belsky, J., Conger, R., & Capaldi, D. M. (2009). The intergenerational transmission of parenting: Introduction to the special section. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(5), 1201-1204. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016245>
- Bokdam, J., Tom, M., Berger, J., Smit, F., & van Rens, C. (2014). *Monitor ouderbetrokkenheid po, vo en mbo. Derde meting 2014, trends in beeld [Monitor parental involvement primary, secondary, and vocational education. Third measurement, trends illustrated]*. Panteia.
- Boonk, L., Gijsselaers, H. J. M., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educational Research Review*, 24, 10-30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.02.001>
- Borman, G. D., Slavin, R. E., Cheung, A. C., Chamberlain, A. M., Madden, N. A., & Chambers, B. (2007). Final reading outcomes of the national randomized field trial of Success for All. *American Educational Research Journal*, 44(3), 701-731. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831207306743>
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Castro, M., Expósito-Casas, E., López-Martín, E., Lizasoain, L., Navarro-Asencio, E., & Gaviria, J. L. (2015). Parental involvement on student academic achievement. *Educational Research Review*, 14, 33-46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2015.01.002>
- Cooter, K. S. (2006). When mama can't read: Counteracting intergenerational illiteracy. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(7), 698-702. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.59.7.9>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and the "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
- Desforges, C., & Abouchar, A. (2003). The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievements and adjustment: A literature review. Department for Education and Skills.
- Dunston, Y. L., Patterson, G. C., & Daniels, K. N. (2010). Scaffolding the home reading experiences of African American first graders. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 6(2), 1-21.
- Dutch Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science (2016). *Personele bekostiging van scholen voor basisonderwijs [Costs of staff for primary schools]*. DUO. https://www.duo.nl/open_onderwijsdata/databestanden/po/bekostiging/bek-pers-bo.jsp

- Epstein, J. L. (1991). Paths to partnership: What can we learn from federal, state, district, school initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(5), 344–349.
- Espinoza, L. M. (2005). Curriculum and assessment considerations for young children from culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42(8), 827–853. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20115>
- Evans, M. A., Moretti, S., Shaw, D., & Fox, M. (2003). Parent scaffolding in children's oral reading. *Early Education and Development*, 14(3), 363–388. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed1403_5
- Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009048817385>
- Gubbels, J., Netten, A., & Verhoeven, L. (2017). *Vijftien jaar leesprestaties in Nederland: PIRLS-2016 [Fifteen years of reading performance in the Netherlands: PIRLS-2016]*. Expertisecentrum Nederlands/Radboud University/Behavioural Science Institute.
- Harkness, S., Super, C. M., Bermúdez, M. R., Moscardino, U., Rha, J., Mavridis, C. J., Bonichini, S., Huitrón, B., Welles-Nyström, B., Palacios, J., Hyun, O., Soriano, G., & Zylicz, P. O. (2010). Parental ethnotheories of children's learning. In (Eds.) Lancy, D. F., Bock, J. & Gaskins, S., *The anthropology of learning in childhood* (pp. 65–81). AltaMira Press.
- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: the impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Annual synthesis 2002*. National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2015). *Qualitative research methods*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkinson, A. S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(2), 105–130. <https://doi.org/10.1086/499194>
- Jones, T. L., & Prinz, R. J. (2005). Potential roles of parental self-efficacy in parent and child adjustment: A review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 25(3), 341–363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2004.12.004>
- Ledoux, G., Blok, H., & Boogaard, M. (2009). *Opbrengstgericht werken: Over de waarde van meetgestuurd onderwijs [Data-driven decision making: The value of data-driven education]*. SCO-Kohnstamm Institute.
- Lee, J. S., & Bowen, N. K. (2006). Parental involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children. *American educational research journal*, 43(2), 193–215. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312043002193>
- Lusse, M. (2013). *Een kwestie van vertrouwen. Een ontwerpgericht onderzoek naar het verbeteren van het contact met ouders in het 'grootstedelijke' vmbo als bijdrage aan preventie van schooluitval [A matter of trust. A design-oriented study on improving the contact with parents in urban vocational education as a contribution to preventing school dropout]*. Erasmus University.
- Mol, S. E., & Bus, A. (2011). To read or not to read: A meta-analysis of print exposure from infancy to early adulthood. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(2), 267–296. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021890>
- Msengi, S. G. (2007). Family, child, and teacher perceptions of African American adult assistance to young readers. *The School Community Journal*, 17(1), 33–60.
- Nalipay, M. J. N., Cai, Y., & King, R. B. (2020). Why do girls do better in reading than boys? How parental emotional contagion explains gender differences in reading achievement. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(2), 310–319. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22330>
- Niklas, F., & Schneider, W. (2013). Home literacy environment and the beginning of reading and spelling. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 38(1), 40–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.10.001>
- Pomerantz, M., Moorman, E. A., & Litwack, S. D. (2007). The how, whom, and why of parents' involvement in children's academic lives: More is not always better. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(3), 373–410. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430305567>
- Poolman, B. G., Doornenbal, J. M., Leseman, P. P. M., & Minnaert, A. E. M. G. (2018). Opvattingen en verwachtingen van moeders op het Groninger platteland [Ideas and expectations of mothers living in the countryside of Groningen-The Netherlands]. *Pedagogische Studiën*, 95(2), 57–85.
- Quint, J., Zhu, P., Balu, R., Rappaport, S., & DeLaurentis, M. (2015). *Scaling up the Success for All model of school reform. Final report from the investing in innovation (i3) evaluation*. MDRC.
- Rasinski, T., & Stevenson, B. (2005). The effects of fast start reading: A fluency-based home involvement reading program, on the reading achievement of beginning readers. *Reading Psychology, an International Quarterly*, 26(2), 109–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702710590930483>
- Reutzel, D. R., Fawson, P. C., & Smith, J. A. (2005). Words to go!: Evaluating a first-grade parent involvement program for "making" words at home. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 45(2), 119–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388070609558445>
- Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *The American Psychologist*, 55, 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Sacker, A., Schoon, I., & Bartley, M. (2002). Social inequality in education achievement and psychological adjustment throughout childhood: Magnitude and mechanisms. *Social Science and Medicine*, 55(5), 863–880. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(01\)00228-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(01)00228-3)

- Silinskas, G., Lerkkanen, M., Tolvanen, A., Niemi, P., Poikkeus, A., & Nurmi, J. (2012). The frequency of parents' reading-related activities at home and children's reading skills during kindergarten and Grade 1. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 33(6), 302–310. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2012.07.004>
- Slavin, R. E., & Madden, N. A. (2012). *Success for All. Summary of research on achievement outcomes*. Success for All Foundation.
- Slavin, R. E., Madden, N. A., Chambers, B., & Haxby, B. (2009). *2 Million children: Success for All*. Corwin Press.
- Van Steensel, R. (2006). Relations between socio-cultural factors, the home literacy environment and children's literacy development in the first years of primary education. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 29(4), 367–382. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2006.00301.x>
- Van Steensel, R., Van der Sande, L., Bramer, W., & Arends, L. (2016). *Effecten van leesmotivatie interventies: uitkomsten van een meta-analyse [The effects of interventions aimed at enhancing reading motivation: outcomes of a meta-analysis]*. Erasmus University.
- Success for All Foundation (2013). *Leading for Success. A sustainable distributed-leadership approach*. Success for All Foundation.
- Sénéchal, M., & Young, L. (2008). The effect of family literacy interventions on children's acquisition of reading from kindergarten to grade 3: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 880–907. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308320319>
- Toetsgids (2015). *Begrijpend lezen [reading comprehension]*. <http://toetsgids.nl/main-TG.asp?Browser=NN&Sector=TG>
- Tracey, D. H., & Young, J. W. (2002). Mothers' helping behaviors during children's at-home oral-reading practice: Effects of children's reading ability, children's gender, and mothers' educational level. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(4), 729–737. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-0663.94.4.729>
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal-contents in self-determination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(1), 19–31. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4101_4
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., Dewitte, S., De Witte, H., & Deci, E. L. (2004). The “why” and “why not” of job search behavior: Their relation to searching, unemployment experience and well-being. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 34, 345–363. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.202>
- Vansteenkiste, M., Sierens, E., Soenens, B., Luyckx, K., & Lens, W. (2009). Motivational profiles from a self-determination perspective: The quality of motivation matters. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(3), 671–688. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015083>
- Wigfield, A., Gladstone, J. R., & Turci, L. (2016). Beyond cognition: Reading motivation and reading comprehension. *Child Development Perspectives*, 10(3), 190–195. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12184>
- Williams, A., & Gregory, E. (2001). Siblings bridging literacies in multilingual contexts. *Journal of research in reading*, 24(3), 248–265. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.00147>

How to cite this article: Akkermans-Rutgers M, Doornenbal J, Kassenberg A, Bosker R, Doolaard S. Is the twig bent as the tree is inclined? Children and parents interacting with school-distributed literacy assignments. *Psychol Schs*. 2021;58:377–399. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22452>