

**Parental Mediation During a Shared Book-
Reading Activity, Parental Beliefs
and the Child's Emergent Literacy level:
An Intergender Viewpoint**

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Abstract

The present research was carried out during a period of increasing social change, where fathers are turning into more active partners in raising their children. In accordance with the social-cultural viewpoint according to which parental mediation comprises the basis for the cognitive and emotional development of their children, this new paternal parenting style creates great interest and arouses the need to identify the fathers' unique contribution to their children's development. The present research presents the fathers' contribution in the context of a comprehensive theoretical and integrative model. This model refers to the relations between the parents' cognitive mediation and emotional support to their children during a literacy activity, the parents' pedagogical beliefs regarding education towards literacy, their evaluation of their children's literacy skills, the parent's gender and the gender of the child, and the effects of these variables on the children's literacy level.

This research included 74 middle-high class families of kindergarten children (half boys and half girls) and their parents. Following previous evidence regarding the contribution of reading books to children's emergent literacy, reading a book to the child comprised the context for examining the differential contribution of the variables in the present research. The parents were asked, each one separately, to read a non-familiar book to their child. These activities were held in the families' homes and were documented by a video camera. The video film was used to evaluate the parents' cognitive and emotional support of their child. After the reading the parents were asked to answer questionnaires pertaining to their pedagogical beliefs regarding cultivation of literacy and to evaluate their child's literacy skill. The child's literacy level in kindergarten was also examined, and was tested according to seven measures: phonological awareness, letter recognition, conceptualization of what is written in the book, word reading (judgment and reasoning) and writing letters and words.