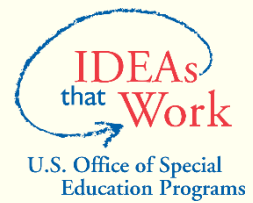




# Parental Perceptions of Literacy: Children With Intellectual Disability

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**Literacy defined as the use written words/text and symbols such as pictures/visual representations to access information and communicate ideas.**

## Purpose

### Background

- The development of students' competence in the area of literacy is arguably one of most critical functions of public education, as the ability to understand and generate text is a requirement for success across a range of environments (e.g., school, home, community).
- Over the last several decades, researchers have increasingly sought to improve literacy outcomes for students with ID (Browder et al., 2006).
- Unfortunately, it is unclear as to how effective dissemination efforts have been at shifting the needle towards improved literacy instruction for students with ID.
- Few researchers have investigated literacy programming for students with ID through direct classroom observations.

### Research Questions:

1. What were the perceptions of parents regarding what skills are important related to literacy (i.e., reading and writing) for their child with ID?
2. What do parents perceive as the current skill sets related to literacy (i.e., reading and writing) of their child with ID?
3. What do parents perceive as the barriers that prevent their child with ID from learning literacy skills?

## Method

### Procedures

1. Members of the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC)'s mailing list received an email containing a URL link to a survey (~8,210 members)
2. Of the 290 people who responded to the email and began the survey, 211 participants answered 'yes' to "Does your child have an intellectual disability?" and were prompted to proceed
3. Participants were able to select more than one item for each multiple selection question

### Survey Instrument

#### 25 Questions:

- 5 categories: reading, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, writing, and literacy
- 9 Multiple choice questions
- 12 multiple \*selection\* questions
- 2 open response questions
- 2 rank order questions

**Table 1**

*Number of Students Reported on by Grade and Age*

Grade Band	n (%)	Age	F	%
K-2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	35 (16.6)	4-5	35	16.6
3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	47 (22.3)	6-11	47	22.3
6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	48 (22.7)	12-14	48	22.7
9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	50 (23.7)	15-18	50	23.7

**Table 2**

*Number of Students Reported on by Type of Expressive Communication Used*

	Elementary		Middle		High School		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Spoken Word	70	85.4	45	93.8	43	86	158	87.8
Written Word	1	1.2	0	0	0	0	1	0.5
Assistive Tech Device	3	3.7	1	2.1	1	2	5	2.7
Picture Exchange	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0.5
Pointing/pulling/gesture	3	3.7	1	2.1	2	4	6	3.3
No clear communication method	5	6.1	1	2.1	3	6	9	5

n=180 Elementary=82 Middle=48 High=50

**Table 3**

*Number of Students Reported on by Primary Location of Literacy Instruction*

Location of Lit Instruction	Elementary		Middle		High School		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Self-Contained, SPED	33	40.7	20	41.7	19	38.0	72	40.2
Resource Classroom	19	23.5	13	27.1	5	10.0	37	20.7
Small group instruction	12	14.8	6	12.5	5	10.0	23	12.8
General Education	10	12.3	7	14.6	16	32.0	33	18.4
<b>General Ed Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>51.9</b>
Hospital/Homebound	3	3.7	1	2.1	2	4.0	6	3.4
Homeschool	4	4.9	1	2.1	1	2.0	6	3.4
Parentally Placed Private School	0	0	0	0	2	4.0	2	1.1

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**Table 4**  
*Parent Perception of Their Student's Current Skill Sets*

	Elementary		Middle		High School	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
<b>Reading Skills</b>						
Does not recognize symbols or read words	4	4.9	0	0	1	2.0
Recognizes familiar symbols	3	3.7	1	2.1	2	4.0
Recognizes name in print	7	8.5	2	4.2	2	4.0
Reads 20 common sight words	1	1.2	0	0	3	6.0
Can sound out some words	7	8.5	4	8.3	0	0
Read basic sentence independently	26	31.7	12	25.0	9	18.0
Read paragraphs independently**	34	41.5	29	60.4	33	66.0
<b>Listening Comprehension Skills</b>						
Beginning to attend to a story being read	6	7.3	1	2.1	3	6.0
Attends to story being read aloud and/or watch a story on video	18	22.0	0	0	2	4.0
After listening, can answer questions from a field 2-4	22	26.8	16	33.3	10	20.0
After listening, can answer basic questions	24	29.3	17	35.4	15	30.0
After listening, can answer challenging questions*	12	14.6	14	29.2	20	40.0
<b>Reading Comprehension</b>						
My child can independently read a story*	45	54.9	37	77.1	40	80.0
After reading short passage independently, can answer basic comp questions	31	37.8	21	43.8	23	46.0
After reading short passage independently, can answer harder comp questions**	14	17.1	16	33.3	17	34.0

\* diff btw school level >.01, \*\* diff btw school level >.05

## Results

### Research Question 1- Parents' Perceptions of the Most Important Literacy Skills:

- Parents ranked highest **to understand something that the child has read** (57.8%) and **following written directions** (47.2%) as most important literacy outcomes
- The overwhelming vast majority of parents (93.3%) indicated that it was **very important that their child learn to read** and **85.0% believed that there is a difference in life outcomes for children who can read** written words than those who cannot
- Most important for their child to learn functional reading and least important was decoding
- Most important for their child to learn functional writing and least important was writing stories

### Research Question 2- Parents' Perceptions of Current Skill Sets

- Table 2 shows skills students are currently working on in school
  - Elementary students were more likely working on print awareness, letter knowledge, sight words, and decoding than middle and high school students
- Table 3 shows the reported current skill repertoire of students
  - Most students are able to read at some level either a basic sentence. Only 2.8% were not able to recognize any symbols or words
  - Listening comprehension: 26.7% of students need response options in order to select from in order to answer comprehension questions, 31.1% can answer basic questions, and 25.6% can answer more challenging questions
  - Reading comprehension: 41.7% can answer basic questions and 26.1% can answer more challenging questions

### Research Question 3- Parents' Perceptions of the Biggest Barriers

- The biggest perceived barriers for **reading** were distractibility(62.2%) and not understanding the content (56.7%).
- The biggest perceived barriers for **writing** were distractibility (63.9%) and holding a writing tool (41.7%)

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## Results (con't)

**Table 5**  
Parent Perception of Literacy Skills Currently Being Taught by Grade Band

	Elementary		Middle		High School	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Print Awareness**	32	39.0	12	25.0	8	16.0
Letter Knowledge*	35	42.7	10	20.8	8	16.0
Sight Words*	48	58.5	15	31.3	11	22.0
Vocabulary	39	47.6	24	50.0	19	38.0
Phonological Awareness	25	30.5	18	37.5	8	16.0
Decoding**	36	43.9	16	33.3	11	22.0
Listening Comprehension	42	51.2	26	54.2	24	48.0
Reading Comprehension	37	45.1	31	64.6	30	60.0
Writing Conventions	19	23.2	19	39.6	19	38.0

**Table 7**  
Parent Perception of Barriers to Literacy

	Elementary		Middle		High	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Disruptive behavior**	30	36.6	11	22.9	8	16.0
Does not understand the content	36	43.9	22	45.8	21	42.0
Uninterested in topic	38	46.3	23	47.9	16	32.0
Unable to remain in seat long enough*	36	43.9	13	27.1	7	14.0
Easily distracted*	59	72.0	31	64.6	22	44.0
Not enough reading role models	5	6.1	3	6.3	2	4.0
Lack of instructional time	13	15.9	13	27.1	14	28.0
Lack of opportunity to generalize	10	12.2	11	22.9	12	24.0
Instruction does not meet need	20	24.4	13	27.1	19	38.0
Lack of accessible materials	6	7.3	9	18.8	9	18.0

\* diff btw school level >.01, \*\* diff btw school level >.05

**Table 6**  
Parent Perception of Most Important Literacy Skills by Grade Band

	Elem		Middle		High	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Identify common words	18	22.0	7	14.6	5	10
Read items in order to navigate their environment	29	35.4	19	39.6	16	32
To understand something they read	49	59.8	27	56.3	28	56
Enjoying reading for leisure or pleasure	26	31.7	9	18.8	10	20
Follow written directions eg recipe*	28	34.1	29	60.4	28	56

\* diff btw grade bands >.01

**Table 8**  
Parent Perception of Most Important Writing Skills

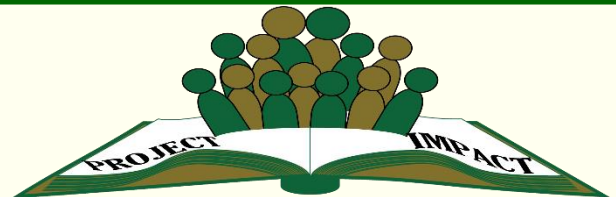
Skill	Mean	Rank
Functional Writing	2.60	1
Sentence writing	3.51	2
Handwriting	3.56	3
Spelling	3.62	4
Grammar	3.81	5
Writing paragraphs	4.80	6
Writing for social interaction	4.89	7
Writing stories	5.96	8

## Discussion

- Overall, less than 50% of respondents reported children had or were learning critical skills in literacy.
- Parents did not indicate if child had mild, moderate, or severe ID; however, the findings lead us to believe there were more children with mild ID than moderate to severe (e.g., 41.7% could read passage independently).
- Which other variable(s) interact with parent perception of current classroom programming?
- Is there are relationship between parent's emphasis on functional writing and their expectations for their children?

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