



Pearson Foundation Early Childhood Education Perception Poll **Detailed Appendix**

The following pages include answers to all questions from the Census-balanced and nationally representative online Pearson Foundation Early Childhood Education Perception Poll conducted among 507 Americans 18 years of age and older. The margin of error is +/- 4.4%.

The following tables segment data by all respondents, men, women and parents (children 18 years of age and younger).

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1. Attitudes About Early Childhood Literacy

Respondents read: Early childhood literacy refers to the pre-reading skills children under the age of 5 need to learn before they attend kindergarten. These pre-reading skills include alphabet and print knowledge, recognizing letter sounds, rhyming, developing a vocabulary, etc. Please keep this definition of early childhood literacy (*children under the age of 5 having the skills they need to learn to read before they attend kindergarten*) in mind when answering the following questions. All questions will relate to children under the age of 5 and who have not yet attended kindergarten.

In your view, how important an issue is early childhood literacy (children under the age of 5 learning the pre-reading skills they need to learn before they attend kindergarten)?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Very important	74	73	74	81
Somewhat important	21	20	22	15
Not very important	3	3	3	3
Not at all important	1	1	1	1
Not sure	1	3	0	0

Do you think the fact that many children under 5 lack early childhood literacy skills is a major problem, a minor problem or not much of a problem in our society?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Major problem	65	64	65	65
Minor problem	27	26	28	27
Not much of a problem	6	7	5	6
Not sure	2	3	2	2

Do you think the issue early childhood literacy receives too little attention, too much attention or about the right amount of attention?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Too little	69	68	70	69
Too much	7	6	7	9
Right amount	14	15	13	15
Not sure	10	11	10	7

How knowledgeable would you say you are about the issue of early childhood literacy?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Very knowledgeable	13	13	14	17
Somewhat knowledgeable	53	50	55	60
Not very knowledgeable	27	29	25	19
Not at all knowledgeable	5	6	3	2
Not sure / Don't know	2	2	3	2

2. Early Childhood Literacy Methods

Below are some ways parents and caregivers help children under the age of 5 develop early childhood literacy skills (pre-reading skills they need to learn before they attend kindergarten). How effective do you think each is? 1 st # - % Very effective 2 nd # - % Effective (very + somewhat)	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Storybook reading with an adult (adult reading to child)	80/97	72/95	86/99	84/99
Educational videos	36/86	33/86	39/88	37/91
Video games that teach literacy skills	35/81	32/82	38/81	32/81
Multi-media resources that combine Web sites and TV programs	28/73	25/77	30/69	28/74
Age-appropriate non-violent cartoons	23/64	22/66	24/62	24/66

Which ONE of the following best describes your views about storybook reading with an adult as a method of teaching early childhood literacy skills to children under the age of 5?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
It is the best method to develop early childhood literacy skills.	63	56	69	73
It is a good method but there are other methods just as good.	32	36	28	24
It is an outdated method and other newer methods that use technology are better.	2	3	1	2
Not sure	3	5	2	1

Which of the following methods do you think has the greatest impact on developing early childhood literacy skills?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Educational videos designed to stimulate learning	15	16	14	13
Ensuring access to early learning Web sites	5	6	4	5
New technology such as video games that teach literacy skills to kids	14	19	10	11
Reading a book to a child	60	52	67	69
Not sure	6	7	5	2

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Reading to children is the most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to teach early childhood literacy skills to kids under the age of 5?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	69	60	76	80
Somewhat agree	27	34	21	18
Somewhat disagree	2	3	1	1
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0
Not sure	2	3	2	1

3. Falling Behind

When thinking about children that start kindergarten unprepared to learn to read, how long do you think it takes for them to catch up to those children who are prepared?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Less than 6 months	11	13	10	9
7 months to a year	35	30	38	37
In elementary school	27	30	24	26
In middle school	3	4	2	3
In high school	1	0	1	1
In college	0	0	0	0
They will never truly catch up	10	10	10	12
Not sure	13	13	15	12

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Children that arrive at kindergarten unprepared to learn to read will never catch up and will suffer life-long learning problems.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	8	9	7	9
Somewhat agree	29	29	29	30
Somewhat disagree	38	35	40	38
Strongly disagree	17	18	16	16
Not sure	8	9	8	7

Below is a list of things some people say can happen to people who are not read to by an adult when they are under 5 years of age. Which of the following do you think will happen to people who are not read to when they are under the age of 5? (Multiple responses)	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
They will be behind other kids when they get to kindergarten.	70	67	74	70
They will stay behind other kids when they go to elementary school.	37	40	34	39
There may be short term consequences, but they will catch up quickly on their reading skills.	31	30	31	27
As adults, they will be less likely to succeed.	18	18	18	20
As teens or young adults, they will be more likely to have trouble with drugs and alcohol.	16	13	17	17
They will stay behind other kids when they go to high school.	13	16	11	13
They will never catch up to other kids.	13	14	11	15

What percentage of low-income households do you think have absolutely NO books in their homes suitable for or designed for children under the age of 5?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Less than 10	9	9	8	13
11-20	9	8	11	11
21-30	18	18	17	18
31-40	17	16	18	14
41-50	9	11	7	9
51-60	13	9	16	15
61-70	8	9	7	6
71-80	10	11	11	8
81-90	5	7	3	5
90-100	2	2	2	1

What percentage of American kindergarten children would you estimate arrive at school without the skills they need to learn to read?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
0-5	2	2	2	2
6-10	7	10	5	5
11-20	14	14	14	17
21-30	25	21	29	26
31-40	18	21	16	15
41-50	15	15	15	13
More than half	19	17	19	22

4. True/False Quiz

Respondents read: Below is a list of statements. Please tell me whether you think each statement is true or false. Please remember that each statement refers to those pre-K children who have not yet attended kindergarten elementary school.

There is actually little benefit to reading to children who do not yet understand words.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	7	7	6	9
False	86	85	88	82
Not sure	7	8	6	9

Because they learn so fast, it takes less than a year for a child that is not read to before kindergarten to catch up with children who were.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	32	30	33	33
False	39	44	35	39
Not sure	29	26	32	28

Most school libraries have about the same number of books for children under the age of 5.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	26	30	23	30
False	44	39	48	39
Not sure	30	31	29	31

Children without basic literacy skills when they enter school are 3-4 times more likely to eventually drop out of school.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	54	52	56	53
False	21	27	17	19
Not sure	25	21	27	28

Poverty is the best predictor of whether or not a child will achieve in school.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	22	24	21	23
False	63	64	62	63
Not sure	15	12	17	134

About one-third of low-income kids start first grade about two years behind other students.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	51	52	50	47
False	21	25	18	20
Not sure	28	23	32	33

5 year old children from low income households have about half the vocabulary of children from middle income families.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	57	58	55	50
False	19	22	17	20
Not sure	24	20	28	30

About half of children from low-income families start first grade up to two years behind their peers.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	47	47	47	42
False	23	26	21	23
Not sure	30	27	32	35

Pre-school children from low-income households hear about two times fewer words compared to children from middle-income households.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
True	55	54	55	50
False	21	24	18	21
Not sure	24	22	27	29

5. Factors That Impact Early Childhood Literacy

Respondents read: Below is a list of reasons some people say impact the ability of young children under 5 to develop early childhood literacy skills they need to learn to read. How important do you think each of the following is as a factor influencing whether these young children develop the skills they need to learn to read?

Factors 1 st # - VERY important 2 nd # - Important (very + somewhat)	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Parents don't spend enough time with kids	74/94	71/90	76/97	75/95
Parents or adults don't read to them	74/92	69/87	78/96	75/92
People don't know how important it is to read to kids at a young age	63/93	56/90	68/94	65/92
Parents don't have the time	61/87	55/85	66/89	58/87
Not enough books in the home	56/90	52/87	59/92	57/91
Kids rely on TV rather than being read to	47/83	40/80	52/86	49/84
Kids play too many video games	47/78	40/74	52/81	49/82
Child care is poor	42/80	40/77	44/83	45/79
Access to quality schools	40/83	39/82	42/84	43/85
Parents' education level	36/94	36/90	37/97	39/95
Many libraries lack books for children under 5	34/73	27/69	39/76	37/72
Single family households without a mom or dad	34/70	40/75	29/67	33/70
Government doesn't focus on the issue	26/57	23/55	30/61	28/61
Hard to get to a library	25/65	20/58	29/71	31/65
The neighborhood kids live in	22/65	23/64	21/66	23/64
Not enough access to educational programs on TV	19/59	19/58	19/60	17/59
Income of parents	13/51	15/54	12/49	14/48

6. Agree/Disagree Statements

Respondents read: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Parenting, not income, explains differences in early childhood literacy.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	45	43	46	49
Somewhat agree	39	40	38	37
Somewhat disagree	8	7	9	8
Strongly disagree	2	1	2	1
Not sure	6	9	5	5

More books in the home means higher reading scores.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	25	22	28	26
Somewhat agree	41	42	41	38
Somewhat disagree	21	23	19	24
Strongly disagree	6	6	6	8
Not sure	7	7	6	4

Reading a book to a child is the best way to teach them to read.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	61	51	69	68
Somewhat agree	30	36	25	25
Somewhat disagree	4	5	3	3
Strongly disagree	1	2	1	1
Not sure	4	6	2	3

A major reason children from low-income backgrounds are behind in reading is because their parents don't read to them.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	42	41	43	41
Somewhat agree	41	40	42	40
Somewhat disagree	8	7	9	10
Strongly disagree	2	3	2	2
Not sure	7	9	4	7

Kids from low-income households have low early childhood literacy skills because they lack access to books.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	21	19	22	17
Somewhat agree	45	46	44	47
Somewhat disagree	18	18	19	19
Strongly disagree	7	7	7	7
Not sure	9	10	8	10

There is no better investment in a child's future than parents reading to them before the age of 5.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	59	49	68	62
Somewhat agree	30	35	26	29
Somewhat disagree	5	8	3	5
Strongly disagree	1	1	1	1
Not sure	5	7	2	3

Access to books is the best way to help improve literacy skills of low-income kids.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	42	34	50	41
Somewhat agree	44	48	41	47
Somewhat disagree	6	8	5	8
Strongly disagree	1	2	1	1
Not sure	7	8	3	3

Young children often want to read the same book over and over again, but that's not a good way for children to learn to read.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	6	6	6	7
Somewhat agree	14	16	12	15
Somewhat disagree	31	37	26	27
Strongly disagree	42	31	51	46
Not sure	7	10	5	5

Technology such as video games, Wii and others are as important in helping young children develop reading skills as reading a book to them is.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	6	6	7	9
Somewhat agree	28	30	26	23
Somewhat disagree	31	30	31	25
Strongly disagree	28	25	31	37
Not sure	7	9	5	6

Fairness requires young, low-income children to have the same access to books as other children.	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Strongly agree	47	39	53	41
Somewhat agree	33	39	28	34
Somewhat disagree	9	9	10	13
Strongly disagree	3	5	2	3
Not sure	8	8	7	9

7. Improving Childhood Literacy

Respondents read: Below list a list of things people and organizations can do to improve childhood literacy. How effective do you think each would be?

Way to improve childhood literacy (ALL) 1 st # - VERY effective 2 nd # - Effective (very + somewhat)	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Parent should read more their kids.	86/95	80/93	90/97	87/97
Donating books to low-income households.	58/92	52/88	63/95	63/94
Teens and older kids should mentor younger kids	53/90	49/87	57/94	54/92
Help organize adults in your community to read to young children	49/89	42/86	54/92	49/91
Not-for-profits should advocate for this issue	36/79	33/76	39/82	35/76
Government should provide grants to people and organizations dedicated to this issue	33/72	29/68	37/75	37/74
There should be a public information campaign about it, including PSAs (public service announcements)	31/73	30/72	32/74	36/75
Politicians should talk about the issue more	28/60	25/58	30/61	33/63

8. Who Should Play a Role?

Respondents read: Below is a list of people and organizations. In your view, how important a role should each play in helping raise awareness of the importance of early childhood literacy?

People/organization 1 st # - Major role 2 nd # - Major + minor role	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Parents	96/99	92/97	99/100	95/99
Teachers	90/99	86/97	93/100	89/99
Grandparents	79/97	73/96	85/99	77/98
Family member	86/99	84/98	88/99	84/100
Daycare centers	70/96	61/93	78/99	73/97
Nannies	63/95	55/92	69/97	62/94
Everyone	55/93	48/90	61/96	54/93
Babysitters	47/93	33/88	58/96	49/95
Community members	38/89	31/87	44/91	34/89
Not-for-profit organizations	38/89	32/86	43/92	37/90
State government	37/82	34/81	39/83	39/83
Local government	35/83	33/81	37/85	36/84
Federal government	33/78	29/76	37/81	35/80
College kids	26/88	20/83	31/92	25/89
Corporations	21/75	18/72	23/77	20/75

9. Other Questions

Which of the following would you be willing to do to help improve early childhood literacy so young children entering kindergarten have the skills they need to learn to read? (Total > 100%)	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Volunteer my time to read to children	65	57	71	67
Mentor a young child	39	36	41	38
Donate money to an early childhood literacy organization	27	29	26	26
None of them because I am active in supporting another cause	20	24	17	19

When thinking about where time, money and resources should be spent on education, which ONE of the following do you think provides the best use of that time, money and resources and gives the best return on investment?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Early childhood literacy or pre-school	51	46	56	48
Kindergarten	11	13	9	15
Elementary school	28	27	29	29
Middle school	2	3	1	3
High school	6	9	4	3
GED certification	2	2	1	2

When do you think is the best time to intervene and teach children literacy skills so that they can have successful careers later in life?	ALL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)	PARENTS (%)
Preschool	58	58	58	55
Kindergarten	19	16	22	21
Elementary school	16	16	17	17
Middle school	2	3	0	2
High school	1	1	1	1
Not sure	4	6	2	4