

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**Contribution of the mother's profession and the home literacy
environment to children's emergent writing:
A comparison between children of mothers who are
pediatric occupational therapists and mothers with other
professions**

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we examined the contribution of the mother's profession and the home literacy environment to the development of basic measures of children's emergent literacy (phonological awareness, letter naming, and letter-sound correspondence) and their emergent writing (letter writing and writing word pairs). Emergent literacy of preschoolers, including emergent writing, are considered as predictors of formal reading and writing, that are acquired later in school. Maternal education and profession can have a significant positive influence on her children's achievements from an early age, including achievements in the field of emergent literacy. A major part of the work of occupational therapists in early childhood includes the treatment of preschoolers, and is partially related directly to the diagnosis and treatment of emergent writing. The home literacy environment is an additional important component in the development of children's emergent literacy and writing. An environment rich in literacy tools and appropriate activities predicts high literacy abilities. The present study aimed to examine whether differences exist in the home literacy environment and in the emergent literacy of children to mothers, who are occupational therapists compared to children whose mothers have the same level of education, but work in a profession that is not therapeutic-educational. In addition, we examined the contribution of the mother's profession and the home literacy environment to children's emergent literacy. The participants included 60 preschoolers aged 60-72 months and their mothers. Half of the mothers are occupational therapists who work with preschoolers and half have a different academic profession that is not related to therapy or education. It was found that the home literacy environment level, the basic emergent literacy level, and the emergent writing level of children whose mothers are occupational therapists are significantly higher than those of children whose mothers work in other professions. Regression analysis showed that the mother's profession made a significant contribution to the child's emergent literacy and emergent writing, while the home literacy environment level made no contribution at all. The study indicates the important impact of the professional knowledge regarding emergent literacy of the occupational therapist mother on her child's literacy, beyond her academic education. Its further points to the need to guide parents who are not in this profession on the importance of promoting literacy among preschoolers.

Key words: mother's profession, emergent literacy. Emergent writing, home literacy environment, occupational therapy.