

## **Abstract**

Studies show that socioeconomic status (SES) and the home literacy environment (HLE) (access to literacy resources and frequency of activity), are important factors in early literacy emergence. Beyond the frequency of activity, the duration of child literacy activity (CLA) and shared parent-child literacy activities (SLA), may also have an impact. This measure was researched only in a few studies. Child literacy development was occasionally also thought to be related to parents' beliefs as to their role in promoting child literacy (PB). This study examined the correlations between all these measures in the Arab family in Israel. Focusing on the COVID-19 outbreak, when young children spent a lot of time at home with their parents. We studied the access to literacy resources and the frequency of SLA, the duration of CLA and the shared parent- child traditional and digital activities. In addition, a comparison was made regarding literacy activity duration (LAD) pre-COVID-19 as opposed to during COVID-19 outbreak. The hypotheses were (a) that home LAD, whether solitary, shared, traditional or digital during COVID-19 would be longer than pre-COVID-19. (b) that SES and child age group will positively correlate with LAD beyond time and type of activity. (c) there will be a positive correlation between the SES and HLE level and PB. (d) the SES, HLE, PB, and child's age group will contribute to LAD, to all its types, during COVID-19 and before it. (e) that HLE and PB will be the main contributors to child's LAD. One hundred and thirty-four parents of kindergarteners from the Arab society in Israel participated. They answered a digital questionnaire over the 3<sup>rd</sup> COVID-19 outbreak, in February-March 2021, that examined (1) family demographics (2) HLE (access to literacy resources and frequency of activity) (3) child's LAD before and during COVID-19 (4) parents' beliefs as to their role in promoting child literacy (PB). Results show an increase in digital child's LAD during COVID-19. An increase in shared digital and traditional LAD was not found. In contrast to the hypotheses, no correlation was found between the child's age and LAD of any type. But, in accordance with the hypotheses, positive correlation was found between SES and HLE, and LAD. Parents from middle SES as opposed to low SES reported a larger number of books per household, a higher frequency of shared book reading, longer LAD, a higher level of enjoyment from book reading, and exposing the child to books at a younger age. Alongside, contrary to the hypotheses, no correlation was found between PB and SES. Parents of both SESs believe that both they and the schools play a prominent role in promoting child literacy. Regression analyses demonstrates that, HLE was the main factor to contribute to shared traditional LAD at home pre- as well as during COVID-19. However, PB as to their role in promoting child literacy together with the kindergarten teacher is the factor that contributed to shared digital LAD during COVID-19. In addition, SES had a major contribution to child's solitary digital LAD during COVID-19. We discuss finding explanations, educational ramifications, and follow-up studies.

