

## Early Reading Survey

### Instructions

**We invite you to take this survey if you are a parent or other caretaker who has used *any* method to foster early reading in your children, *whether you have been successful or not.***

Of course we want data on the success stories, but we *also* want to hear from people who had no luck with early reading methods. The methods could be *Your Baby Can Read* videos, other videos, Doman flashcards, PowerPoint or Little Reader presentations designed to teach reading, pointing while reading, and other methods thought to teach children to read very early.

Please take this survey *only* if you are the person who is *most* responsible for how your child is learning, or else are *thoroughly* familiar with how your child is learning. Most respondents will be mothers, but there will be a few fathers. If you are a grandparent who is teaching the child extensively, you also can take the survey. Please do *not* take the survey if you are a preschool teacher who happens to use early learning tools in the classroom. We might do a different survey about your situation later.

This survey asks questions about *each specific child*, not about all of your children together. You will have to repeat Sections II and III if you wish to give us information about more than one child.

As with any survey, the accuracy of the results depends on your honesty. If, on reflection, you feel you cannot be honest, please do not complete this survey. Also, if there are *parts* that you feel uncomfortable completing, just don't complete them.

This information will be reported *only* in aggregate, and not with your name attached. We will not publish your name anywhere. We will not publish your other information except in summary/aggregate form, and we will not share the raw data except with other highly responsible researchers. We will not share the raw data, including your name or email address, with any for-profit company, and we will not use it for any sort of advertising. We will share text/narrative answers that you provide (with personally identifying information removed) only if you give us permission to do so (below).

### Section I: personal (not required, except for the first, marked items)

#### PLEASE COMPLETE

1. How are you related to the children?
2. Who is responsible for the day-to-day care of the children? (Do not provide names. If both parents care for the children, and no one else cares for the children, say "Mother and Father"; if just one parent, specify which; if persons with a different relationship, please describe the relationship; if there is a daycare provider, grandparent, or someone else responsible for the child for more than three hours per week, please describe role.)
3. What is the highest level of education that attained by the person *most* responsible for the child's early reading program? (Below high school, high school diploma, some college, college degree, graduate/postgraduate degree, doctorate)
4. What is the highest level of education that the other main caretaker, if any, has attained? (Below high school, high school diploma, some college, college degree, graduate/postgraduate degree, doctorate)

5. How many children are you reporting about in this survey?
6. May we have your permission to share any text/narrative answers you provide (with personally identifying information removed) in aggregate data compilations and research reports?

**NOT REQUIRED**

7. Name
8. City, state, and country
9. Email address (not required; will not be published; used only for survey conductors to communicate with you about survey-related matters)
10. Specify the income level of the household (not required; this information will be kept in strictest confidence; we are merely interested in the income level distribution of parents of early reading children)
11. Including the child or children you are reporting about, how many children are you responsible for (total)?

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** Sections II and III are to be filled out for **each child**. So, if you want to report about more than one child, you will have to fill out Sections II and III more than once. If you don't have time to do the complete survey for all your children, **feel free** to choose just one of your children to report about in Section II, and then stop there.

**Section II: brief survey**

For this section, please pick *one* child, age 12 months or older, to answer questions about.

1. How old is the child *now*? (Years, months)
2. Boy or girl?
3. By what age could your child do the following? (Possible answers: 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, third birthday, fourth birthday, fifth birthday)
  - a. sign, point, gesture, *or speak* in a way that indicates understanding of at least a few written words, before they are read aloud (for example, the child points at nose when the word “nose” comes up)
  - b. say out loud at least a few written words, which had been specifically taught before, without assistance; i.e., the child memorized a few whole words
  - c. point to all the letters of the alphabet when you stated their names
  - d. read phonetically, or sound out, CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words, such as “dog” and “hat”; not just *memorized* a few such words
  - e. *either* read phonetically, *or* had memorized, at least 100 words
  - f. *either* read phonetically, *or* had memorized, at least 500 words
  - g. read phonetically at the first or higher instructional level (please consult the San Diego Quick Assessment, on this page: <http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/articles/060899.htm> (choose a whole number; use “0” if your child cannot read yet)
4. What tools have you used, and how much did you use them?
  - a. **Reading to the child.** Caretaker (or others) read *paper books* to the child, averaging over all the years through fifth birthday: never; rarely; 15 minutes per day; a half-hour per day; an hour per day; over an hour per day.
  - b. **Pointing at words.** How frequently did/do you point at words as you read to your child? Never; rarely; sometimes; most of the time; always.
  - c. **Flashcards (in general).** Showed paper flashcards (of *any* sort) that show words (and possibly also pictures):

- i. (for how long a period) never; just a few times; about a month; 2-6 months; 7-12 months; over 12 months
  - ii. (how often shown, *averaged across that period*) never; rarely; regularly, but less than daily; daily; multiple times per day
- d. **Flashcards & books made with PowerPoint.** (Do not include Little Reader, which is covered below.) I showed my child PowerPoint presentations that resembled either flashcards or simple books:
  - i. (for how long a period) never; just a few times; about a month; 2-6 months; 7-12 months; over 12 months
  - ii. (how often shown, *averaged across that period*) never; rarely; regularly, but less than daily; daily; multiple times per day
- e. ***Your Baby Can Read.*** We watched *Your Baby Can Read* videos:
  - i. (how many videos) none; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; all 5, plus at least some of *Your Child Can Read*
  - ii. (how often used) not at all; rarely; regularly, but not as often as the instructions prescribe; about as often as the instructions prescribe; more often than the instructions prescribe
- f. **Doman flashcard method.** So far, we have followed (something like) the Doman flashcard method for learning reading and/or “encyclopedic knowledge,” either using paper flashcards or similar electronic tools:
  - i. (what aspects of the program) not at all; a personal, *greatly* modified version, but still recognizably “Doman”; Doman’s program, but not every aspect of it (e.g., not the physical training part); Doman’s complete program, as described in IAHP books and seminars
  - ii. (for how long a period) never; just a few times; about a month; 2-6 months; 7-12 months; over 12 months
  - iii. (how often used) never; rarely; regularly, but not as often as Doman prescribes; about as often as Doman prescribes; more often than Doman prescribes
- g. **Little Reader.** Used Little Reader software:
  - i. (for how long a period) never; just a few times; about a month; 2-6 months; 7-12 months; over 12 months
  - ii. (how often used, on average) never; rarely; regularly, but less than daily; about once daily; multiple times per day
- h. **“Fleschcards.”** Used the free phonics flashcards created by Larry Sanger:
  - i. (how far you got through the cards) just showed (some or all of) the first set; showed 1-10 sets; showed 11-20 sets; showed more than 20, but not all of the sets; showed all the sets
  - ii. (how often used, on average) never; rarely; regularly, but less than daily; about once daily; multiple times per day
- i. **Baby signing.** Choose one: I have never really tried to teach my baby some signs; I have tried to teach my baby some signs, but he/she does not sign back; we sign some, but not a lot; we sign a lot or constantly.
- j. **“Academic” preschool (of any sort; regular play-oriented daycare does not count).** We put our child in “academic” preschool:
  - i. (how long) never; 0-3 months; 4-6 months; 7-12 months; one year; two years; three years

- ii. (how often, on average): 1-2 hours/week; 3-4 hours/week; 5-8 hours/week; 9-12 hours/week; 13-16 hours/week; more than 16 hours/week
  - k. **In utero baby learning.** Prior to birth, we: did nothing special; tried some in utero baby learning techniques; extensively used in utero baby learning techniques.
5. How would you describe your views and practices of early education, when you followed an early reading program with your child(ren), *regardless of your current views*? What “camp” would you have placed yourself in, if any? (Choose *one*.)
- a. Mainly, I took the advice of most mainstream early education experts (and so was very skeptical of most of the practices discussed in this survey).
  - b. Mainly, I followed the Doman method.
  - c. Mainly, I used *Your Baby Can* products.
  - d. Mainly, I followed the advice of J. Richard Gentry (*Raising Confident Readers*).
  - e. Mainly, I followed the advice of Timothy D. Kailing (*Native Reading*).
  - f. Mainly, I followed the Montessori method with my baby/toddler.
  - g. Mainly, I focused on baby signing more than other techniques.
  - h. I used my own method to teach reading early, which may or may not borrow ideas from other methods.
  - i. I used some other approach.
- [text area: please elaborate your answer, if you want]**
6. If you are currently skeptical of very early reading, please check all that apply to you:
- a. I once was pursuing an early reading program, and am no longer pursuing that program because I do not believe in it anymore. But I remain at least somewhat open to other early reading programs.
  - b. I once was pursuing a program, but I no longer believe in teaching children to read early (by *any* method).
  - c. Though I am skeptical about very early reading, I was and am nevertheless willing to try various techniques out, even perhaps against my better judgment.
  - d. I don’t know what to think about these techniques. It so happens that I have used some of these tools, but it was never my plan to teach my child to read (even if my child did happen to learn).
  - e. Other
- [text area: please elaborate your answer, if you want]**
7. If you have videos online demonstrating your child’s progress in learning to read, please give us the URLs (not required) and your child’s age in each video. In any future report(s), we *will not* connect your videos to any of your other answers. We will use them only for general illustrative purposes.
- [text area]**

Please go on to the next sections if you have time to help give us a fuller picture of how parents are teaching their early readers. We’d really appreciate it. You’ll probably find the results interesting!

### Section III: complete survey

#### Subsection A: other reading and learning milestones

By what age could your child do the following? (Possible answers: 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, third birthday, fourth birthday, fifth birthday, not yet)

1. Name all the letters of the alphabet when you showed/pointed at them
2. Say the sounds that all the letters of the alphabet make (for example, say “buh” when shown the letter B)

3. First time reading an *entire* picture book, or presentation, *with whole sentences*.
4. First time reading an *entire* chapter book.
5. Draw a barely recognizable representative picture (e.g., stick figure, simple house)
6. Write own name
7. Write all of the letters of the alphabet (whether upper or lower case)
8. Count to 10
9. Count to 100
10. Do a few sums more difficult than  $1+1$  and  $2+2$ , on paper or not without assistance, regardless of whether memorized
11. Do all single-digit sums on paper or not, up to  $9+9$ , without assistance, regardless of whether memorized

**Subsection B: books**

1. On average, how many books per week did you read to your child?
  - a. Between the ages of 0 and 12 months? (0, 1-3, 4-10, 11-50, over 50, n/a)
  - b. As a one and two year old?
  - c. As a three and four year old?
2. How much did your child like to be read to? Just your honest impression.
  - a. Between the ages of 0 and 12 months. (In general, did not like it. Hard to tell/seemed neutral. Liked it. Loved it.)
  - b. As a one and two year old?
  - c. As a three and four year old?
3. Did you ever read a book to your child that you know your child did not want to listen to? (Please be honest.)
  - a. Between the ages of 0 and 12 months? (Never, very rarely, occasionally, often)
  - b. As a one and two year old?
  - c. As a three and four year old?
4. How often did you point to the text you were reading? (Never, rarely, occasionally, often, always)
  - a. Between the ages of 0 and 12 months?
  - b. As a one and two year old?
  - c. As a three and four year old?
5. How often did your child spontaneously pick up books to flip through (whether to read or not)? Never, very rarely, occasionally, often, almost every day, every day without fail)
  - a. As a one year old?
  - b. As a two year old?
  - c. As a three year old?
  - d. As a four year old?
6. On average, how many times per month did your child read a book (any sort) *to him- or herself, cover to cover...*
  - a. As a one year old?
  - b. As a two year old?
  - c. As a three year old?
  - d. As a four year old?
7. How many chapter books (total) did your child read...
  - a. As a two year old?
  - b. As a three year old?
  - c. As a four year old?

8. On *average*, how many times per month did you go to the library for books for your child:
  - a. Between the ages of 0 and 12 months? (Never; occasionally, but less than once/month; about once/month; 2-4 times/month; more often)
  - b. As a one and two year old?
  - c. As a three and four year old?
9. What proportion of fiction to nonfiction did you read throughout the entire period? (If it varied, give your best guess at the *average*.) 100-0; 90-10; 80-20; etc.
10. Please specify the five **picture** books, fiction or nonfiction, that your child liked, or requested, the most. (For purposes of aggregation, if you specify more than five, we will choose the first five from your list. Please include author and full title, or enough for us to be able to uniquely identify the book.)
11. Please specify the five **chapter** books, fiction or nonfiction, that your child liked, or requested, the most.
12. By what age had you begun reading children’s chapter books to your child? (12 months, 18 months, 24 months, third birthday, fourth birthday, fifth birthday, not yet)
13. By what age had you begun reading *any* chapter books, whether intended for children or not and whether your child could understand them, to your child? (12 months, 18 months, 24 months, third birthday, fourth birthday, fifth birthday, not yet)
14. How many (if any) books did you *make* for your child? This includes hand-made paper books (not PowerPoint—this is covered separately), scrapbooks (with words, intended for teaching reading), etc. (0, 1, 2-5, more than 5)

**Subsection C: videos and other media**

1. How often have you shown the following other videos to your child (under the age of five): (options: never; once or just a few times; many times; very frequently/we did the whole program/saw most or all episodes)
  - a. *Baby Einstein*
  - b. *Baby Genius*
  - c. *Between the Lions*
  - d. *Brainy Baby*
  - e. LeapFrog videos (e.g., *Talking Words Factory* and *Math Circus*)
  - f. *Little Einsteins*
  - g. *Monki See Monki Do*
  - h. Peter Weatherall videos
  - i. *Readeez*
  - j. *Sesame Street*
  - k. *TweedleWink*
  - l. Other videos [please specify]
2. How often have you shown videos, presentations, games, or other content from the following websites and software systems? (options: Never; once or just a few times; many times; very frequently/we used the whole program/explored the whole site)
  - a. Literative.com
  - b. pbskids.org
  - c. RoyTheZebra.com
  - d. Starfall.com
  - e. Tumble Books (from any source)
  - f. WatchKnow.org

- g. Other websites [please specify]
3. When your child was ready to learn from them, how often did you use the following media/manipulatives and associated techniques?  
(options: Never; once or just a few times; many times; very frequently)
- a. Alphabet blocks
  - b. Electronic alphabet learning toys (except Fridge Phonics)
  - c. Foam letters and other “carryable” letters (other than fridge magnets)
  - d. Labelling objects around the house
  - e. LeapFrog Click Start
  - f. LeapFrog Refrigerator Phonics
  - g. LeapFrog Tag or Tag Junior
  - h. “Match the word with the object” games
  - i. Montessori manipulatives (any sort)
  - j. Refrigerator (letter) magnets
4. How many PowerPoint presentations, Little Reader presentations, videos, or other “digital books” have you made for and shown to your child? 0; 1-5; 6-10; 11-25; 26-50; 51-100; over 100.

**Subsection D: other educational activities**

1. Are you (through any method) attempting, or did you attempt, to teach your child in a language other than the “primary” language of the home (under the age of five)? (yes/no)  
(If no, skip to the next section.)
2. If yes, how often does one parent (or both) speak in that other language to the child?  
(exclusively/all the time, most of the time, some of the time, only a little)
3. Is one parent (or both) a native speaker of this other language? (yes/no)
4. How often do you read in the other language? (never, rarely, sometimes, often, daily)
5. How well can your child read in the other language? (not at all; a few words memorized; many words memorized; first grade level; higher level)
6. Are you (through any method) attempting to teach your child to play a musical instrument?  
(yes/no)
7. Have you taught your child to memorize nursery rhymes, poems, quotations, or other texts?  
How many? (no; just a few; many)

**Subsection E: your general activities, views, and motivations**

1. Please rank the following items, from 1 to 5, in order of importance for your child’s progress so far in *learning to read*, in particular:
  - a. parent reading to child (while pointing or not)
  - b. videos, websites, software, handheld apps, and other digital media
  - c. paper (not digital) flashcards
  - d. blocks, refrigerator magnets, letters, and other “bulky” toys and manipulatives
  - e. paper workbooks and textbooks
2. Which of the following describe your *actual motivations* for fostering early literacy in your child? (Please be honest.) (options for each: very important, somewhat important, not important)
  - a. I want to help make my child into a genius, or an extremely intelligent person, anyway.
  - b. I want to give my child a competitive advantage over other children in school or in life generally.

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- c. I want to help my child to be the best student and person he or she can possibly be.
  - d. I want to help my child achieve some academic aim(s).
  - e. I want to prevent any future reading problems.
  - f. Other (please explain)
3. Which of the following best describes your views about “forcing” your child to learn.
- a. I never force my child to learn, and I never will.
  - b. I never force my child to learn, although in the future (when the child is school age) it might be necessary.
  - c. One should not attempt to force a *baby* or a *toddler* to learn, but preschoolers are different; then it sometimes it is necessary.
  - d. It is all right occasionally to force a small child to learn, but one should avoid it.
  - e. I am not opposed to using force or discipline to teach children, even small children; common concerns about forcing children to learn are misplaced.
  - f. Other (please specify)
4. Please describe your views about “testing” your child, for example, having them read a text, or say what is on a card. Choose the answer that best fits your own views:
- a. I am 100% opposed to any testing of young children
  - b. Testing is something that should be done only extremely rarely.
  - c. It is all right to test from time to time, but not regularly.
  - d. I see nothing wrong with testing regularly as part of a program, but if it makes a child self-conscious or resistant, one should stop.
  - e. Testing is fine, and it can even be fine even when a child is resistant (depending on circumstances).