

**THE EMERGENT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

**OF**

**PRE-SCHOOLERS AND THEIR**

**HOME SUPPORTS FOR LITERACY**

**A DISSERTATION**

**PRESENTED**

**TO**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF LOGOPAEDICS, FACULTY OF MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
CAPE TOWN**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE M.SC (SPEECH & LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY)**

**BY**

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**DECEMBER, 1996**

This dissertation has been given  
the highest possible grade by the  
examiners and is held by the author.

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*You may have tangible wealth untold :  
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.  
Richer than I you cannot be -  
I had a mother who read to me.*

*From "The Reading Mother"  
by Strickland Gillian*

*Children who are not spoken to by live  
and responsive adults will not learn to  
speak properly. Children who are not  
answered will stop asking questions.  
They will become incurious.  
And children who are not told stories and  
who are not read to, will have few reasons  
for wanting to learn to read.*

*Gail Haley  
(1971 Caldecott Medal acceptance speech)*

*Few children learn to love books by themselves.  
Someone has to lure them into the wonderful  
world of the written word; someone has to show  
them the way.*

*Orville Prescott  
(A Father Reads to his Children)*

*If we would get our parents to read to their  
pre-school children fifteen minutes a day, we  
could revolutionise the schools.*

*Ruth Love  
(Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools)*

*Love of reading is not required  
it is inspired.*

*Love of reading is not demanded,  
it is exemplified.*

*Love of reading is not enacted,  
it is quickened.*

*Love of reading is not solicited,  
it is activated.*

***Russell Staufer***  
***(Wilson Library Bulletin)***

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ELAP	Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile
SHELL-K	School-Home Early Language and Literacy Battery - Kindergarten
CAP	Comprehensive Assessment Programme
TROG	Test for Reception of Grammar
SES	Socio-economic status
PA	Phonological awareness
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
SLT	Speech-language therapist
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
ANC	African National Congress

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of my work on this dissertation, I was acutely aware of the fact that little can be accomplished without the assistance and support of others. I owe a debt of gratitude to several persons, who have contributed greatly to the successful completion of this dissertation and, in some cases, also to my development both as a person and a scholar. My sincere thanks are extended to :

My supervisor, Ms Karen Malan, formerly of the Department of Logopaedics, University of Cape Town, for her invaluable guidance and input during the entire process.

My co-supervisor, Prof Fanie Sonn, Director of the Institute for Child and Family Development at the University of the Western Cape, by whose expertise as an examiner of theses I benefitted greatly.

The pre-primary teachers and the Principals of the Kenmere and Factreton Primary Schools for their willingness to assist me in conducting my research. The positive manner in which they responded and the interest displayed in the project is much appreciated.

The pupils and their families who participated in the study. Without them, the study would not have materialised. I particularly appreciated the positive response I received from parents, who did not hesitate to assist me by providing the information which I required.

Jaques Newman from the Department of Statistics, UWC, for statistical analysis of the data and producing the graphs.

The Director and staff of the Institute for Child and Family Development at UWC for their support and input and also for making the resources of the Institute available to me. In addition to the Director, Prof Sonn, whom I have already acknowledged, the following persons deserve special mention :

- Bea Lategan, Clinical Psychologist for assisting with the scoring of the Draw-a-Man test.
- Cornelia Fester, Secretary, for her invaluable assistance with the typing of tables and with the final layout of this

document.

Brenda Leibowitz and Marcella Naidoo of the Academic Development Centre at UWC and Nan Van Der Merwe of the Professional Communications Unit at UCT, for their contribution to the development of my writing skills and for giving me confidence in my ability to write.

My family and friends, for their support and encouragement during the research process. I am particularly grateful to my husband, Donauvin, and my son, Daniel, for the sacrifices which they made.

## DECLARATION

I, Ingrid Anthea Willenberg, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work or any part of it has been, or is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other University.

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*Signed*

SIGNATURE

30.12.96.....

DATE

## ETHICS STATEMENT

All information obtained from the subjects participating in this study, as well as their parents, will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. No personal information pertaining to the families will be disclosed to the teachers or the school principals. Parents will be given feedback regarding their children's performance, but no actual scores will be disclosed. IQ scores, in particular will not be disclosed to either parents or teachers.

Upon completion of this study, letters of thanks will be written to the parents of all the subjects. A brochure on reading to children will also be sent to parents.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to assess the emergent literacy knowledge of a group of South African pre-schoolers from low and low-middle class families and to explore their home supports for literacy. The sample comprised 24 subjects, aged between 5 years 9 months and 6 years 5 months. Sixteen of the subjects were from low-middle class families, while the remaining eight were from low-class families.

The emergent literacy knowledge of the children was assessed using the Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile (ELAP), which was developed for the purpose of this study. The profile included subtests derived and modified from existing batteries developed elsewhere in the world for assessment of emergent literacy. The children's home supports for literacy were ascertained by means of personal interviews conducted with the parents in their home environments.

Although both groups exhibited poor emergent literacy knowledge in general, it was found that there were statistically significant differences in the performance of the two groups on several subtests of the ELAP. The group of children from low-middle class families displayed relatively better literacy knowledge than their counterparts from low-class families. This group (i.e. the low-middle class group) also had better access to home supports for literacy. Thus differences in home supports for literacy were strongly linked to differences in socio-economic status.

The findings of the study confirm the much documented finding that home environments impact greatly on children's emergent literacy development. The finding that even the children with relatively more favourable home environments displayed deficits in emergent literacy knowledge indicates the urgent need to promote the emergent literacy development of pre-schoolers in South Africa, particularly those from historically disadvantaged communities. This has implications for parents, teachers, educare workers, librarians and speech-language therapists, inter alia.

## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

The knowledge which pre-schoolers have about reading and writing prior to formal schooling has been increasingly acknowledged and researched in recent years. Historically it has been assumed that children do not begin to read until the first year of formal schooling (Mason, 1980). It has also been widely accepted that schools provide the best environments for learning to read (Holdaway, 1979). During the last two to three decades, these assumptions have been challenged by various research findings which have shown that many children are capable of acquiring a wealth of knowledge about print before receiving formal instruction at school (Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Van Kleeck, 1990; Wells, 1986). This area of enquiry has been termed "emergent literacy".

Research has demonstrated that children's knowledge about literacy develops within their home and family contexts (Heath, 1983; Leichter, 1984; Taylor, 1983). In addition, it is widely asserted that middle-class home environments provide children with literacy experiences which are congruent with those encountered at school (Feitelson, 1987; Heath, 1983; McLane & McNamee, 1990; Snow, 1983), resulting in their more successful acquisition of literacy than their working class peers. However, this assertion has been strongly contested by Anderson and Stokes (1984) and Purcell-Gates, L'Allier and Smith (1995) as being over-simplistic. A study conducted by Purcell-Gates et al. (1995) showed much variation in

the home literacy environments of working class families, with some families being highly literate. The issue of the relationship between socio-economic status and children's acquisition of literacy is thus a contentious one which continues to be debated internationally.

A review of current research in the field of emergent literacy has prompted an enquiry into the South African situation. Given that the majority of South African families are socially and economically disadvantaged, it is essential to investigate how this impacts upon children's acquisition of literacy. Enquiries have identified that there is an extreme paucity of emergent literacy research in this country. Apart from an unpublished study conducted by Wolson (1992) investigating the language experiences of pre-schoolers which foster literacy, there is no documented local research which focuses on the literacy knowledge of pre-schoolers, much less the impact of socio-economic status on literacy development. Thus, both international debate and the lack of local research in this area served as the impetus for the present study. This study sought to initiate the development of a pool of knowledge pertaining to local situations in respect of emergent literacy development, and also to explore local contexts in the light of current debates.

Documentation of the study will assume the form described as follows. Chapter Two will provide a review of the literature which has established the significance of the domain of enquiry addressed by the present study.

Chapter Three includes the theoretical framework by which the design of the study has been informed. Chapter Four provides information about the community in which the study was conducted. Chapter Five is an account of the methodological procedures employed in the execution of the study. The results obtained and a discussion of these results are provided in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with directions for future research and implications of the findings .

## CHAPTER TWO : LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes three sections. The first is a brief overview of the predominant research paradigms within the field of emergent literacy. The second is a survey of some important research which has prompted the initiation of the present study. The third section is the problem statement, which provides the motivation for conducting the study.

### 1. Research Paradigms

A review of the literature on emergent literacy has revealed that research in this area is predominantly qualitative. The main methods of data collection employed are participant observation and interviews. Popular research foci include observation of home or school environments and adult-child interactions around literacy. A smaller number of studies have involved quantitative designs in which assessments of literacy competencies were administered with a view towards identifying developmental stages of emergent literacy or the validation of models of literacy acquisition. Within the experimental paradigm there have also been longitudinal training studies in which intervention has been undertaken in order to identify which skills impact upon literacy development.

Studies employing an eclectic design are very commonly encountered within the field of emergent literacy. Among these are studies which included qualitative participant observation of children and their families as

well as quantitative measurement of literacy competencies. The prevalence of eclectic research design in this domain of study will become evident in the following survey of significant research.

## **2. Survey of Significant Research in the Field of Emergent Literacy**

From the literature, the following main foci of research may be identified : home and/or school environments and the accompanying interactions around literacy; the development and validation of models of literacy acquisition. Less prominent research foci include the delineation of developmental stages in literacy development as well as research relating to the design and implementation of early literacy development programmes. The studies which will be discussed in this survey are ones which have prompted the research questions addressed in the present study.

Many of the studies pertaining to home literacy environments approach the topic either from a socio-economic status or cross-cultural perspective. A seminal work in this area is the ethnographic study by Heath (1983) on working-class African Americans and working- and middle- class white communities in the Piedmont Carolinas of the USA. After extensive participant observation of these communities, Heath found that they differed greatly with regard to their literacy practices and also how they viewed the role of adults in children's development of language and literacy. Furthermore, her observations conducted within schools revealed

that the above-mentioned differences between the three communities played themselves out in the scholastic performance of the children (Heath, 1982, 1983). Within the white working-class community, Roadville, adults viewed it as their role to teach children to use language and also to provide basic literacy instruction. Children were exposed to literacy artifacts from infancy and the books which they encountered were mainly alphabet or number books, nursery rhymes, Bible stories and real-life stories. During joint book reading sessions, adults focused mainly on the factual aspects of the story and children were not encouraged to relate the story to other contexts. Roadville children tended to perform well during the first three grades of schooling but experienced difficulty later on when faced with creative writing tasks and tasks which required them to decontextualise knowledge.

The adults in Trackton, the black working-class community, did not adopt an instructive role in the lives of their children. Children were raised in environments which were very adult-orientated and they seldom received toys, much less children's books. They were not exposed to joint book reading but frequently engaged in story telling with their peers. Adults did not actively teach children the narrative practices valued within the community, but merely rewarded appropriate attempts at story telling. Children were exposed mainly to analogical questions (that is, questions which prompted them to identify patterns of similarity between items or events) rather than ones requiring "what-explanations" (factual information)

and became adept at providing reason-explanations (explaining why particular events occurred in a story) and affective statements (personal responses to events in a story). Upon entering school, Trackton children experienced difficulty with labelling items, providing "what-explanations" and responding to pictorial representations, since these were not peculiar to their pre-school experience. The analogical skills which the children acquired during pre-school were only brought to bear on school tasks in later grades, by which time they had already fallen behind due to their difficulty in meeting the demands of the curriculum in the early grades.

By contrast, in the middle-class community of Maintown, parents actively socialise their children into a literacy orientation. Children have considerable exposure to joint book reading and learn to take meaning from books as well as ways of displaying this knowledge in a manner such as is valued in classroom interactions. When they enter school, these children have little difficulty acquiring literacy due to their extensive exposure to the kinds of interactions which form an integral part of literacy learning in the classroom. Heath's research demonstrated the existence of qualitative as well as quantitative differences in the home literacy environments of the children from the three different socio-cultural groups. It also served to highlight the impact of early literacy experiences within the home on later school performance. Whereas Heath compared the three communities from a socio-cultural rather than a socio-economic point of view, there have

been a number of studies which have honed in on the literacy environments of families of particular socio-economic status. Carraher (1984, cited by Carraher, 1987) conducted a survey on 42 mothers of working class children in Brazil. The content of the personal interviews covered socio-economic variables, attitudes towards and uses of literacy, and the role of literacy in children's daily routines (ibidem). The results showed that, while mothers expressed recognition of the value of literacy for daily life, their usage of literacy was very restricted. Of the sample, 75% used literacy for correspondence, 39% read newspapers, books, magazines and the Bible and 32% used literacy as a memory aid. Carraher (1987) asserted that this lack of social relevance of literacy in the lives of poor Brazilian children was a major contributing factor to their failure to acquire basic literacy skills.

Teale (1986) conducted an investigation into the home literacy experiences of Anglo-, African- and Mexican-American children from low income families. The 24 subjects were between two years six months and three years six months of age. Intensive observations were conducted in the homes of these families for purposes of identifying the type, frequency and duration of literacy events which took place. Arising from the observations, the following domains of literacy events were identified : daily living routines; entertainment; school-related activity; work; religion; interpersonal communication; participating in information networks; storybook time and literacy for the sake of teaching/learning literacy. Of these domains, all the families used literacy in daily living routines but

seldom for work. Only three of the 22 participating families observed storybook time in their homes. Despite the similar socio-economic status of the families, Teale found considerable variation in the home literacy experiences of the children both in terms of type and amount. Thus, the findings of this study lend support to the view that low income families should not be construed as a homogenous group with regard to home literacy environments.

The relationship between parental literacy skills and functional uses of print and children's ability to learn literacy skills was examined in a descriptive study conducted by Purcell-Gates (1994). Twenty four children between ages four and six from families of low socio-economic status constituted the sample for the study. The methodology involved participant observation of the children and their families in their home environments as well as the administration of assessment tasks designed to measure written language concepts which are critical for success in early literacy instruction. Although there was some degree of variation, usage of print in the homes was generally at a low level. On the whole, the children in the sample displayed limited knowledge of written language concepts.

Despite the fact that all the families participating in the study were of low SES, there was variation in their literacy levels and engagement in literate activities. Purcell-Gates found that low-literate families, of which members had functional literacy skills, engaged in less than half as many literacy

events as literate families, of which members had greater levels of literacy skill. It was also ascertained that children whose parents read and wrote more complex texts and who read and wrote with their children, had better written language knowledge. Thus, the findings of this research support the view that a family's ability to foster literacy should be assessed on merit, rather than assumed on the basis of SES. In addition, the outcome also confirms the assertion that children from homes in which limited engagement with literacy occurs, tend to have poor literacy knowledge.

The studies cited previously have all addressed the specific issue of socio-economic status and literacy. The studies which follow focus more broadly on the general variables which impact upon emergent literacy knowledge. Moon and Wells (1979) investigated the home influences of 20 children between five and seven years on the early stages of learning to read. They obtained data from parent interviews, transcripts of parent-child conversations and various measures of reading such as the Clay Concepts about Print Test, the Neale Accuracy and Comprehension Test and the Carver Word Recognition Test. Home measures taken into account included child and parental interest in literacy, parental provision of resources for literacy, parental teaching of literacy and parental attitude to education. Statistical analysis revealed a significant correlation between parental interest in literacy and all tests of reading ability. It was also identified that children's knowledge of literacy during pre-school, that is, at age five, correlated positively with all parental measures and also with

reading ability at age seven. Moon and Wells (1979) concluded that parental interest in literacy and quality of verbal interaction during the pre-school years influence knowledge of literacy at school entry, which, in turn, influences reading performance at age seven.

As an extension of the previous study, Wells (1987) attempted to identify aspects of children's pre-school experiences which account for differences in their later educational achievement. The following measures were obtained from a group of 32 children : oral language and knowledge of literacy at age five; reading achievement at age seven and overall academic achievement at age ten. Subsequent to correlational analysis it was found that achievement in reading at seven years was the most significant predictor of overall achievement at ten years. Reading achievement at seven years was , in turn, predicted by knowledge of literacy and oral language at age five. Family background, as measured by parental occupations and educational levels, was found to correlate significantly with reading achievement at age seven. Knowledge of literacy at age five was identified as the best predictor of reading at seven years and it also correlated positively with overall achievement at ten years.

In view of the great predictive value of knowledge of literacy at five years, Wells proceeded to probe the factors which contribute to literacy knowledge by investigating the frequency of occurrence of the following literacy-promoting experiences : looking at picture books; drawing and

colouring; listening to stories and pretend writing. Correlational analysis of the above with earlier assessment measures showed that listening to stories was the only activity which correlated positively with knowledge of literacy and oral language ability at five years and reading ability at seven years. The findings of this study thus provide strong support for the importance of reading stories to pre-schoolers as well as the contribution of emergent literacy knowledge to later reading and overall academic performance.

The relationship between early reading achievement, oral language ability and home background was investigated by Share, Jorm, Maclean, Matthews and Waterman (1983). The subjects for their study were 543 pre-school children with a mean age of five years one month and from a range of SES backgrounds. Home background measures included home educational processes, literacy at home and father's occupation as a measure of SES. Early reading achievement was evaluated by assessing letter naming, name writing, name reading, letter copying and recognition and discrimination of letters and numbers. Sentence memory tasks, picture and colour naming tasks, the North Western Syntax Screening Test and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary test were used to measure oral language. Analysis of the data revealed that the following home background variables were significantly related to both oral language ability and reading ability at school entry : library membership, book ownership, frequency of book

reading and occupational status of the father. Home background variables were found to account for 26% of the variance in early reading achievement and 30% of the variance in oral language ability. Oral language ability accounted for 36% of the variance in early reading achievement. An interesting finding arising from this study is that children from homes where languages other than English were also spoken, tended to have poorer English language abilities. The results of this study attest to the important influence of home background and oral language ability on reading achievement.

The Harvard Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development focused on children from low income families, in an effort to identify the environmental supports for literacy both at home and at school (Snow, 1991). Eighty low income families participated in the study, which commenced when the children were three years old. The first phase was completed when the children reached age five, but it was planned that the study would continue until the subjects were in the middle grades of primary school. When the children were three and four years old, home visits were conducted in order to obtain samples of mother-child interactions during toy play, book reading, mealtimes and the elicitation of reports of events from the child. At age five the children were assessed on the School-Home Early Language and Literacy Battery-Kindergarten (SHELL-K), a test battery specifically designed for the study (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991). The SHELL-K included the following measures : non-verbal

intelligence, vocabulary, word definitions, story comprehension, narrative production, print and writing concepts. Correlational analysis showed that non-verbal intelligence scores were not correlated with other task scores or home variables. However, several of the home measures which captured decontextualised use of language were found to correlate with various test scores. The results obtained confirmed the hypothesis of the researchers that the use of decontextualised language in the home supports the development of literacy.

Emerging from the studies cited above are two important notions. The first is that family environments have a significant contribution to make with regard to children's literacy development. The second is that oral language ability influences emerging literacy as well as later reading achievement. The following section will explore how these notions have given rise to the initiation of the present study.

### **3. Problem Statement**

With regard to the literacy environments provided by families, there have been dissenting research outcomes relating to families of low socio-economic status. Some studies have found the home environments of low SES families not to be conducive to fostering literacy, while other studies have found variation among low SES families and caution against treating them as a homogenous group. These outcomes prompted consideration of the South African situation, where enquiries identified a paucity of

documented local research regarding emergent literacy in general, much less the contribution of families to children's literacy development. The experiences of children from low SES families were of particular interest since the majority of families in South Africa have historically been politically, educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged. The present study was prompted by a need to explore the exposure of South African pre-schoolers to literacy-promoting experiences in their homes and also to ascertain their levels of literacy knowledge. The underlying motivation for obtaining this information was to determine whether or not children are being exposed to adequate fostering of literacy and hence, whether or not some form of intervention is required.

Having presented a rationale for conducting this study, it is also perhaps necessary to justify its being conducted by a speech-language therapist. In the previous section of this chapter, some of the studies mentioned highlighted the important contribution of oral language to literacy development. These findings also present a strong case for involvement of speech-language therapists in the area of emergent literacy. Literacy has traditionally been viewed as the domain of teachers and remedial teachers. However, increasing awareness of the importance of oral language for the development of literacy has resulted in speech-language therapists becoming involved in this area. Hence, the present study has been undertaken by a speech-language therapist (SLT) and its findings will be explored from the perspective of the SLT's potential role in emergent

literacy development in South Africa.

This study attempted to generate answers to the following research questions :

1. How do the emergent literacy experiences of a group of South African pre-schoolers relate to those identified by British and American studies ?
  
2. Do pre-school children from low- and low-middle class families differ with regard to
  - (a) literacy knowledge
  - (b) exposure to literacy artifacts
  - (c) exposure to uses of literacy within the home ?

In seeking to address these research questions, the following aims were identified :

1. To adapt frameworks developed internationally for assessment of emergent literacy knowledge, for use with a group of South African pre-schoolers.
  
2. To assess the emergent literacy knowledge of two groups of South African pre-school children, from low- and low- middle class families, respectively.

3. To investigate the home supports for literacy of the children in respect of the literacy artifacts and parental uses of literacy within the home.

## CHAPTER THREE : THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter aims to identify those areas of theoretical knowledge which have informed the present study. The first three sections serve to contextualise the domain of emergent literacy and to identify its scope. The two subsequent sections entail aspects of theoretical knowledge which have specific bearing on the methodology employed in the study.

### 1. Literacy

A definition of literacy is currently the cause of much dispute among academics and practitioners. However, for the purposes of this study, it will be defined simply as the ability to read and write. While the definition adopted focuses on reading and writing only, cognisance is taken of the role of oral language abilities in these processes. Traditionally, mastery of the written language form was seen to constitute literacy, but it has been increasingly recognised that oral language is integral to the mastery of written language and is therefore a crucial aspect of literacy (Garton & Pratt, 1989). According to Guttman and Fredericksen (1985), the acquisition of literacy skills includes the transfer of previously established oral discourse skills to reading and writing. There are strong assertions that the development of oral and written aspects of language is simultaneous, interwoven and mutually influential (Dickinson, Wolf & Stotsky, 1993; Hannon, 1995; Sulzby & Zecker, 1991). Early on in the child's development, oral language predominates and it is these early

acquired oral language skills which contribute to the development of reading and writing (Dickinson et al., 1993). In turn, as reading and writing skills develop, they result in further development of oral language.

Having said that the development of oral and written language is interwoven, it must be emphasized that the acquisition of literacy is not merely the superimposition of oral skills on the written modality. On the contrary, it has been identified that there is a particular area of oral language competency which is essential for effective comprehension and production of written language. This competency has been termed decontextualised language, as opposed to contextualised language, which is the currency of informal conversation (Snow, 1983).

Contextualised language is typified by informal conversations with intimates, where background information is shared and there is opportunity for mutual negotiation of meaning (Dickinson, 1991). It may be assumed that the listener has a certain amount of background knowledge, given that the physical and temporal contexts are usually shared. Contextualised language is context-bound and achieves cohesion via paralinguistic and non-verbal channels such as prosody, intonation, gesture and facial expression (Tannen, 1982). In contrast, decontextualised language is required in situations where novel information has to be shared with a partner who has little or no background information, where meaning must be made explicit and the receiver is unable to provide feedback regarding

comprehensibility of the message (Dickinson, 1991). Decontextualised language utilises lexicalisation and complex syntactic structures in order to make connections explicit (Tannen, 1982). Thus with contextualised language, meaning is extrinsic to language and is often implicit, whereas with decontextualised language, meaning is intrinsic to language and made very explicit (Olson, 1977).

Contextualised language develops within informal conversations with intimates and is a normal part of the language acquisition process. Decontextualised language skill, on the other hand, requires a specific kind of exposure to strategies which are not necessarily used in all cultural groups. Essentially decontextualised language skills are crucial for literacy and school-related activities. The use of decontextualisation varies across cultures as a function of patterns of social interaction. In closely knit communities or "societies of intimates" (Givon, cited by Gee, 1985 p. 10) where communication is mainly face-to-face and discourse participants have shared background information there is little need for decontextualisation (Gee, 1985; Peter-Denny, 1991). By contrast, in societies where communication is seldom face-to-face and background information is not shared, there is a greater need for "self-contained" (Peter-Denny, 1991 p.72) messages which are explicit. Thus, the ease with which children develop decontextualised language skill is largely determined by the language strategies of their communities of origin. Although the usage of decontextualised language is culturally determined,

this skill is nevertheless crucial for academic progress. The ability of pre-schoolers to use decontextualised language has been found to relate to success in the later stages of reading development, particularly the ability to comprehend written texts (Snow, 1991).

The need for different language abilities in conversational versus instructional settings is illustrated in Cummins' (1979, cited by Cummins, 1984) concepts of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS is defined as language proficiency in everyday communicative contexts and CALP as the ability to manipulate language in decontextualised academic situations. The context-embedded communication typical of informal conversation allows for the use of situational and paralinguistic cues in interpretation and also for active negotiation of meaning by conversation partners (Cummins, 1984). By contrast, typical classroom interactions and activities are context-reduced, for example news time and oral presentations, where pupils are required to report on events at which their audience, namely the teacher and other pupils, were not present (Cummins, 1984). Although these terms originate from literature on bilingualism, they are equally applicable to a discussion on literacy since they illustrate the basic differences between contextualised versus decontextualised language and emphasize the importance of specialised language skills within academic settings.

The preceding section has explored the interwoven nature of oral and written language as well as the specific oral language competencies which have significance for written language development. It is against this background that the emergent development of literacy during the pre-school years will be discussed in the following section.

## 2. Historical Perspectives on the Development of Literacy in Children

During the 1920s to the 1960s, the **maturational view** of the onset of reading, based on the work of Gesell (1925, cited by Teale & Sulzby, 1986) was prominent. According to this view, children need to acquire a certain level of maturational development before being ready to receive reading instruction. Reading readiness tests were used to identify levels of maturity and if a child was not mature enough, reading instruction was postponed (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). The advent of formal testing to assess reading readiness also meant that specific skills required for reading had been identified (Morrow, 1993). This led to the identification of experiences and activities which could be introduced to facilitate the maturation process and heralded the interventionist **reading readiness** approach, which was prevalent during the 1950s and 1960s (Van Kleeck, 1992). Proponents of this approach held the view that instead of waiting for maturation to take its natural course, educators could introduce programmes to facilitate it (Morrow, 1993; Van Kleeck, 1992). Teale and Sulzby (1986) identified the following assumptions of this approach : firstly, that formal reading instruction can only occur subsequent to the

child's mastery of certain basic skills; secondly, writing should only be introduced once some reading competence has been acquired; thirdly, reading should be taught as a sequence of skills to be mastered and fourthly, that formal, teacher-directed learning should be emphasized. Thus, the reading readiness approach encompasses a skills-orientated view of reading and emphasises the role of instruction.

The reading readiness approach was dominant until fairly recently, when it was challenged by the findings of research into the development of pre-schoolers (Van Kleeck, 1992). The findings of various research studies prompted a change in perspectives on the development of reading. Firstly, research findings regarding the social-interactive nature of language acquisition motivated enquiries into the acquisition of reading, which they perceived as a related activity (Morrow, 1993). Secondly, research into literacy development in the home (Durkin, 1966; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983) revealed that many pre-school children are exposed to a range of literacy activities and experiences in their homes which are conducive to learning to read. Studies also revealed that pre-schoolers acquire a wealth of knowledge about reading and writing prior to actually receiving formal reading instruction (Durkin, 1966; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983).

In the light of the above research findings, a new approach to literacy came into being, namely, the **emergent literacy** approach. The term **emergent literacy** was first introduced by Clay (1966, cited by Morrow, 1993), who

identified that children demonstrate reading abilities before starting school. It is used to refer to the knowledge, skills and orientations which pre-schoolers display in relation to reading, writing and oral language (Holdaway, 1979). The basic assumptions of this approach are, firstly, that children acquire knowledge about language, reading and writing before receiving formal instruction; secondly, that reading, writing and oral language develop concurrently and influence each other; thirdly, that the development of literacy occurs in everyday home and community life, in real and purposeful situations; and fourthly, that children experience print independently but benefit from literacy models in their environment (Morrow, 1993; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). In the literature there is consensus that children's early encounters with print endow them with a "literacy set" (Holdaway, 1979) which facilitates their acquisition of literacy. This literacy set includes attitudes, concepts and skills relating to literacy and is a pre-requisite for successful participation in formal reading programmes (Holdaway, 1979).

Most approaches to emergent literacy are based on the theories of learning proposed by Piaget and Vygotsky. According to Piaget's constructivist account of learning, children participate actively in their development and build knowledge through interacting with the world (Teale, 1982). Theories of literacy development based on this approach view literacy as a process of learning rather than of teaching. Other approaches to literacy focus on acquisition via social interaction as proposed by Vygotsky.

Social-interactionist accounts of literacy development emphasize the role of both teaching and learning, the basic assumption being that the child shapes his or her own learning but that this is determined by the experiences available in the environment (Teale, 1982). An important aspect of the social-interactionist approach is the mediatory function served by adults in the child's development. This is encapsulated in Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the "zone of proximal development". This zone has a lower limit which is the developmental level achieved independently by the child and an upper limit which is the potential level that can be achieved through the guidance of, or in collaboration with, more skilled individuals. The present study adopts a predominantly social-interactionist perspective since it gives prominence to the role of adults in the child's literacy development.

Having traced the course of the emergent literacy approach and identified its theoretical origins, the focus now shifts to the actual process of emergent literacy development.

### **3. The Development of Emergent Literacy :**

Emergent literacy development is said to occur within the context of exposure to models in natural, meaningful and functional settings (Gee, 1991). Much of the literacy learning is said to be implicit, rather than explicit (Purcell-Gates, 1994) and occurs informally during social interaction. By contrast, conventional literacy develops via learning in

formal instructional settings.

In the literature there is widespread support for the idea that literacy is socially transmitted (Reder, 1994; Smith, 1988; Wray, Bloom & Hall, 1989) and there are strong assertions that children's failure to respond to formal reading instruction has its roots in limited literacy socialisation in the home environment (Carragher, 1987). Van Kleeck and Schuele (1987) identify literacy socialisation as a precursor to literacy. They define this literacy socialisation as the acquisition of knowledge about literacy within social and cultural environments. They further state that children acquire a great deal of literacy knowledge by virtue of their membership of and participation in literate societies.

Similarly, Smith (1988) stated that in order for children to master reading and writing they require access to a community of written language users called the "literacy club". Admission to the literacy club allows children to participate in literate activities with more skilled and experienced users of literacy (Minns, 1990; Smith, 1988). Since the family is the first social grouping which the child encounters, it follows that literacy should begin at home. Outside of the home, it is the immediate community which plays a role in literacy socialisation. It is within their primary communities that children develop a sense of the social relevance of literacy. Social interactions around literacy allow children to experience literacy linked to outcomes with real life significance . Prevailing attitudes and values

relating to literacy are conveyed to children during these interactions (Goodman, 1984). In order for them to desire literacy skills, children need to witness the role of literacy in the lives of significant others. Furthermore, by participating in literacy events alongside others, children experience literacy in functional and meaningful ways which allow them to appreciate its value (Ferreiro, 1992; McLane & McNamee, 1990). The recognition of the social significance of literacy is also regarded as a prerequisite for successful participation in formal reading instruction (Taylor, 1983).

Having looked briefly at the process of emergent literacy development, it is pertinent to focus more specifically on the nature of the knowledge and skills which develop.

### 3.1 Areas of Emergent Literacy Knowledge :

Van Kleeck (1990) categorised the areas of emergent literacy knowledge into three broad areas, namely, form or structure, content and use.

- (a) **Form** : This area of knowledge relates to the physical and structural aspects of written language.
- (i) *Conventions of print.* This area of knowledge includes knowing how to handle books correctly and also how print is organised; for example that print goes from left to right and

top to bottom on a page; that spaces in print indicate word boundaries and that punctuation marks serve certain functions (Lomax & McGee, 1987; Van Kleeck, 1990).

- (ii) *Phonological awareness.* Also referred to as phoneme awareness, phonemic analysis, phoneme segmentation and phonological sensitivity, this term refers to the awareness that spoken words consist of individual sounds, the ability to divide words into smaller units of sound and the ability to manipulate the sounds in words (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Catts, 1991; Goswami & Bryant, 1994; Lewkowicz, 1980; Majsterek & Ellenwood, 1995).
- (iii) *Letter naming and writing.* As children engage in scribbling they begin to produce mock letters and upside down or backward letters (Van Kleeck, 1992). This indicates a growing graphic awareness.
- (iv) *Formal relationship of print to speech.* Initially young children have the idea that the pictures in story books correspond to the spoken word, but between three and five years they acquire the understanding that print represents speech and therefore conveys meaning (Goodman, 1986). The ultimate understanding of the relationship of print to speech occurs

when the child realises that each speech sound is roughly represented by one letter (Van Kleeck, 1990).

- (v) *Macrostructures for organising written language.* As a result of participation in joint story book reading experiences, children acquire "story sense" (Gates, 1947, cited by Chall, 1983) or the understanding that written language is structured or organised in particular ways (Feitelson, 1987; Teale, 1984). The structural organisation of stories is captured by story grammars, which are rules describing the syntactic structure of narratives (Westby, 1984). These rules are stored in memory as story schemas, which are "mental structures that represent one's knowledge of the form of a typical story" (Singer, 1990, p.192). Story grammars include a **setting**, which introduces the main character and context, and an **episode** or series of episodes (Westby, 1984). An episode comprises a **beginning / initiating event**; a **reaction to that initiating event**; an **action or attempt**; an **outcome or consequence** and an **ending** (ibidem). Familiarity with story grammars facilitates children's comprehension as well as production of stories (Hudson & Shapiro, 1991).

- (b) **Use** : The functional relevance of written language is an important aspect of emergent literacy knowledge.
- (i) *Functions of print.* Through their own participation in literacy activities and observation of others engaged in these activities, children come to realise that print serves a variety of functions in daily life. The following are functions of print identified by Heath (1980) and Anderson and Stokes (1984) : instrumental, i.e. for accomplishing tasks of daily life; social-interactional, i.e. for maintaining personal relationships; entertainment; memory support; substitute for oral messages; religion; acquiring information; work; provision of permanent records.
- (ii) *Rules for interacting with print.* Snow and Ninio (1986) identified a number of rules for interacting with print which children acquire during joint book reading experiences. These include learning that books are for reading, not manipulating; books control the attention of participants and the topic of conversation; pictures are not things but representations of things; pictures are for naming; pictures can represent events; book events occur outside of real time and books constitute an autonomous, fictional world (Snow & Ninio, 1986).
- (c) **Content** : An understanding of the content of written language requires specialised language knowledge.

- (i) *Language about language.* Via their involvement with print, children come to understand oral language terms referring to written language (Goodman, 1986). They demonstrate understanding of words such as *read, write, draw, page, story, book*, etc, even though they are not able to define them in adult terms (ibidem). A lack of understanding of print-related vocabulary may place a child at risk of failure during early reading instruction because this knowledge tends to be assumed rather than actively taught by teachers (Van Kleeck, 1990).
- (ii) *The decontextualised nature of print.* Interaction with text enables children to acquire the understanding that in the case of written language, meaning is derived solely from the text. by contrast, oral language can be interpreted using linguistic as well as extra-linguistic cues.

The above discussion has included the historical context of the domain of emergent literacy, how emergent literacy development takes place and the areas of knowledge which constitute emergent literacy. The following section will explore the development of conventional literacy and the competencies which are required. However, it must be mentioned that emergent and conventional literacy are not two discrete entities and it is not possible to identify exactly where the one ends and the other begins.

Thus emergent and conventional literacy could be construed as extremities on a continuum.

#### **4. The Development of Conventional Literacy**

While the term "emergent literacy" refers to preliminary knowledge and skills pertaining to literacy, the term "conventional literacy" refers to the ability to read and write in the true sense. While it is acknowledged that the development of reading and writing is interwoven, for purposes of this study greater emphasis will be placed on reading. This section will provide the theoretical background which has guided the choice of assessment tools utilised in the execution of this study in order to obtain information about the literacy knowledge of pre-schoolers. Its focus will include the development of reading as well as the processes and skills involved in reading.

##### **4.1 The Development Of Reading :**

Stackhouse (1990) developed the following model of reading development based on the work of Frith (1985, cited by Stackhouse, 1990).

Pre-literate Phase : the child displays a growing awareness of print and engages in pretend reading and writing.

Logographic Phase : the child is able to recognise environmental print and frequently encountered words by strong reliance on visual processing skills. Words are recognised as visual wholes and maximum use is made of contextual cues such as shape and colour

for recognition of environmental print.

Alphabetic Phase : this phase is marked by developing knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds.

Orthographic Phase : during this phase the child acquires spelling rules and learns irregular spellings.

The pre-literate and logographic phases constitute emergent literacy development since they occur prior to formal reading instruction. The alphabetic phase marks the transition from emergent to conventional reading.

#### **4.2 Processes of Reading :**

The reading process is seen to consist of two main components, namely, mechanical reading, or decoding, and comprehension (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1986; Juel, Griffith & Gough, 1986; Perfetti, 1985). The mechanical stage of reading involves the transformation of print into linguistic symbols (Perfetti, 1985) by the translation of graphemes into their auditory-vocal equivalents (Wiig & Semel, 1984). Following the identification of words in the mechanical stage of reading, the reader is then required to build a representation of the text meaning in order to achieve comprehension (Perfetti, 1985).

#### **4.3 The Skills of Reading :**

The reading process is a complex one which requires many skills and

abilities. The following have been identified as important for learning to read : the ability to interpret pictures; the ability to recognise signs; book handling skills; story sense; an interest in reading (Gates, 1947, cited by Chall, 1983); phonological awareness or auditory perceptual skills; visual perceptual skills; left-right directionality and good oral language skills (Carrow-Woolfolk & Lynch, 1982). Grove and Hauptfleisch (1986) also identified general health, neurological functioning, visual and auditory acuity, speech defects, body orientation, language ability and intellectual ability as factors which could influence reading performance.

It is evident that both the mechanical and comprehension aspects of reading are influenced by a plethora of factors. For purposes of the present study, the following areas of skill and knowledge are regarded as crucial for successful reading and therefore significant in any attempt to assess emergent reading abilities. These areas have been identified with reference mainly to other studies involving assessment of emergent literacy abilities (Johns, 1980; Lomax & McGee, 1987; Purcell-Gates, 1994; Teale, Hiebert & Chittenden, 1987).

**(i) Concepts about Print :**

This entity is understood to include an awareness of the meaningful nature of print; knowledge of the conventions of print, such as reading from left to right; awareness of the functional significance of reading and the ability to recognise print embedded in environmental contexts (Lomax

& McGee, 1987).

(a) The awareness that print is meaningful is a fundamental insight required for readiness to receive formal reading instruction (Van Kleeck, 1990). The expectation that a written message will be meaningful provides the reader with the motivation to decode the print in order to uncover its meaning. The absence of this expectation, relegates the process of reading to the level of a purely mechanical task.

(b) Knowledge of the conventions of print includes knowing how to orientate a book correctly; paging from front to back; knowing that print is read from left to right and top to bottom on a page; understanding that spaces in print indicate word boundaries (Lomax & McGee, 1987; Van Kleeck, 1990). Essentially, this knowledge incorporates an understanding of "how books work" (Snowball, 1985). Much of this knowledge is acquired during the pre-school years via exposure to print and participation in joint book reading experiences (Minns, 1990; Snowball, 1985; Teale, 1984). Certain advanced aspects of this knowledge require rudimentary reading skills and therefore are only acquired subsequent to reading instruction. Advanced print concepts include an understanding of punctuation marks and the ability to recognise incorrect letter order within words (Johns, 1980). The beginning reader who has already acquired the basic conventions of print is enabled to focus his/her energies on decoding and deriving meaning from print, thereby lessening the demands of the

reading task.

(c) Awareness of the functional significance of print is an important factor determining the child's motivation to learn to read and is intimately related to the role of literacy in the home environment (Carragher, 1987; Taylor, 1983). The child who is aware that literacy can be used to achieve a whole range of purposes will be highly motivated to acquire literacy skills in order to utilise them.

(d) Recognition of environmental print is the ability to identify print such as signs, labels and print on packaging, which occur in fixed and predictable contexts in the environment. In identifying environmental print, the child relies on cues such as colour, shape and background (Stackhouse, 1990). This skill does not represent true decoding, but may be considered as a rudimentary reading skill (Mason, 1980). The ability of a pre-school child to recognise environmental print is evidence of the awareness that print is meaningful and of a growing attention to the physical features of print. Thus, while this ability does not seem to have a bearing on later reading performance, it serves to indicate a "tuning in" to literacy on the part of the young child.

**(ii) Oral Language Abilities:**

According to Chall (1983), oral language is a strong predictor of early reading success. The notion of oral language as a significant factor in

reading performance is echoed by many other academics and researchers (Carrow-Woolfolk & Lynch, 1982; Morrow, 1993; Tunmer & Bowey, 1984, Van Kleeck & Schuele, 1987). There is consensus that reading requires knowledge of all aspects of oral language, namely, phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics and pragmatics (Carrow-Woolfolk & Lynch, 1982; Morrow, 1993). Menyuk and Flood (1981) identified the potential impact of deficits in the various components of language on the reading process :

"Children with speech perception and/or production problems should have difficulty in decoding words. Children who are having problems in lexical retrieval should have difficulty in comprehending a word after they have phonologically decoded it. Children with syntactic problems will have difficulty in understanding sentential relations in written sentences. Children who have difficulty in understanding sentential gists in oral discourse will have difficulty in understanding and recalling stories and passages" (p18).

Wells (1987) found command of oral language at age five to be a significant predictor of reading comprehension at age seven. With reference to the work of other researchers, Carrow-Woolfolk and Lynch (1982) identified the following language characteristics of poor readers : smaller speaking vocabularies; less appropriate use of grammar and syntax; poorer verbal fluency and organisation of verbal concepts; poorer word retrieval; history of oral language problems; differences in morphological

usage compared to good readers and poorer listening comprehension.

In addition to the more generalised oral language competencies, the ability to comprehend and produce decontextualised language is considered essential for literacy (Snow, 1983, 1991). In essence, skill at decontextualising language involves the application of general oral language competence to communication situations in which the participants do not have recourse to extralinguistic cues, such as is the case with reading text. This ability is central to the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1984). Decontextualised language skills have been identified as crucial for academic performance in general and more specifically for skilled reading (Snow, 1983, 1991). Norris and Bruning (1988) evaluated the use of decontextualised language in the narratives of 150 high- and low-achieving kindergarten and first grade pupils. They found that the high achievers in the early stages of reading instruction had better decontextualised language skills than low achievers. Decontextualised language skills which have been identified as particularly important for literacy are the comprehension and production of narratives and the ability to produce formal word definitions (Pellegrini, 1985; Snow, Cancini, Gonzalez & Shriberg, 1989).

Narrative skills incorporate the ability to decontextualise language as well as an understanding of temporality and causality (Pellegrini, 1985). Narratives do not constitute a homogenous group, but rather include a

range of different genres which fall within three broad categories : **scripts**, or general descriptions of what usually happens during an event; **personal narratives**, which are accounts of specific personal experiences and **stories** or fictional accounts (Hudson & Shapiro, 1991). **Personal narratives** are usually reported in the past tense and organised around a high point according to Labov (1972), who identified the following components of structural organisation for personal narratives : *Introducers* and *Abstracts*, which respectively gain the listener's attention and summarize the story; *Orientations* identify the setting; *Complicating actions* are actions which lead up to the high point; *Evaluations* indicate the point of the story; *Resolutions* indicate outcomes or solutions and *Codas* bring the story to a close. These structural elements begin to occur in children's narratives from two to eight years. Evaluative devices may be observed in the conversational narratives of two-year-olds, while codas have been found to appear as late as eight years onwards (Hudson & Shapiro, 1991). The structural organisation of **stories** in terms of story grammars has been discussed previously and will therefore not be repeated. Since scripts were not been included in the narrative types sampled, they will not be discussed. Scripts will also not be discussed, because they were not included in the methodology of the study. The reason for excluding scripts is that they are not considered to generate appropriate samples for narrative analysis (Malan, 1994).

The development of narrative competencies in children occurs via their

exposure to narratives in their primary communities (Heath, 1986). However, the narrative structures described above are typically western middle class and are not applicable to the narratives produced in many ethnic communities. Cross-cultural differences in narrative production have increasingly become the focus of international research, but local research in this area is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, regardless of diversity in cultural narrative practices, it is precisely these decontextualised narrative skills which are brought to bear on both the comprehension and production of literate style narratives predominantly encountered in written texts. Westby (1985) described narratives as forming the transition between oral and literate language styles, since they combine aspects of both styles. Snow and Dickinson (1990) asserted that narrative skills are better predictors of literacy achievement than language in conversational settings but were unable to explain the precise nature of the link between narrative skill and reading achievement.

The ability to provide formal or dictionary-type word definitions is another decontextualised language skill which has been found to relate to literacy (Snow, Cancini, Gonzalez & Shriberg, 1989). Snow et al. found that children's scores on a formal definitions task correlated positively with their reading and language scores on the California Achievement Test. Skill at providing definitions requires not only knowledge of word meanings but also mastery of the "definitional genre" (Snow et al., 1989). It is proposed that this definitional genre is acquired as a result of particular kinds of

verbal interactions at home and at school (ibidem). The role of schooling in the acquisition of the definitional genre is acknowledged (Snow, 1990) and it would seem likely that verbal interactions at home which have a strong school-like orientation, act in a facilitatory manner. Furthermore, because of the influence of schooling in the development of this skill, it is expected that pre-school children would demonstrate partial rather than complete competence in this area.

(iii) **Metalinguistic awareness** is a language-related skill which is considered to be crucial for literacy development (Van Kleeck & Schuele, 1987) and emerges in children aged between four and eight years (Tunmer & Cole, 1985). It may be defined as the ability to focus attention on language and think about, analyze and talk about its nature, structure and functions (Garton & Pratt, 1989; Owens, 1988). Metalinguistic ability involves treating language as an object of thought, in contrast to using language as a system for the production and comprehension of sentences (Owens, 1988; Tunmer & Cole, 1985). Whereas normal language processing is automatic, metalinguistic processing involves conscious control (Tunmer & Cole, 1985). Tunmer and Bowey (1984) identified the following categories of metalinguistic awareness : phonological awareness, word awareness, form awareness and pragmatic awareness. Phonological and word awareness refer to the awareness of the basic units of language, namely, phonemes and words. Phonological awareness skills include the ability to segment words into their constituent phonemes as well as

recognition and production of rhyme. Among word awareness skills is the ability to segment sentences into words and to separate words from their referents. Form awareness relates to structural representations of linguistic meanings of utterances and is manifested in the ability to make judgements of grammatical and semantic acceptability. Pragmatic awareness relates to the communication process as a whole and includes awareness of inconsistencies and message inadequacy. Phonological and word awareness are considered important for decoding, whereas form and pragmatic awareness are viewed as vital contributors to reading comprehension (Tunmer & Cole, 1985). While metalinguistic skills are regarded as pre-requisites for reading, the relationship between the two is not uni-directional, since the ability to read also contributes to further increases in metalinguistic ability (Tunmer & Bowey, 1984).

The metalinguistic skill which has been most strongly associated with reading skill is phonological awareness (PA). The ability to segment words into their constituent phonemes is a precursor to phoneme-grapheme correspondence, which is the realisation that there are systematic correspondences between the phonemes of spoken language and the graphemes of written language (Tunmer & Cole, 1985). Extensive research has shown that PA skills during the pre-school years are significant predictors of reading ability (Bryant & Bradley, 1983; Bryant, Bradley, Maclean & Crossland, 1989; Lundberg, Frost & Petersen, 1988, cited by

Lundberg, 1994; Muter, 1994). PA skills have also been found to be an important discriminating factor between good and poor readers (Swank & Catts, 1994). Juel, Griffith and Gough (1986) devised and validated a model of literacy acquisition which revealed that PA is crucial for literacy. Awareness of rhyme has been identified as a particularly important PA skill and its acquisition during the pre-school years has been found to be a significant predictor of later reading performance. Bryant and Bradley (1983) identified a predictive relationship between children's rhyming ability at age four and their success in reading at age seven. Assessments of PA usually include some of the following tasks : identifying words with the same initial sounds; segmenting words into syllables or phonemes; blending of phonemes or syllables to form words; manipulating phonemes by adding them to or deleting them from words; transposing syllables or phonemes within words (Adams, 1990, cited by Muter, 1994; Majsterek & Ellenwood, 1995).

**(iv) Phoneme-grapheme Correspondence** or **letter-sound knowledge** refers to the relationship between a single phoneme and the letter or grapheme used to represent it (Goswami & Bryant, 1994). Mason (1980) viewed letter knowledge as a precursor to the more skilled process of reading by letter-sound analysis. According to Bradley and Bryant (1983), phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge in combination are important for the acquisition of reading skill. Furthermore, Juel, Griffith and Gough (1986) identified PA as a necessary condition for the development

of phoneme-grapheme correspondence. In terms of the model devised and researched by Lomax and McGee (1987), phoneme-grapheme correspondence only develops once the child has acquired some degree of phonological awareness. While phoneme-grapheme correspondence knowledge is generally acquired through systematic teaching, Mason (1980) found that it developed early in children whose parents and teachers drew their attention to environmental print, read and reread alphabet books and stories, and encouraged printing and identification of words.

The different literacy-related skills acquire prominence at different stages of literacy development as well as at different stages of the school curriculum due to the qualitative changes in reading demands. During the early school years, the emphasis is on the acquisition of mechanical reading ability, which requires skills such as phonological awareness, phoneme-grapheme correspondence (Chall, 1983) and visual perceptual skills. Once the mechanical aspects of reading have been mastered, the focus shifts towards reading comprehension, which requires decontextualised oral language skills (Chall, 1983; Snow, 1991). The skills required for reading have been found to have their roots in various emergent literacy experiences. For example, exposure to rhymes has been found to foster phonemic awareness, which, in turn, is related to decoding skill, whereas opportunities for using extended discourse such as explanations or personal narratives promotes the development of decontextualised language skills,

which are essential for reading comprehension (Snow, 1991).

In addition to the abovementioned skills and knowledge, the influence of intellectual ability on the acquisition of literacy also merits consideration. There is strong support for the view that IQ exerts a strong influence on reading performance (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1986; Juel et al., 1986; Muter, 1994), although there are differing views with regard to the nature of its influence. Muter (1994) identified IQ as a predictor of early literacy skills, while Juel et al. (1986) asserted that IQ influences PA skills, which in turn are strong predictors of literacy abilities. According to Grove and Hauptfleisch (1986), while it may be possible for a child with poor intellectual ability to master mechanical reading, there are likely to be difficulties with reading comprehension.

During the Harvard Home-School study of Language and Literacy Development, an emergent literacy assessment battery, which included the Test of Non-verbal Intelligence, was administered to subjects. Correlational analysis of the scores on each of the subtests revealed that there was no relationship between scores of non-verbal intelligence and other test scores (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991). However, this finding does not exclude the possibility that there is a correlation between literacy and overall intelligence. In fact, in view of the role of language in reading ability it would seem plausible that literacy skills are strongly correlated with verbal intelligence.

The foregoing discussion has emphasized the competencies required for successful reading. These skills begin to develop during the emergent literacy phase and often continue to improve subsequent to the acquisition of conventional literacy. Having discussed the skills needed for literacy, the contribution of family environments to the development of those skills will now be explored.

## **5. The Impact of Family Environments on the Development of Children's Literacy :**

Since one of the aims of the present study involves the investigation of children's home supports for literacy, the following section is a synthesis of current theory pertaining to those aspects of family environments which impact upon children's literacy development. This section provides the theory which has informed the second aspect of the methodology of this study, namely the investigation of children's home supports for literacy. The most important home environment factors which have been found to influence literacy development are the physical environment, interpersonal interactions around literacy and activities promotive of literacy. The socio-economic status of families is also regarded as a significant factor, although this is a contentious issue.

### **5.1 Physical Aspects of the Home Environment :**

According to Leichter (1984 p.40), "The level of economic and educational resources, the types of visual stimulation and the physical arrangements of

the family set the stage for the child's experience with literacy". A literate home environment should therefore include a variety of literacy artifacts such as books, newspapers and magazines as well as educational resources such as school-related books, games, etc. (Chall, 1983; Elley, 1992; Leichter, 1984; Neuman, 1986). In addition to the obviously literate items such as books, most households abound with other forms of print such as food packaging, labels on toiletries and medicines, shopping lists, etc. (Leichter, 1984). Following ethnographic research into home and family environments, Leichter compiled a list of the literacy artifacts most commonly found in households. Exposure to literacy artifacts is regarded as being essential for the development of early concepts about print as well for encouraging leisure reading in older children.

In a study of fifth grade students, Neuman (1986) found a relationship between children's leisure reading and the availability of books, newspapers and magazines in the home. An international study conducted by the International Association for Evaluation of Education on nine- and fourteen-year old pupils revealed that the availability of books in the home and school is a factor which influences reading achievement (Elley, 1992). A comparison of avid and infrequent readers conducted by Ingham (1982) identified that avid readers owned 50 or more books, whereas infrequent readers owned less than 10.

## 5.2 Interpersonal Interactions around Literacy :

In the literature, there are frequent references to the role of adults in children's literacy development. Minns (1990) and Smith (1988) argue that children learn to read and write by participating in literate activities along with more skilled and experienced users of literacy. Reder (1994), with reference to the work of Holdaway (1979), identified the following characteristics of social engagements which promote literacy development: (1) observation of other individuals participating in literacy activities; (2) collaboration with others in literacy activities; (3) opportunities to practice literacy activities, and (4) supportive feedback regarding the child's independent performance of literacy activities.

Although literate interactions with adults in general is important for literacy development, the involvement of parents or primary caregivers is paramount. Hannon (1995) delineated four aspects of the role of parents in fostering children's literacy development : firstly, providing opportunities for learning; secondly, recognising and valuing children's achievements; thirdly, interacting with children around literacy activities, and fourthly, providing models of literate behaviour.

Parental modelling of literacy is important, especially in view of the fact that role models have a significant impact on children's behaviour. Taylor (1983) aptly states that for literacy to assume social significance for children, it must be observed by them to be socially significant in the lives

of adult role models. In addition, a vital aspect of engagements with literacy is mediation by adults (Feitelson, 1987; Teale & Sulzby, 1987). As mediators, adults serve to help children to understand and make sense of literacy experiences. Mediation may take the form of expanding on literacy experiences, relating them either to past events or daily life, or scaffolding (Heath, 1982; Snow, 1983). Scaffolding is a process in which adults provide support for learners by "trying to close the gap between specific task requirements and the skill level of the learner" (Eisenhart & Cutts-Dougherty, 1991, p.40). Scaffolding of literacy activities may be effected by subdividing tasks into manageable chunks, providing prompts, etc. As the child's competence increases, so the amount of support or scaffolding is reduced until he or she is able to participate independently in those activities.

Parents are also responsible for creating particular emotional and motivational climates in the home with regard to literacy. The emotional and motivational climate is influenced by parents' aspirations for their children, their prior experiences of literacy (Leichter, 1984; Neuman, 1986) and their current uses of literacy. Taylor (1994) asserted that the transmission of literacy styles and values occurs indirectly and often subconsciously within families unless parents make conscious efforts to alter these patterns.

### **5.3 Activities which Contribute to Children's Emerging Literacy :**

Various scholars have identified a range of experiences which promote literacy development. These promotive experiences differ with regard to the particular aspects of literacy which they promote as well as the stages of literacy development at which their contributions become apparent. It must be also be emphasized that many of these experiences or activities require mediation by adults in order to yield maximum benefit for the child. The activities described below should therefore be considered with reference to the patterns of adult-child interaction discussed in the previous section.

Prior to their engagement with overt literacy events, young children participate in symbolic activities involving talking, playing and drawing (McLane & McNamee, 1990). Although at face value, these activities appear to have little or no connection with reading and writing, they provide the foundations for these activities. Storytelling, pretend play and drawing involve use of symbols in the form of words, objects or marks on paper (McLane & McNamee, 1990). These activities encourage children to exercise imagination and move beyond their immediate contexts, both of which they are required to do when reading or writing stories (ibidem). This ability to understand and create decontextualisation is of great importance for reading and writing. Storytelling or narrative also requires the ability to decontextualise language, since it involves talking about events outside of the temporal or physical context (Pellegrini, 1985; Snow,

1983).

Activities which have implications for the development of mechanical reading skills involve rhyming and sound play. Studies have shown that children with good rhyme awareness at school entry make better progress in reading and spelling than those who lack this skill. Connected to rhyme awareness is phoneme awareness, which is the ability to segment words into component sounds. Exposure to a number and variety of literacy artifacts (Leichter, 1984) is an important aspect of the child's initiation into a literate society. This exposure makes the child aware that print occurs in many fonts and colours and appears on a range of items, from books to medicine bottles. Repeated encounters with print in specific contexts, eg. labels on cans, facilitate the recognition of environmental print, which marks the beginning of reading. This ability to recognise print, albeit context dependant, is highly motivating since it helps to create in children the positive expectation that they will become successful readers.

The activity which is most overtly connected with the acquisition of literacy is joint book reading with adults. It has been given much coverage in the literature and is also the cause of some controversy. On the one hand there is a strong argument for a link between early book reading experience and success in school. The outcome of a study conducted by Wells (1987) revealed that pre-schoolers' performance on a test of literacy knowledge was a good predictor of reading success at age seven. Furthermore,

scores of literacy knowledge correlated highly with pre-school book reading experiences. Durkin (1966, cited by Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994) compared a group of children who were early readers with a group who were not. Having matched subjects for IQ, she found that the groups were determined by the frequency of joint book reading experiences. Feitelson (1987) conducted a study comparing children from schools where achievement on average was poor and children from schools with good achievement records. The children in the better group were found to own more books and to have had greater exposure to joint book reading.

In contrast, Anderson and Stokes (1984) contest the emphasis on book reading and argue that it is not the only source of literacy experience. However, they do concede that book-related experiences provide better preparation for the school's approach to teaching literacy. It has been argued that it is not the book reading experiences of pre-schoolers per se which are significant, but rather the interactions which surround these events (Beals, De Temple & Dickinson, 1994; Heath, 1983; Snow, Nathan & Perlman, 1985). The ways in which adults mediate children's encounters with text has been emphasised (Feitelson, 1987; Teale & Sulzby, 1987). However, existing cross-cultural differences in book reading practices and mediation styles (Heath, 1983; Teale & Sulzby, 1987) and the paucity of research in this area preclude the issuing of conclusive statements about the significance of book reading.

Despite the problems with research in this area, as well as the variations in patterns of adult mediation of book reading, there is nevertheless consensus that there is a wealth of literacy knowledge which may be accrued from book reading experiences. Exposure to books helps children acquire physical book handling skills such as page turning (Minns, 1990) as well as the conventions of print which include knowing the structure of books, that print is read from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page. Via storybook reading children become aware that print is meaningful and that stories have predictable structures or schema (Feitelson, 1987; Teale, 1984). They also acquire a metalinguistic awareness of print which includes understanding such concepts as words, sentences and pages (Teale, 1984). In addition to the vocabulary development which results from book reading, children also become familiar with the more formal, decontextualised language of written texts (Feitelson, 1987; Teale, 1984). A further contribution of book reading experiences is that they provide opportunity for interaction with text in collaboration with a caring adult. This positive affective climate serves to deepen the bond between parent and child and also to foster positive attitudes toward reading. The frequency of early joint book reading experiences has also been found to be a factor which influences whether or not children engage in independent leisure reading later on (Ingham, 1982; Neuman, 1986).

Early exposure to literacy-orientated experiences and activities creates a

knowledge base upon which later reading instruction can build, thereby facilitating the child's transition to literacy. It also engenders positive attitudes towards literacy, thereby stimulating an appropriate mindset towards reading instruction.

#### **5.4 Socio-economic Status of the Family :**

Studies of socio-economic status (SES) and reading achievement at school have identified considerable differences between high and low socio-economic groups (Douglas, 1964 and Davie, Butler & Goldstein, 1972, cited by Hannon, 1987). Researchers have used the following indicators of socio-economic status : parents' educational level, occupational status and income (Carragher, 1987; Tizard & Hughes, 1984). According to Miller (1991), occupational status is the best predictor of social class. Furthermore, education usually determines occupation, which, in turn, determines income (ibidem). Teale (1986) also used quality of housing and status of dwelling area as measures of socio-economic status.

In the literature there is much support for the view that children from low SES families typically start school at a disadvantage in comparison with their peers from higher SES families and that this situation persists and may even worsen during later schooling (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994). Emergent literacy studies have also established that the literacy practices of high SES families tend to facilitate the transition of their children towards conventional reading (Snow, 1983; Heath, 1983; McCormick & Mason,

1986). Family literacy practices in high socio-economic groups tend to be congruent with those valued by the schools and consequently children from these environments learn to read more easily and successfully than their low SES counterparts. Wells (1985) found that better educated parents, especially mothers, engaged more frequently in story reading with their children, an activity which is associated with early reading success.

Since parental education has been identified as a socio-economic variable (Davies, 1963, cited by Share, Jorm, Maclean, Matthews & Waterman, 1983; Tizard & Hughes, 1984), this implies that parents in higher socio-economic groups read to their children more frequently. In their study of the emergent literacy knowledge of kindergarten children from high and low socio-economic groups, McCormick and Mason (1986) found that children from low socio-economic groups had less knowledge of letters, letter sounds and words and that their parents provided less support for the development of pre-reading skills. However, they did acknowledge that the parents in the lower socio-economic group were willing to assist their children if given clear guidelines.

Research findings indicating SES differences in parental support for literacy have led to the perception that families of low socio-economic status do not provide their pre-school children with experiences which are promotive of literacy. Anderson and Stokes (1984) contested this notion very strongly, stating that these children do not have fewer promotive

experiences but rather that they have different kinds of literacy experiences. This finding concurs with the work of Heath (1983). However Anderson and Stokes (1984) and Teale (1986) found that storybook reading was not a frequently-occurring practice in low SES families. Yet it is precisely this practice which has been found to correlate with reading achievement at school (Wells, 1987). As has been mentioned earlier however, it may not be book reading experiences per se which impact on literacy development but rather the concomitant interactions. Purcell-Gates, L'Allier and Smith (1995) conducted a study of 20 low SES families and found that they differed greatly with regard to literacy practices. They concluded that "...the operative factor for emergent literacy opportunities is not socio-economic status. It is family literacy practices which determine young children's experiences with print in the home" (p. 577).

Studies such as those by Purcell-Gates et al.(1995), Anderson and Stokes(1984) and Heath (1983) reflect an increasing disenchantment with the emphasis on socio-economic status differences in children's literacy competencies, an approach which tends to perpetuate a class-based approach to people and also encourages false assumptions on the basis of social class. Researchers are instead beginning to focus more on the family environments and the extent to which they do or do not support literacy (Purcell-Gates, L'Allier & Smith, 1995; Toomey & Sloane, 1994). For instance, Toomey and Sloane (1994) conducted a pre-school programme

to encourage family book reading, prior to the commencement of which they obtained measures of SES, family literacy environments, family support for school learning, parental illiteracy, ethnicity and children's literacy competencies. They found that measures of family literacy environments correlated more strongly with children's literacy competencies than did SES. Thus we are cautioned against overemphasizing the influence of socio-economic status. On the other hand, it needs to be acknowledged that factors such as education and income, which are measures of socio-economic status, influence both the nature and quantity of literacy artifacts and activities within the home. Families with greater financial resources will be able to acquire literacy artifacts more easily. They are also more likely to engage in leisure activities which are mediated by literacy, such as planning holidays with the use of travel brochures, making use of menus at restaurants, reading programmes at the theatre, etc. (Teale, 1984). By contrast, parents who have limited education are less likely to place an emphasis on literate activities in their homes, although in some cases, their own lack of education motivates them to promote their children's literacy.

Thus, it may be argued that it is not the family's SES per se which determines its capacity for promoting children's literacy. Instead, it is the determinants of SES such as education, occupational status and income which influence the extent to which and the manner in which families are able to foster literacy. However, in the same way as it cannot be assumed

that all families with favourable socio-economic circumstances actually do promote literacy within their home environments, it must be acknowledged that many low SES families are successfully able to foster children's literacy despite their circumstances.

The current chapter has explored the theoretical background to the study. The following chapter will provide pertinent background information on the community within which the study was conducted.

## **CHAPTER FOUR : THE LOCATION OF THE STUDY : THE KENSINGTON-FACTRETON COMMUNITY**

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the study with regard to forces which impact upon the lives of the subjects and which are also considered to have influenced the outcomes. The three forces are socio-economic status, education and language.

The sample for the study was drawn from the communities of Kensington and Factreton, which are adjacent suburbs situated approximately eight kilometres from central Cape Town. These areas were formerly designated as "coloured" according to the Group Areas Act of 1958. This legislation determined that each of the race groups identified were only granted residence in specifically demarcated areas. The historical status of Kensington-Factreton as a "coloured" residential area has impacted on the socio-economic, educational and linguistic profiles of the community.

### **1. Socio-economic Status:**

Since socio-economic status (SES) was one of the methodological criteria in the selection of subjects, it is important to provide an indication of the overall socio-economic milieu within this community. The residents of Kensington and Factreton are of middle, low-middle and low socio-economic status, with the latter two groups predominating. The area includes both economic and sub-economic housing, as defined in common

parlance. Factreton consists predominantly of sub-economic housing with primitive facilities. However, these are interspersed by sub-economic dwellings which have been tastefully upgraded subsequent to residents being given the option of purchasing their homes from the local municipality. By contrast, Kensington consists of economic housing on a continuum ranging from dwellings in a state of disrepair to the more affluent and aesthetically pleasing. The income levels within the two areas also indicate a contrast in living standards : during the 1991 census it was found that the average monthly per capita income was R462 in Kensington and R289 in Factreton (Malan, 1996b).

## **2. Education :**

In order to understand the educational situation of children and their families in the Kensington-Factreton area, a historical perspective is required. As is the case within other "coloured" communities, schooling in this area attests strongly to the discriminatory practices of the former apartheid regime. All the schools in the area are governed by the erstwhile Department of Education and Culture (DEC) which controlled "coloured" education. School buildings are typically dilapidated, poorly constructed and lacking in facilities such as laboratories and sports fields. The unsatisfactory physical environments coupled with inadequate equipment and high teacher-pupil ratios have severely compromised the education of children in "coloured" communities. The majority of parents and grandparents of the children participating in the study are products of this

grossly inadequate education system.

Subsequent to the demise of apartheid and the inception of the government of national unity in South Africa, steps have been taken to redress past imbalances in the education system. However, schools for African pupils, governed by the former Department of Education and Training (DET), are receiving priority because they have historically had even poorer educational opportunities than pupils in "coloured" schools. In order to redress past imbalances in education, the new unitary education department has introduced rationalisation measures within DEC schools. Rationalisation has entailed reducing the number of staff at DEC schools via offers of voluntary retrenchment and redeployment for teachers. This has led to concomitant increases in pupil-teacher ratios. The current situation is therefore likely to impact negatively on education within the Kensington-Factreton community, amongst others.

Over and above the poor quality of education which members of this community have been subjected to, the educational levels achieved have also been low. According to Malan (1996b), 62% and 81% of employed residents of Kensington and Factreton respectively, have some level of primary school education. Successful completion of standard ten has only been achieved by 21% of employed people in Kensington and 11% in Factreton. The low levels of education attained by residents of this community have implications for occupational status, income, lifestyles and

family values and thus exert a pervasive influence on the milieu in which children are raised.

### **3. Language :**

Patterns of language usage in the Kensington and Factreton communities are fairly typical of those of the Cape Flats area in general. The name "Cape Flats" refers to those residential areas traditionally allocated to "coloureds" during the apartheid era. Most residents of the Cape Flats speak both English and Afrikaans and intensive contact between the two languages over the years has resulted in phonological, syntactic and morphological convergence, code-mixing and code-switching between English and Afrikaans (Malan, 1996a). This has given rise to non-standard dialects of English and Afrikaans which are peculiar to this region. Of the two languages spoken on the Cape Flats, English is perceived to have higher status, which is manifested in the phenomenon whereby many Afrikaans-dominant parents choose to have their children educated via the medium of English (Malan, 1996a). In scenarios in which Afrikaans-dominant parents introduce English to their children in the home, these children are essentially acquiring a second language variety of English as their first language (Malan, 1996a).

The Kensington and Factreton areas are no exception to this growing trend towards the use of English in Cape Flats communities. As a result, many schools which were formerly Afrikaans-medium are now dual-medium due

to the increasing demand for English instruction. The proportion of English-versus Afrikaans-medium classes at the schools is generally determined by their physical location : English is dominant in Kensington, which is the relatively higher socio-economic area, whereas in Factreton, Afrikaans is more dominant (Malan, 1996b). The link between language usage and social class became evident when subjects were being selected for this study. The sample was drawn from the Kenmere and Factreton primary schools, the former situated in Kensington and the latter in Factreton. Kenmere primary was originally Afrikaans-medium and has only provided English-medium instruction since 1985. Factreton Primary has been a dual medium school since the 1970s. Initially the school was predominantly Afrikaans, but, of late, English has become the dominant medium of instruction. While both schools have in recent years undergone a gradual shift towards providing more classes with English as a medium of instruction, greater difficulty was encountered in finding English-speaking pre-schoolers at the predominantly low SES Factreton Primary School. This resulted in the subject groups being of unequal size, which is a problem discussed further in the following chapter.

As a consequence of the language characteristics of Cape Flats communities, the majority of children have little or no exposure to standard English, a situation which has negative implications for schooling, where the use of standard English is called for. Furthermore, children exposed predominantly to dialectal varieties of English also tend to perform poorly

on commonly used language tests which are more suited to monolingual speakers of standard English (Malan, 1996a). The lack of standardised tests suitable for local populations thus places these children at a disadvantage and is also problematic for language practitioners in that they have difficulty in obtaining a true reflection of children's linguistic skills.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that children in this community and other Cape Flats communities are exposed to linguistic environments which impact negatively on their performance in formal educational settings. Having briefly sketched the socio-economic, educational and linguistic profiles of the target community of the study, the focus shifts more specifically to the implementation of the study. This will be documented in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE :        **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter constitutes a detailed account of how the study was conducted. It includes three main sections pertaining to aims, subjects and procedures.

### **1. Aims of the Study**

- 1.1 To adapt frameworks developed internationally for assessment of emergent literacy knowledge for use with a group of South African pre-schoolers.
- 1.2 To assess the emergent literacy knowledge of two groups of South African pre-school children, from low-middle and low socio-economic status families, respectively.
- 1.3. To investigate the home supports for literacy of the children in respect of literacy artifacts and parental uses of literacy within the home.

### **2. Research Design**

The study employed an eclectic design in that it incorporated elements of

both quantitative and qualitative methodology. Subjects for this small, two group design study were selected by means of purposive sampling. One group comprised 16 subjects and the other, eight. The research took the form of a survey, with two main methods of data collection. The first method involved the administration of an assessment battery to two groups of subjects. The second involved structured interviews to obtain responses to a questionnaire. The questionnaire included both closed and open ended questions. Both sets of data were collected during October and November 1995.

### **3. Subjects**

The study included 24 subjects between 5 years 9 months and 6 years 5 months of age, with an approximate mean age of 6 years and one month. There were two groups, namely low-middle- and low socio-economic class, comprising 16 and eight subjects respectively. The subjects in Group A were from low-middle class families and were enrolled in the English-medium pre-primary class at Kenmere Primary School. The eight subjects in Group B were from low class families and attended the dual medium pre-primary class at Factreton Primary School. All subjects were residents of the Kensington-Factreton communities.

### 3.1 Selection Criteria Employed :

- (i) **Area of Residence :** Only pupils residing within the Kensington-Factreton area were targeted. This area is an historically older and more stable community than most other Cape Flats "coloured" communities. Furthermore, its residents range from working class to lower-middle and middle class and, in contrast to other communities, it has a mixture of privately owned, economic properties as well as a sub-economic housing scheme (Malan, 1996b).
  
- (ii) **Socio-economic Status :** Children from low- and low-middle-class families were targeted for the study. Parental occupations, as well as the teachers' assessments, were used to determine the SES of subjects. The parents themselves provided additional information during the interviews. In the low class group, the parents were mainly employed as blue collar workers such as operators. The low-middle class parents were employed mainly as skilled artisans or clerks. The latter group thus included blue and white collar workers.
  
- (iii) **Developmental Status :** Only children considered to be within normal developmental limits were regarded as suitable candidates for the study since delays would be likely to have a negative influence on performance of assessment tasks.

The class teachers were asked to identify any pupils who were not, in their estimation, functioning within normal limits. These children were then excluded from the study.

- (iv) **Language:** Only first language English speaking children were selected, due to all the assessment materials being in English. However, the association between language and social class in this community meant that children from low-middle socio-economic families would more likely be English-speaking, while those from low class families were more likely to be Afrikaans-dominant. The need for English-speaking subjects thus resulted in the two groups being of unequal size because it was not possible to obtain a similar number of working class children who were first language English speakers.

### 3.2 Selection Procedure :

Kenmere and Factreton Primary schools were targeted as sources of subjects because of their location, that is, the former being in the relatively higher socio-economic area of Kensington and the latter in the poorer Factreton area.

Written consent was sought from the parents of all the

children who fulfilled the above criteria. Of the 31 pupils in the English pre-school class at Kenmere Primary, four were identified by the teacher as being developmentally delayed; six pupils lived outside the Kensington-Factreton area; three parents denied consent and two pupils did not return their consent forms. This left a total of 16 pupils available as subjects.

At Factreton Primary, the pre-school class was dual medium and the teacher was only able to identify ten English-speaking pupils from low income families. Of the ten pupils, two parents denied consent, leaving eight pupils in the second group.

Tables 1 and 2, which follow, provide an overview of pertinent biographical and socio-economic information on the subjects selected for the study. Group A refers to the subjects from Kenmere Primary and Group B refers to the subjects from Factreton Primary.

**TABLE 1. BIOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
INFORMATION ON GROUP A SUBJECTS**

SUBJECT	AGE	SEX	MATERNAL OCCUPATION	PATERNAL OCCUPATION	MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME
1.	6y 1m	F	Shipping Import Controller	Welder	Above - R3000
2.	6y 5m	M	Bank Admin. Official	Principal Admin. Assistant	Above - R3000
3.	5y 11m	M	Clerk	N\A	R1500 - R3000
4.	6y 5m	M	Despatch Clerk	Hawker	R1500 - R3000
5.	6y 4m	M	Housewife	Plumber	Above R3000
6.	5y 9m	M	Shop Assistant	Senior Fireman	Above R3000
7.	6y 1m	M	Receptionist	Leather Cutter	R1500 - R3000
8.	5y 11m	F	Housewife	Cabinet Maker	Above R3000
9.	6y 2m	M	Import Clerk	Import Clerk	Above R3000
10.	6y 3m	M	Teacher	Operator	R1500 - R3000
11.	5y 10m	F	Teacher	Clerk	Above R3000
12.	6y 1m	F	Teacher	Unemployed	R1500 - R3000
13.	5y 10m	F	Housewife	Foreman	Above R3000
14.	5y 11m	F	Computer Programmer	Unqualified Fitter & Turner	Above R3000
15.	5y 11m	F	Admin. Assistant	Carpenter	Above R3000
16.	6y 0m	F	Clerk	N\A	Below R1500

**TABLE 2. BIOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFORMATION  
ON GROUP B SUBJECTS**

SUBJECT	AGE	SEX	MATERNAL OCCUPATION	PATERNAL OCCUPATION	MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME
1.	5y 11m	M	Unemployed	N\A	Below R1500
2.	6y 3m	F	Machinist	N\A	Below R1500
3.	6y 0m	F	Housewife	Ceiling & Partitioning Installation	R1500 - R3000
4.	6y 4m	F	Printer	Driver	R1500 - R3000
5.	6y 0m	F	Machinist	Operator	R1500 - R3000
6.	6y 0m	M	Baker	N\A	R1500 - R3000
7.	6y 4m	M	Cleaner	Stock Controller	R1500 - R3000
8.	6y 4m	F	Housewife	Stock Controller	R1500 - R3000

### 3.3 Subject Characteristics :

**3.3.1 Sex** : Group A comprised 50% boys and 50% girls, whereas group B comprised 37.5% boys and 62.5% girls.

**3.3.2 Age** : In group A, 43.8% of the subjects were between 5 years 6 months and 5 years 11 months of age. Only 12.5%

of group B subjects fell into this age group. 56.3% of group A subjects and 87.5% of group B subjects were between 6 years 0 months and 6 years 6 months of age.

#### **4. Procedure**

##### **4.1 The Development of an Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile (ELAP)**

###### **4.1.1 Origins of the Profile**

The Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile (ELAP) was developed with the following considerations in mind :

- to provide a culturally appropriate assessment tool for English-speaking pre-school children from the social grouping formerly designated in South Africa as "coloured".
  
- to provide a structured framework for generating qualitative information regarding emergent literacy skills and knowledge.

The subtests within the profile were derived from two main sources, namely the Comprehensive Assessment Program (CAP) - Early Childhood Diagnostic Instrument (Mason & Stewart, 1989) and the School-Home Early Language and Literacy Battery - Kindergarten (SHELL-K) (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991). Additional subtests were also taken from other sources which will be

mentioned in conjunction with specific subtests. Essentially the subtests of the Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile (ELAP) cover three broad areas, namely, print knowledge, metalinguistic awareness and language ability. The distribution of the subtests within these areas is shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3. AREAS OF LITERACY KNOWLEDGE ASSESSED BY SUBTESTS OF THE ELAP**

AREA OF LITERACY KNOWLEDGE	SUBTEST OF ELAP
Print Knowledge	Environmental Print Letter Recognition Concepts about Print Functional Awareness of Print
Metalinguistic Knowledge	Sounds in Words Rhyming Words
Language Ability	Test for Reception of Grammar (TROG) Story Comprehension Word Definitions Narrative Tasks

Of the source test instruments, the CAP was developed in the United

States of America in conjunction with a pre-school early reading programme as a means of measuring children's progress (Mason & Stewart, 1989). The instrument is aimed at children between four and six years of age. The battery has been used on urban and rural economically deprived children, but norms have not been finalised (ibidem). The norms available for "mainstream", or white middle class American children, enable the tester to establish whether children are performing at pre-kindergarten, kindergarten or grade one (sub-standard A in South African terms) levels. The CAP includes three areas, namely emergent literacy, language and basic concepts (Refer to Appendix 1 for a list of the original CAP subtests).

The SHELL-K was developed as part of a study of the language and literacy development of American pre-school children from low-income families. Its scope includes aspects of emergent literacy, language and non-verbal intelligence (Refer to Appendix 2 for a complete list of subtests). The battery also includes certain subtests from the CAP.

Certain aspects of the profile developed in this study were also modelled on tests derived from sources other than those mentioned above. The Functional Awareness of Print test was modelled on test of functional print developed by Lomax and McGee (1987) as part of a battery of measures of children's written language knowledge which was administered to children from middle -income families in the USA. The

test of Rhyming Words was based on a research task used by Bradley and Bryant (1978, cited by Bradley, 1990). The Concepts about Print test incorporated selected items from Clay's (1972 & 1979, cited by Clay, 1985) Concepts about Print tests, "Sand" and "Stones", as well as the CAP Story and Print Concepts (Mason & Stewart, 1989). Clay's tests were developed for assessment of beginning readers or children who were making poor progress during reading instruction.

The CAP and SHELL-K tests were selected as the primary sources of assessment material for use in the study because of their comprehensive nature. The SHELL-K was particularly suitable because it had been designed specifically for children from low income families. However, they were not viewed as being directly applicable to South African children due to the culturally specific nature of some of the test stimuli. In addition it was found that the two instruments did not include certain areas which are also pertinent to emergent literacy development. Thus, two kinds of modifications were necessary : firstly, the omission of culturally specific stimuli and inclusion of more appropriate items, and, secondly, the inclusion of subtests which were not part of either of these instruments.

A major problem encountered with the inclusion and adaptation of foreign test materials into the Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile for use in South Africa is the fact that norms are not valid since the populations on

which they are standardised are vastly different from local ones. The issue of norms is problematic to this study, but it must be recognised that the process of obtaining local norms is a cost- and labour-intensive procedure which is outside the scope of the present study. The emphasis of the study is not to identify the subjects' developmental levels with regard to emergent literacy, but rather to describe their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, this study serves as a preliminary stage in the development of an assessment procedure suitable for a segment of the South African population.

#### 4.1.2 Subtests in the Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile

The following is a description of each subtest as well as a rationale for its inclusion in the profile. Refer to Appendices 3 to 14 for detailed information with regard to administration, test stimuli and scoring of each of the subtests.

(i) Environmental Print (See Appendix 3)

Source : A modification of the Environmental Print subtest of the CAP. The administration and scoring guidelines from the CAP were used but stimuli appropriate for South African conditions were substituted. Stimuli selected were ones which were considered to be present with high frequency in the children's everyday environments.

- (a) Rationale : Frith (1985, cited by Stuart & Coltheart, 1988) identified three phases in the process of reading acquisition, namely, logographic, alphabetic and orthographic. The first stage, the logographic phase, which typically occurs during the pre-school years, is one in which the child is able to recognise familiar words by identifying salient graphic features or by using contextual cues. During this stage, the child is able to recognise print such as logos and signs in their naturally occurring contexts, for example the logos on shopping bags, signs outside shops, etc. This recognition of print is not based on decoding ability but rather reflects a reliance on visual cues such as shape, colour, size and background.
- (b) Task : Expressive identification and recognition of environmental print. Receptive identification of logos was tested but not scored.
- (c) Stimuli : Logos of familiar products, shops and restaurants : Pick & Pay, Shoprite-Checkers (supermarkets); Hyperama, OK (low cost department stores); Edgars (a family clothing shop); CNA (Central News Agency, a book shop), Simba chips, Spur Steak Ranches, Kentucky Fried Chicken and M-Net (a local television network).
- (ii) **Letter Recognition** (See Appendix 4)
- Source : A modification of the Letter Recognition subtest of the CAP. The stimuli, administration and scoring procedures of the

CAP subtest were used. An addition introduced in this study was to ask children to identify the letters on the alphabet chart in their classroom. This was possible since the classrooms at both schools had alphabet charts on the wall, forming part of the environmental print in the room.

- (a) Rationale : The ability to decode print involves being able to translate graphemes into their auditory equivalents (Wiig & Semel, 1984). This skill is termed "phoneme-grapheme correspondence". Muter and Taylor (1994, cited by Taylor, 1994) identified letter knowledge as a major contributor to reading progress.
- (b) Task : Subjects were shown letter charts and asked to identify the contents of the charts. This was done to ascertain whether the children were able to identify letters as opposed to numbers, for example. They were then required to recognize and name the upper and lower case letters on the charts. In addition they were shown the alphabet chart on the classroom wall and asked to identify any letters which they knew. The latter was done to determine whether they were able to recognise and name letters when assisted by contextual cues such as pictures accompanying each letter.
- (c) Stimuli : Upper and lower case letter charts.

(iii) **Sounds in Words** (See Appendix 5)

Source : A modification of the Sounds in Words subtest of the CAP.

(a) Rationale : Phoneme awareness has been identified as a strong predictor of progress in beginning reading (Muter, 1994).

(b) Task : Identifying words which have the same initial or final sounds. Subjects are presented with three words, from which they have to identify two words with a common initial or final sound. The first six items share an initial sound while the last four share a final sound. Subjects are instructed accordingly. Picture cues are provided to assist remembering of items.

(c) Stimuli : pictures plus auditory cues.

The stimuli, administration and scoring procedures of the CAP subtest were slightly adapted. On the original subtest, if the first two items were answered incorrectly, the examiner proceeded to the second section beginning at item seven. In this instance, the examiner administered all items, regardless of subjects' responses. Two items from the CAP subtest were eliminated to shorten the test since it was envisaged that subjects would have difficulty and find it long: Item 10, **snake-lake-river** was eliminated because it was hypothesized that the word lake would not be familiar to many

of the children since lakes do not occur commonly in their environment; Item 11, **keys-trees-leaf**, was eliminated because the interpretation of the pictures was likely to be more difficult than for other items in that section, due to the words "trees" and "leaf" belonging to similar semantic categories. Item eight, **tub-tire-boy**, was changed to **bath-tyre-boy** since the word "tub" is not part of the vernacular.

(iv) **Rhyming Words** (See Appendix 6)

Source : An original subtest developed by the researcher. This subtest was modelled on the oddities task developed by Bryant and Bradley (1978, cited by Bradley, 1990)) in which children were asked to identify the word in each group which did not rhyme with the rest. The subtest includes two aspects, namely rhyme recognition and rhyme production. Since the rhyme recognition test was subject to the effects of guessing, the rhyme production task was included to determine whether the child really understood the concept.

- (a) Rationale : Awareness of rhyme during pre-school years has been found to be a significant predictor of later reading performance. Bryant and Bradley (1983, cited by Bryant, 1990) identified a predictive relationship between children's rhyming ability at age

four and their success in reading at age seven.

- (b) Task : Recognition and production of rhyming words. In the first part of the test, subjects are presented with a card containing three pictures. The examiner produces the words auditorily as she points to the pictures. The child is then required to point to the pictures of the two words which sound "almost the same". In the second part, five of the items in part one are used. A rhyming pair is presented auditorily and the child is requested to produce another word which "sounds like" the previous two.

- (c) Stimuli : pictures and auditory cues

- (v) Concepts about Print (See Appendix 7)

Source : This subtest was devised by the researcher by combining selected items from the CAP Story and Print Concepts subtest and Clay's (1979, cited by Clay, 1985) Concepts about Print Test. Items excluded from these tests were ones which required skills such as word recognition, the ability to match the examiner's spoken words with the text and knowledge of punctuation marks. These were regarded as being too complex for pre-school children.

- (a) Rationale : Book handling skills, as well as knowledge of the conventions of print or "how books work" (Snowball,1985) are

important aspects which develop prior to learning to read (Dickinson, Wolf & Stotsky, 1993). In addition, children need to develop a specialized vocabulary related to print (Dickinson et al, 1993). This includes an understanding of words such as **read, write, draw, page, story, book**, etc. These vocabulary items are not explicitly taught at school, but knowledge of them is often assumed. Dickinson et al. (1993) state that children who are unfamiliar with print-related vocabulary may be at risk for failure in early reading instruction.

(b) Task : Responding to questions about print-related concepts. Areas assessed include front vs back, print vs picture, print direction and orientation, and concepts such as page, letter, word and read.

(c) Stimulus : storybook

(vi) **Functional Awareness of Print** (See Appendix 8)

Source : A modification of the test of functional print awareness developed by Lomax and McGee (1987).

(a) Rationale : The literature stresses the importance of the functional relevance of literacy for children as an important motivating factor

in learning to read. Taylor (1983) asserts that children need to discover the functions of print and its relevance to their lives before receiving formal instruction, that is, they need to learn the "social significance of written language". Therefore it is necessary to determine whether children are aware of the functions which print can serve in their daily lives.

(b) Task : Naming various items of print and identifying their uses in everyday life.

(c) Stimuli : Print sources which are local and therefore more familiar were selected for this subtest : M-Net (television network) television guide; telephone directory; calendar; newspaper; map. The actual items, not pictures, were presented to subjects.

(vii) **Story Comprehension** (See Appendix 9)

Source : This subtest was modelled by the researcher on the subtest of Story Comprehension in the SHELL-K. The storybook used in the SHELL-K is "The Snowy Day" by Ezra Jack Keats (1962). This was not considered to be appropriate for this group of South African children since they do not experience snow in their areas of residence. Instead, the book "The Bear Under the Stairs" by Helen Cooper (1993) was used. It is the story of a little boy named William who imagines that there is a bear living under

the staircase of his house. He fears that the bear might eat him if its hungry and therefore feeds it regularly, until the smell of rotting food alerts his mother. William confides his fears to his mother, who then helps him to resolve the problem.

The questions accompanying the story were modelled on those used in the SHELL-K; that is, a combination of literal and interpretive questions were posed.

- (a) Rationale : Juel, Griffith and Gough (1986) identified listening comprehension as a critical component of reading and state categorically that "if a child's listening comprehension of text is poor, then his reading comprehension will be poor, no matter how good his decoding" (p244). Since the essence of acquiring literacy is learning to derive meaning from text, we need to establish pre-schoolers' capability for this by determining whether they are able to answer basic questions about stories which have been read to them.
  
- (b) Task : Answering questions relating to a story read by the examiner. A combination of literal and interpretive questions are posed. Example of a literal question : "Was William still afraid of bears ?". Example of an interpretive question : "What do you think would have happened if the bear didn't get any food ?"

- (c) Stimulus : Storybook - The Bear Under the Stairs by Helen Cooper (1993). Refer to Appendix 9 for a transcript of the text.

(viii) **Word Definitions** (See Appendix 10)

Source : A modification of the Definitions Task of the SHELL-K, which was adapted from the CAP Vocabulary, Definitions and Superordinates Test.

- (a) Rationale : Snow, Cancini, Gonzalez and Shriberg(1989) identified the ability to give formal word definitions as an important precursor to literacy.

- (b) Task : In the first part of the test subjects are presented auditorily with common words and asked to provide definitions. In the second part, two semantic items are presented and the child is asked to identify the superordinate terms and give an additional item in the same semantic category.

- (c) Stimuli : verbal

Note : The stimulus item "stool" in the SHELL-K was eliminated as it was not felt to be part of the vernacular and also because of its similarity to the Afrikaans word "*stoe!*", meaning "chair".

(ix) **Narrative Tasks** (See Appendix 11)

Source : An original subtest developed by the researcher. Although a narrative task was included in the SHELL-K, the elicitation stimuli were found to be too disjointed for children who possibly had limited exposure to fictional narratives. The SHELL-K stimuli consisted of three picture slides presented to the child in a story sequence. The child would then be requested to tell a story based on the pictures.

- (a) Rationale : Skilled production of narratives is crucial for reading comprehension (Snow; 1983,1991) and has also been found to discriminate between good and poor readers (Feagans, 1982). Two kinds of narratives were elicited from subjects, namely, fictional and personal. The fictional narrative was elicited by asking the subjects to retell the story used in the Story Comprehension subtest. This meant that all the subjects had the same information as subject matter for their narrative and that certain children were not placed at a disadvantage by lack of a familiar story to narrate. Personal narratives were also elicited since they are the earliest genre which children develop (Preece, 1987). In a study of the range of narrative forms produced by young children in conversation, Preece (1988) found personal narratives to be the most frequently occurring. The greater emotional salience of personally experienced events provides a

strong motivating factor in children's narrative production (ibidem). Fictional narratives, by contrast, have less emotional salience. In addition, personal narratives require memory of a single episode whereas stories require memory of a fictional story, the ability to develop a plot and general knowledge of social roles, personality types and typical social interactions (Hudson & Shapiro, 1991). The topics selected for eliciting personal narratives were ones which fall within the realm of experience of most children to ensure that they would have subject matter about which to narrate:

- (b) Task : The story of "The Bear Under the Stairs" which had been used in the Story Comprehension subtest was reread to the subjects, who were asked to retell the story. Personal narratives were elicited by requesting children to share their experiences of visiting the doctor or hospital, witnessing an accident and celebrating Guy Fawkes.

The task was administered to the children in pairs in order to encourage participation and also to simulate a conversational setting.

- (c) Stimuli :

- (1) Story - " The Bear Under the Stairs" by Helen Cooper
- (2) Informal discussion with a classmate and the examiner

- (x) Test for Reception of Grammar (TROG) (Bishop, 1983)(See Appendix 12)

Source : The TROG is a test of language comprehension or receptive language ability focusing on the ability to comprehend grammatical structures in the absence of linguistic and extra-linguistic contextual cues. Thus, the test essentially taps comprehension of decontextualised language. It was designed for use with children with specific developmental language disorders with a view to determining the comprehension ability of children with grammatically abnormal expressive language (Bishop, 1983). The TROG is appropriate for children aged between four and thirteen years. Despite many features to its credit, a limitation surrounding the use of the TROG for this study is the lack of norms for the South African population.

- (a) Rationale : Given the documented link between oral language competence and learning to read and write, it is essential to determine the children's level of language competence. The TROG was selected for ease of administration and short administration time due to testing being discontinued after a ceiling has been reached. The picture stimuli are all common, easily recognisable items.

(xi) **Goodenough-Harris Draw-A-Man Test** (Harris, 1963) (See Appendix 13)

- (a) Rationale : It was considered important to obtain an indication of subjects' intellectual levels in order to identify whether performance was influenced by above or below average intelligence. The Goodenough test was selected due to its appropriateness for the subjects included in the study as well as ease of administration and scoring. This test has been found to be a valid and reliable measure of intellectual ability (Harris, 1963). Several studies have identified correlations in excess of 0.5 between the Goodenough-Harris test and other tests of intelligence, thus providing proof of its validity (Anastasi, 1982). Harris (1963) reported on a study by McHugh in 1945 which established that 30 of the 51 points on the Draw-a-Man scale correlated significantly with the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence. The Draw-a-Man test has been found to correlate highly with tests of reasoning, spatial aptitude and perceptual accuracy and the role of motor co-ordination is reported to be negligible (Anastasi, 1982). In addition, the test is also relatively culture-free (ibidem).

Since all the subjects had been exposed to 10 months of pre-school education prior to the commencement of the study, it was thought that they would therefore all at least have been exposed to draw-a-man activities in the school setting if they had not

encountered this at home. Furthermore, it was considered that the performance of subjects on the Goodenough test would be the least susceptible to the effects of environmental deprivation in that the test merely required some exposure to drawing activities, as opposed to the familiarity with blocks, puzzles and other toys which is assumed by many other measures of intelligence.

## 4.2 Data collection

### 4.2.1 Administration of the Emergent Literacy Assessment

#### Profile :

- (i) Test Conditions : Assessment of subjects was constrained by lack of space and sound proof-facilities at the schools. All the subjects in group A (Kenmere Primary) were tested alone with the examiner in their classroom while the remaining pupils were at concert rehearsals. Although the latter resulted in continuous background noise, the children did not appear to be distracted and the noise levels did not affect the quality of the recordings obtained.

The subjects in group B (Factreton Primary) were tested in a nearby classroom which was not in use. Conditions were fairly quiet and there were no visual distractions in the form

of posters, etc.

- (ii) Test Administration :Testing of subjects was done over two sessions for two reasons, namely to allow for subject fatigue and also because the researcher only had access to the testing room at Kenmere Primary for limited periods. The first session was of approximately 45 minutes duration and the second session 20 minutes. Testing was done as follows :

#### Session one

- Concepts about Print
- Story Comprehension
- Environmental Print
- Functional Awareness of Print
- Word Definitions Test
- Letter Recognition
- Sounds in Words
- TROG
- Goodenough-Harris Draw-a-Man Test

#### Session two

- Rhyming Words Test
- Narrative Sample

(iii) Scoring of Subtests :

The TROG and Goodenough-Harris Draw-a-man tests were scored according to the manuals for those instruments. Responses to the Functional Awareness of Print and Word definitions tests were tape recorded, transcribed and then scored according to specific criteria. The narrative samples were also tape recorded and transcribed and then evaluated according to qualitative criteria. The responses to the remaining subtests were scored as either correct or incorrect. Specific information regarding scoring criteria may be found in Appendices 3 to 13.

Note : Because the examiner was not fully qualified to administer formal intelligence tests, all scoring was checked by an experienced clinical psychologist.

(iv) Test Equipment :

- (a) Refer to Appendices 3 to 13 for descriptions of stimuli used in the assessment profile.
- (b) Subjects' responses to the following subtests were recorded using a Sony TCM-17 Cassette Corder, with built-in microphone :      Story

Comprehension; Functional Awareness of Print; Word Definitions Test; Narrative sample. Responses to the remaining subtests were transcribed on score sheets, which are displayed in Appendix 14

#### 4.2.2 Parent interviews

##### (i) Interview Process :

The parents of each of the children in the two groups were contacted telephonically in order to provide more information about the research project and also to arrange a mutually suitable time for an interview. Parents were told that the aim of the project was to obtain information regarding the development of pre-school children and more specifically about the reading and writing practices which they engage in. Prospective respondents were assured of the strictest confidentiality.

With the exception of cases where one parent was not employed, most of the interviews were conducted in the evenings. All interviews took place in the homes of the families and were conducted personally by the researcher. In most cases the mothers served as informants, largely because they were more familiar with the children's histories

as well as their activities. Of the 26 interviews conducted, three included both parents and one was conducted with a father. The remaining 22 respondents were mothers.

Interviews were of approximately one-and-a-half hours duration. At the beginning of each interview, the purpose of the research was again explained to informants. Questions regarding the child's developmental history as well as family structure and dynamics were then posed. Information relating to socio-economic status and home supports for literacy was then elicited using the questionnaires as a guide. Refer to appendices 17 and 18 for a copy of the questionnaires, entitled "Parent Questionnaire" and "Home Supports for Literacy". All responses by informants were written down by the interviewer.

(ii) Questionnaire design :

The questionnaires were specifically developed by the researcher to elicit information relevant to the aims of the study. The "Home Supports for Literacy" questionnaire was developed with reference to Leichter (1984) and Mason (1980). In her account of observational and ethnographic research conducted on the ways in which home environments contribute to children's developing literacy, Leichter (1984) compiled a list of typical examples of literacy artifacts observed in the homes of subjects. This list

included fairly universal artifacts such as books, newspapers and magazines, as well as typically American items such as sport catalogues and baseball cards. For purposes of this study, the Americanised items were eliminated due to their lack of appropriateness. Selected items were identified from the remainder of the list, in order to reduce questionnaire administration time.

Questions relating to home support for reading were developed from a questionnaire devised by Mason (1980). Mason conducted a study of the development of pre-school children's knowledge of letters and words, which included observation and assessment of the children, as well as a parent questionnaire. The parent questionnaire included, inter alia, a section on support for children's reading, on which questions for the present study were based.

The following section presents an outline of the areas covered in the parent interviews and provides a rationale for each one.

A. General:

(i) Developmental History of Child :

Information regarding birth, development, medical history, child care and previous schooling was requested. This was done in order to determine whether or not each of the subjects had followed the normal patterns of development and to identify factors

in the history which might be indicative of developmental delays or learning difficulties. The questions on child care and schooling were asked for the purpose of identifying the main source of early stimulation, since stimulation is considered to be a significant factor in the child's development.

(ii) Family Structure and Dynamics :

It was considered important to identify whether the child was part of a single-parent or two-parent family, since it has implications for parental uses of literacy and also possibly for family income. Information about siblings was elicited to ascertain family size, which is also a factor influencing the amount of time parents have to spend with each child and also the physical and financial resources available. In addition, it is recognised that older siblings often serve as models for literacy.

B. Parent Questionnaire ( Refer to Appendix 17 for a copy of the questionnaire):

- (i) Home Language : Parents were questioned about which languages were spoken in the home, by whom and to whom. They were also asked about the language medium in which they were educated. This was done because of the increasing tendency among urban "Coloured" families in the Western Cape for children to be educated in the medium

of English even when the parents themselves are Afrikaans-speaking. It is commonly the case that parents speak Afrikaans to each other, but English to the children. The parents' competence in English has implications for the quality of the language models to which the children are exposed and their subsequent language competence. Also, the exposure of children to two languages in the home may result in the child being dominant in the language other than the medium of instruction.

- (ii) Marital Status of Parents : This information was requested to identify whether the children were from single-parent or two-parent families, as it had implications for income, number of potential adult models of literacy and exposure to parental uses of literacy. These factors also have relevance to the enquiry about the number of other adults within the household (Refer to section (vi) on Housing).
  
- (iii) Educational Level of Parents : Parental education is a determinant of employment opportunities and therefore occupational status and income, all of which are indicators of socio-economic status (Miller, 1991). Furthermore, a link between maternal education and children's school performance has been identified.

- (iv) Parental Occupations : Occupational status is a determinant of income and therefore a socio-economic indicator (Miller, 1991).
  
- (v) Monthly Family Income (before deductions) : Although it is acknowledged that people are generally sensitive about disclosing their income, it was regarded as important to include this question because families may have additional sources of income which would not be reflected by their occupational status. To allow for parents' sensitivity about discussing income, the enquiry was made in a less direct manner, that is by asking parents to identify which income category they fell into.
  
- (vi) Housing : This section included information on the type of housing, whether or not parents owned the property and the number of occupants in the household. Both ownership of property and type of housing are indications of socio-economic status. Number of occupants in the household also relates to socio-economic status in that in lower socio-economic groups it is a common practice for a dwelling to be occupied by several families to facilitate payment of rental. An additional cause for this phenomenon is the housing shortage which has existed since the apartheid era,

particularly after the forced removals of families from areas such as District Six, following the introduction of the Group Areas Act.

- (vii) Parental Uses of Literacy : Information regarding parental reading habits was requested in order to gain an indication of the role of literacy in the lives of parents and also the models for literacy which children are exposed to. Parents were asked what types of reading matter they preferred and how often they read. Information on uses of literacy in the workplace was also requested.

C. Home Supports for Literacy Questionnaire

(See Appendix 18) :

- (i) Literacy artifacts in the home : The list of artifacts was an adaptation of those developed by Leichter (1984). Certain items were eliminated since they were not considered to be appropriate within the family contexts of the subjects, for example, laundry slips, sport catalogues and baseball cards.
- (ii) Literacy activities in the home : Parents were asked about their literacy activities to gain an idea of which literacy activities other than reading of novels they engaged in. This section relates to the finding of researchers such as Anderson and Stokes (1984) who

identified that while many parents do not read novels, they may utilise literacy in functional ways in their daily lives.

- (iii) Children's literacy exposure and literacy activities : Questions regarding pretend reading and writing and writing of patterns were asked to ascertain children's interest in these emergent literacy activities. Questions on book ownership, library membership and shared reading were asked to establish the level of children's engagements with literacy. The question on rhyming was included since rhyming has been identified as a crucial skill for literacy (Bryant & Bradley, 1983, cited by Bryant, 1990). The researcher also enquired about the children's exposure to other adults who encouraged literacy to cover the possibility that children might have regular contact with someone other than the parents who provide a literate model and promoted their literacy development.

On the basis of the information obtained with regard to home supports for literacy, parental uses of literacy and the interviewer's observations, each family was assigned a home literacy environment rating according to categories defined by the researcher (Refer to Appendix 19).

## **5. Data Analysis**

In view of the small sample size, mainly descriptive statistics were applied to the raw data. All statistical analyses were performed using the Number Crunching Statistical System (NCSS). The data generated were obtained from two sources, namely the ELAP and the parent interviews.

### **5.1 Data Obtained from the Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile**

Quantitative analyses were performed on all the subtests of the ELAP, except the Narrative tasks, which were qualitatively analyzed. Means, standard deviations and ranges for 11 of the 12 subtests of the ELAP were calculated for each of the two groups. This was done in order to determine central tendencies as well as measures of dispersion. Bar charts illustrating the mean scores of each group on each of the subtests of the ELAP were drawn in order to provide an easy means of comparing the results of the two groups. The Mann-Whitney t-test was applied to the group means for individual subtests in order to ascertain the existence of statistically significant differences between the groups. Furthermore, the Spearman Correlation test was applied to the subtests to determine whether or not the performance of the entire sample reflected systematic relationships between certain subtests.

## 5.2 DATA OBTAINED FROM PARENT INTERVIEWS

The parent interviews generated frequency data in the following areas :

- 5.2.1 Family structure : family size; position in the family; marital status of parents.
- 5.2.2 Socio-economic indicators : monthly family income; type of housing; maternal and paternal educational levels.
- 5.2.3 Parental uses of literacy : maternal and paternal uses of literacy in the workplace; maternal and paternal reading materials used in the home.
- 5.2.4 Other home supports for literacy : library attendance; book ownership; exposure to story reading; children's requests for story reading; exposure to nursery rhymes; access to fostering of literacy by siblings or adults other than parents; home language and home literacy environment.

Each of the categories listed within the above areas was sub-categorized even further. For example, the category family income had three sub-categories, namely, less than R1500-00, between R1500-00 and R3000-

00, and above R3000-00. The frequencies for each of the sub-categories were identified for each group and presented in bar charts. The bar charts included frequency data for both groups , to allow for easy visual comparison of the two sets of data.

## CHAPTER SIX : RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study will be presented and discussed simultaneously, for the sake of clarity and also to preclude needless repetition. The first section will focus on outcomes of the Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile and the parent interviews. This will be followed by a more general discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study as a whole and of the findings relative to the initial research questions and aims.

### 1. The Emergent Literacy Assessment Profile (ELAP)

Administration of the ELAP to the two groups resulted in a rather predictable outcome, namely that Group A subjects (i.e. those from lower-middle class families) corporately performed consistently better than those in Group B ( i.e. those from low class families). However, analysis of responses to specific test items yielded interesting and very helpful information pertaining to the assessment instrument itself. All findings will be presented in a systematic discussion of the subtests of the ELAP, followed by a more general discourse on the ELAP as a whole. The results obtained on the ELAP are also presented graphically below. Table 4 shows the mean scores of the two groups on the various subtests presented as percentages of the maximum possible scores. Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations obtained by the two groups on the subtests of the ELAP. The tables do not include scores for the Narrative Task since the emphasis for this subtest was on qualitative

analysis rather than raw scores. In addition, Figures 1 and 2 provide a graphic indication of the performance of the two groups relative to each other on the subtests. The raw scores obtained by the subjects on the various subtests are presented in Appendices 15 and 16.

**TABLE 4 : MEAN PERCENTAGES ATTAINED BY GROUPS A  
AND B ON SUBTESTS OF THE ELAP**

SUBTEST	GROUP A	GROUP B
1. Environmental Print	56,9%	31,3%
2. Letter Recognition	12,2%	3,8%
3. Sounds in Words	57,5%	26,3%
4. Rhyming Words	49,2%	40,9%
5. Concepts about Print	70%	51,3%
6. Functional Awareness of Print	57,5%	35%
7. Story Comprehension	52,5%	35%
8. Word Definitions	54,6%	37,5%

**TABLE 5 : GROUP MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR  
SUBTESTS OF THE ELAP**

**X = MEAN**

SUBTEST	GROUP A	GROUP B
1. Environmental Print *	X = 11,38 SD = 3,24	X = 6,25 SD = 4,71
2. Letter Recognition	X = 4,88 SD = 7,26	X = 1,5 SD = 3,50
3. Sounds in Words *	X = 5,75 SD = 2,57	X = 2,62 SD = 2,56
4. Rhyming Words	X = 7,38 SD = 3,42	X = 6,13 SD = 4,19
5. Concepts about Print *	X = 7 SD = 1,46	X = 5,13 SD = 1,13
6. Functional Awareness of Print *	X = 5,75 SD = 1,44	X = 3,5 SD = 2,07
7. Story Comprehension	X = 5,19 SD = 1,83	X = 3,5 SD = 1,69
8. Word Definitions *	X = 20,75 SD = 4,28	X = 14,25 SD = 2,71
9. TROG	X = 9,38 SD = 3,09	X = 6,63 SD = 2,26
10. Draw-A-Man Test Raw Scores (RS)	X = 16,5 SD = 5,40	X = 11,38 SD = 1,92

\* = Statistically significant differences between group means

### 1.1 Environmental Print

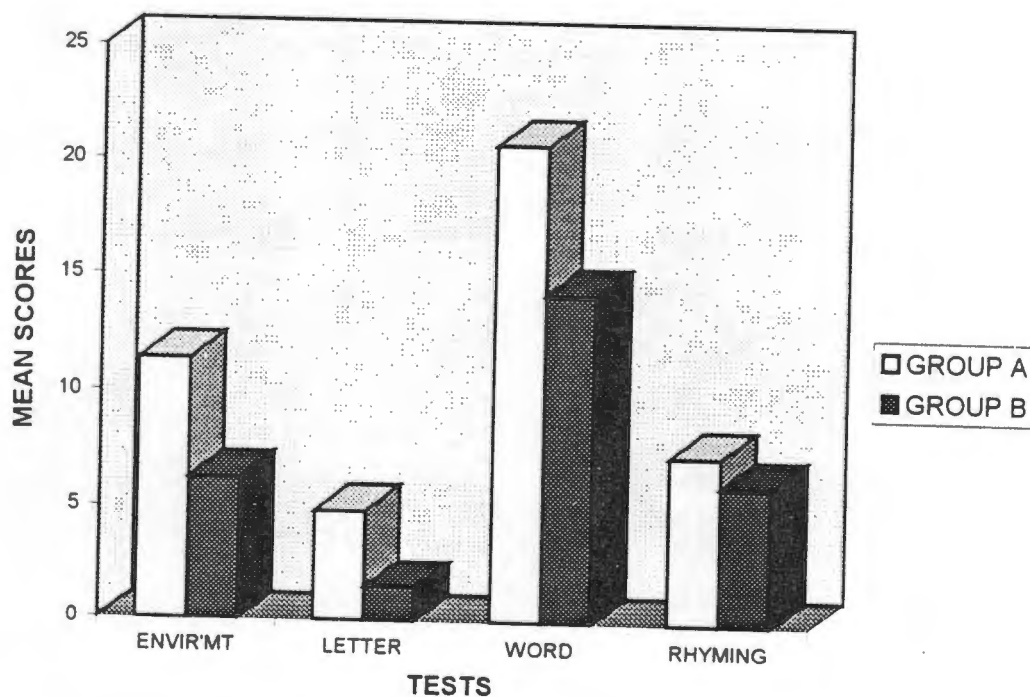
The mean percentages scored were 56.9% for Group A and 31.3% for Group B. Of a maximum possible score of 20, Group A had a mean score of 11.4, with scores ranging from 6 to 18. Group B achieved a mean score of 6.3, with scores ranging from 0 to 14.

The Mann-Whitney T-test identified statistically significant differences between the two group means ( $p < 0.05$ ). Performance of all subjects on this subtest was found to have a moderate positive correlation (0.68) with their performance on the Test of Word Definitions.

Four of the ten logos were correctly identified by more than 80% of Group A and none were correctly identified by more than 50% of Group B. Interpretation of the results is complicated by the fact that the ability to recognize environmental print requires not only visual perceptual discrimination and an understanding of the representative nature of print, but also previous exposure to the specific test stimuli. Hence it is difficult to determine whether or not poor performance is due to lack of exposure to the stimuli. It is therefore also not possible to identify a single source of between-group differences. For Group A, the fact that more than 80% of the subjects were able to recognize four of the logos, seems to indicate that their poor performance on the other items may have been due to lack of exposure. However, for Group B, the fact that none of the items were recognised by more than 50% of the subjects seems to suggest that these children have not begun to derive meaning from environmental print.

The most commonly recognised signs for both groups were "M-Net (a local television network)", "Kentucky Fried Chicken" and "Spur Steak Ranches". The "CNA (Central News Agency, a local bookshop chain)" logo was only identified by one subject in group A and none in group B. This result seems to indicate that the logo is not one which is commonly encountered by this group of children and is perhaps not an appropriate test stimulus.

FIGURE 1. A COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT, LETTER RECOGNITION, WORD DEFINITIONS AND RHYMING WORDS SUBTESTS



## 1.2 Letter Recognition

Both groups scored extremely poorly on this subtest, with Group A achieving a mean percentage of 12.2% and Group B 3.8%. Of a maximum score of 40, Group A had a mean score of 4.9, with scores ranging from 0 to 22. The mean score for Group B was 1.5, with scores ranging from 0 to 10. According to the results of the Mann-Whitney Test, the differences in group means were not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The poor scores attained by both groups were not entirely unexpected, since neither group had been taught letter recognition at school at the commencement of the study. However, towards the end it had been introduced into the Group A classroom, which is likely to account for the improved performance of some of the Group A children who were assessed later. The generally poor scores are also evidence that parents did not develop letter recognition skills at home. In sharp contrast to these results, Mason (1980) found that, according to parental reports, 58% of a sample of middle class American children were able to recognize more than 20 letters at the beginning of the pre-school year and that this figure had increased to 95% by the end of the year.

Many of the subjects in this study found this subtest rather threatening and were all too aware of their inability to answer the

questions. It may have been unfair to include this subtest in view of the fact that they had not been taught the alphabet at school. A further problem identified with this test was that the alphabet charts used as test stimuli did not include all the letters. Many of the children knew the initial letters of their names and sometimes their surnames, but their scores did not necessarily reflect this since those letters did not all appear on the charts.

### 1.3 Sounds in Words

The mean percentage for Group A was 57.5% and for Group B, 26.3%. However, even in the higher scoring group, Group A, the mean percentage obtained is below 60%. Of a maximum score of 10, the mean for Group A was 5.8, with scores ranging from 0 to 9. Group B attained a mean score of 2.6, with scores ranging from 0 to 7. Application of the Mann Whitney t-test revealed that differences in group means were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Low as they are, the scores attained by both groups are considered to be slightly optimistic, since it appeared that subjects often guessed the answers. The fact that subjects had to select a matching sound pair from a set of three words and pictures meant that they had a 50% chance of guessing the correct answer. A choice of four items would have reduced the chances of guessing correctly but would have meant a greater memory load.

Given that a proportion of the correct responses obtained were most likely due to guessing, it was nevertheless evident that, in general, the children displayed poor phonological awareness skills. All the verbal stimuli included in the test were found to be sufficiently familiar to the subjects, as they were asked to name each of the stimulus items which were introduced. Thus lack of familiarity with the verbal stimuli is not considered to be a possible contributor to poor performance. The phonological awareness (PA) skills tapped by this subtest were discrimination, segmentation and the ability to identify onsets in onset-rime combinations. These are lower order PA skills, which have been found to develop in children between four and six years (Muter, 1994). The fact that many of the children had not established these skills does not augur well for their acquisition of formal literacy. While poor PA skills need not necessarily mean that the children will not achieve proficiency in reading, it does make the task more difficult. Also, given the robust predictive value of PA skills during pre-school for literacy skills at school (Bryant, Bradley, Maclean & Crossland, 1989; Lundberg, Frost & Petersen, 1988; Muter, 1994), it is cause for some concern that so many of the children experienced difficulty with PA tasks.

#### 1.4 Rhyming Words

Similar to their performance on the previous subtest, Sounds in Words, the overall performance of both groups on the Rhyming Words subtest was poor. Group A subjects attained a mean percentage of 49.2% and Group B 40.9%. Of a maximum score of 15, the mean for group A was 7.4, with scores ranging from 1 to 14. Group B achieved a mean score of 6.1, with scores ranging from 0 to 14. The Mann-Whitney Test identified no significant differences in group means ( $p > 0.05$ ).

For both groups, performance was better on the rhyme detection items than on the rhyme production ones. This was to be expected, as rhyme production is a developmentally more complex skill (Muter, 1994). For two items on the rhyme detection task the "decoy" word had the same initial sound or phoneme as one of the words in the rhyming pair. It was observed that commonly the children identified the two words with the same initial sound as being a rhyming pair. For example, on the item *cot - cap - tap*, "cot" and "cap" were identified as rhyming words. The item *bat - coat - boat* was also handled in a similar fashion. These two items were also the ones which elicited the lowest percentage of correct answers in both groups.

Since both the Rhyming Words and Sounds in Words subtests tap PA skills, it was expected that subjects' performance would be similar. For the most part, this was the case. However there were a few instances where subjects scored poorly on the Sounds in Words test but well on the Rhyming Words test. With regard to group performance as a whole, the mean scores for Group A were similar for the two subtests, whereas the mean for Group B was noticeably higher on the Rhyming Words subtest.

The test stimuli or the nature of the task are not considered to have impinged upon subjects' performance since the verbal stimuli were all familiar and the task was expedited by the support of accompanying visual stimuli.

### 1.5 Concepts about Print

The mean percentages for groups A and B were 70 % and 51.3 %, respectively. Of a maximum possible score of 10, the mean for Group A was 7, with scores ranging from 4 to 9. The mean score for Group B was 5.1, with scores ranging from 4 to 7. According to the outcome of the t-test, the differences in group means are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The attainment of Group A subjects attests to their good grasp of basic print concepts. While the performance of Group B was relatively poorer, this subtest was the only one for which the group mean equalled more than 50% of the maximum points attainable. This subtest taps book orientation concepts, which, according to Johns (1980), represent the most basic level of print concepts. Day and Day (cited by Johns, 1980) found that book orientation concepts were well established in pre-schoolers. Conversely, Purcell-Gates (1994) found that children from low SES families had a limited knowledge of print concepts and conventions as assessed by Clay's Concepts about Print Test. The performance of Group A concurred with the findings of Day and Day, while that of Group B supported the findings of Purcell-Gates. Nonetheless, despite the fairly poor performance of Group B, overall attainment on this subtest reflects that all subjects had at least some grasp of print concepts, which affirms that there has been some degree of exposure to books. As has been previously mentioned, this subtest assesses the most basic of print concepts and therefore performance should be interpreted in the light of this fact.

With regard to specific test items, a common error observed was in the identification of the first page of the story. Most subjects pointed to the title page. Many subjects were also unable to identify the title of the story.

### 1.6 Functional Awareness of Print

Both groups attained low mean scores on this subtest. The mean percentages attained were 57.5% by Group A and 35% by Group B.

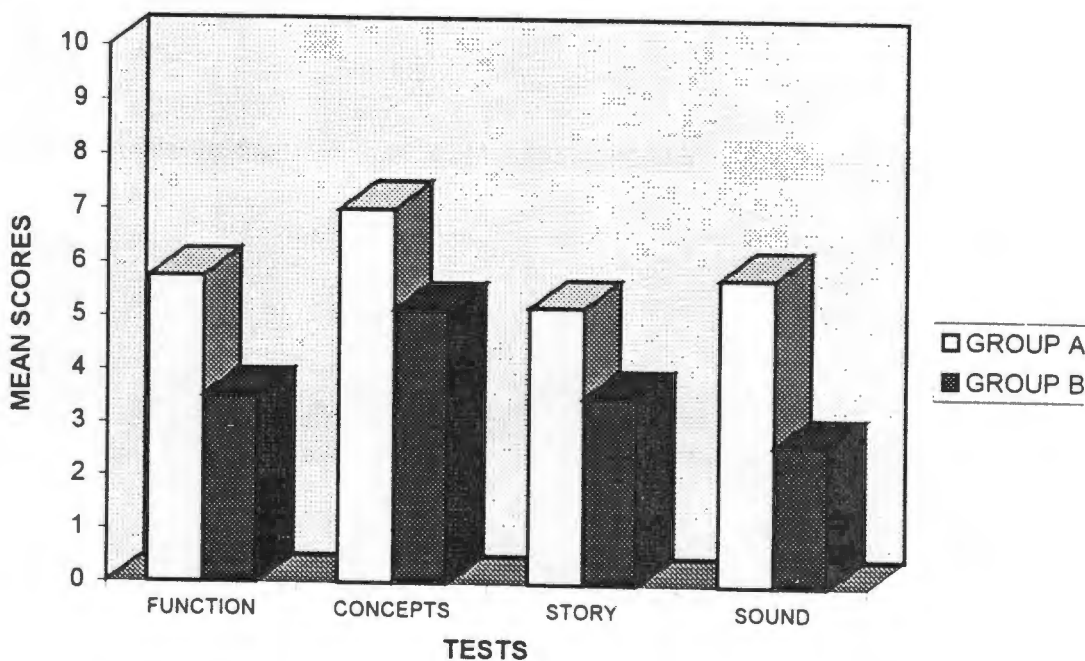
Of a maximum possible score of 10, the mean for Group A was 5.8, with scores ranging from 3 to 8. The mean for Group B was 3.5, with scores ranging from 2 to 8. Application of the Mann-Whitney Test identified statistically significant differences between the group means ( $p < 0.05$ ).

A pervasive difficulty in naming artifacts as well as providing functional definitions or explanations was observed. It is hypothesized that the children's difficulty is related to lack of exposure to the particular literacy artifacts as well as poor decontextualised language skills which are necessary for producing coherent definitions and explanations. It would appear that for some children the problem did not lie in lack of knowledge but rather in the inability to articulate that knowledge in an accessible manner. Interestingly, the Spearman correlation test identified a high positive correlation (0.73) between subjects' performance on this subtest and on the Word Definitions test.

An item analysis revealed that the questions relating to the map and the calendar were the most poorly answered. The inclusion of a map

as a functional print item may have been unfair since it was obviously outside the realm of experience of many of the children. Many children responded to the map by saying that "It tells you the weather". It appears that for them, the only encounter with maps has been in the context of the weather forecast on television. Although many children scored poorly on the item "calendar" as well, calendars were observed in many of the homes visited. It is suggested that perhaps calendars are not used in a functional way with sufficient frequency to have made an impact upon the children.

**FIGURE 2. A COMPARISON OF THE MEAN SCORES FOR THE FUNCTIONAL AWARENESS OF PRINT, CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT, STORY COMPREHENSION AND SOUNDS IN WORDS SUBTESTS**



### 1.7 Story Comprehension

Both groups achieved low scores on this subtest, with the mean percentage for the better group, Group A, at 52% and that of Group B at 35%. Of a maximum possible score of 10, the mean score for group A was 5.2, with scores ranging from 3 to 8. Group B attained a mean score of 3.5, with scores ranging from 1 to 6. A t-test did not identify statistically significant differences between the two group means ( $p > 0.05$ ). A moderate positive correlation (0.67) was found between subjects' performance on this subtest and their performance on the test of Word Definitions.

The children in Group B generally displayed poor concentration and lack of interest in the story. The Group A children tended to be more interested and responsive. Many of them were able to remember the story from their earlier introduction to it and were able to participate by echoing the recurring lines, eg. "He slammed the door shut - wham,bang,thump".

The comprehension questions which were answered best were those ones which were literal. For example, "What did William's mommy do to make him feel better?". The questions which required reasoning or interpretive skills were poorly answered by both groups. For example, "What do you think would have happened if

the bear didn't get any food?". The question relating to the existence of a real bear posed a problem for the majority of children. Only one of the subjects in the sample, a member of Group A, was able to recognise that the bear existed only in the boy's imagination. Even though many of them said that there hadn't really been a bear, it was obvious that they themselves were not sure. The presence of illustrations of the bear throughout the story seemed to have confused the children, who regarded the illustrations as evidence of the bear's existence. The confusion experienced by the children also seems to provide evidence that there was stronger reliance on the illustrations than on the text for creation of meaning from the story. However, it is also possible that the whole issue around the existence versus non-existence of the bear may have been cognitively difficult for children of this age group to grasp. In order to try and eliminate this possible confounding factor, the mean scores for both groups were computed by excluding questions six and seven which relate to the existence of the bear. The resulting mean percentages were 60% for Group A and 41% for Group B, which are only slightly higher than the original mean percentages. Thus it is apparent that, over and above the confusion surrounding the existence of the bear, the story comprehension skills of both groups were found to be lacking.

### 1.8 Word Definitions

The mean percentages were 54.6% for Group A and 37.5% for Group B. Of a maximum possible score of 38, the mean for Group A was 20.8, with scores ranging from 13 to 29. The scores in Group B ranged from 12 to 23, with a mean score of 14.3. The Mann-Whitney test showed that the differences in group means were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Application of the Spearman Correlation Test identified that subjects' performance on this subtest correlated positively with their performance on four other subtests, namely, Environmental Print (0.68), Functional Awareness of Print (0.73), Story Comprehension (0.67) and the TROG (0.69). (Refer to Appendix 23 for the Spearman Correlation Report.

The children were generally not able to provide clear physical and functional descriptions of objects. The definitions elicited seldom included superordinate terms, which are regarded as critical in the production of formal definitions (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991). Responses were characterised by circumlocutions and the use of non-specific words such as "thing". The results of this study concur with those of Dickinson and Tabors (1991), who found that 50% of the subjects in their low-income group were unable to provide formal definitions. The children's difficulties in providing definitions clearly point to deficits in decontextualised use of language.

Analysis of subjects' responses to each of the test items identified that more than 50% of Group A subjects scored zero for their definitions of the words "diamond" and "thief". More than 50% of Group B subjects scored zero for the following items : "alphabet", "donkey", "nail" and "thief". It was interesting to note that 87,5% of Group B subjects were unable to define the word "alphabet" which is a metalinguistic term in that it is a unit of oral language which refers to written language. Several of the Group B subjects failed to respond to this item, while others replied that "alphabet" means "to sleep". It would seem that these children attended only to the last syllable of the word "alphabet" and responded as if it were the Afrikaans word "bed", which has the same spelling and meaning as the English word "bed", but pronounced /b t/. This response attests to the bilingual home environments of many of the children. Several Group A subjects named letters of the alphabet in lieu of a definition. For the item "donkey", all the subjects in Group B scored zero, with the majority of them failing to respond. In Group A, by contrast, 62% of the subjects either described the donkey's physical features or referred to its function as a beast of burden. The latter response would have earned them two points. In response to the item "nail", many subjects in both groups made vague references to fingers and hands or cutting of nails. Many Group B subjects did not respond. The word "diamond" elicited

many references to rings and there were also several "no responses".

The test stimuli were regarded as being fair since the words were generally familiar to most of the children. During the administration of the subtest it was evident that the children were familiar with the words but were not able to provide satisfactory definitions. This position is also supported by the item analysis, which showed that very few of the test items failed to elicit any form of response from subjects. An exception was the item "thief", to which 54% of the entire sample did not respond, whereas for other items, the percentage of "no responses" was minimal. It is therefore possible that "thief" is a word which is not part of the vernacular of these children. Perhaps alternative words such as "robber" or "skelm" would have been better understood by the children. The word "skelm" is an Afrikaans word, roughly translated as "crook", which is commonly used by English speakers on the Cape Flats.

### 1.9 Narrative Task

The fictional narratives produced by both groups in their retelling of the "bear" story included a limited number of plot elements (Note: The script of the "bear" story appears in Appendix 9 and the list of plot elements required for the narrative task is presented in Appendix 11). Generally subjects displayed poor ability to orientate

the listener to the narrative, as evidenced by the fact that none of the narratives included a setting. Few of the narratives included the initiating event or the protagonists reaction to it. Most narratives included the action and at least one outcome, but few had appropriate endings. The mean number of plot elements out of nine identified by Group A was 3.1 and by Group B was 1. The mean narrative length for Group A was 8.2 clauses and for Group B, 2.4. A sample of a fictional narrative from each group is presented below. The narratives are among the highest scoring ones in each group.

"So William was afraid  
And so he shut the door wham bang thump  
And he fed the bear  
When they ate  
And so a huge smell came from the door  
So the smell was getting stronger and stronger  
So William's mother did some cleaning  
And William's mother cleaned  
And they fight the bear  
William's mother bought him a huge grizzle bear  
And then William wasn't afraid of bears."

C.P. ( 5 years 9 months -Group A)

"The bear under the stairs  
And he gave them hazelnuts  
And bread and bacon and bananas  
And he worried 'bout the bear  
And they go fight the bear  
And his eyes was wide open"

S.G. ( 6 years 0 months - Group B)

As for the fictional narratives, the personal narratives produced by Group A were considerably longer than those of Group B. Both groups produced a significantly higher percentage of action clauses than either orientation or evaluation clauses. Thus, the majority of narratives were rather like a list of actions, with little to orient the listener to the situation or to evaluate the significance of the events. The mean percentages of action, orientation and evaluation clauses are presented in Figure 3.

The following narrative from a subject in Group A, is one which had the highest percentage of orientation clauses :

"There was a man  
They were living down there  
And so they were bumped

And so that man he rode into the one teacher here teacher  
Moodley

And so the other accident it was about that man

His whole car was broken

The whole part of the car was broken

And so only the bottom piece was left."

J.T. ( 6 years 1 month)

The following narrative produced by a Group B subject illustrates the prevalence of action clauses :

"My mommy did take me to the doctor

So the doctor give me medicine

So my mommy say

I must go sleep

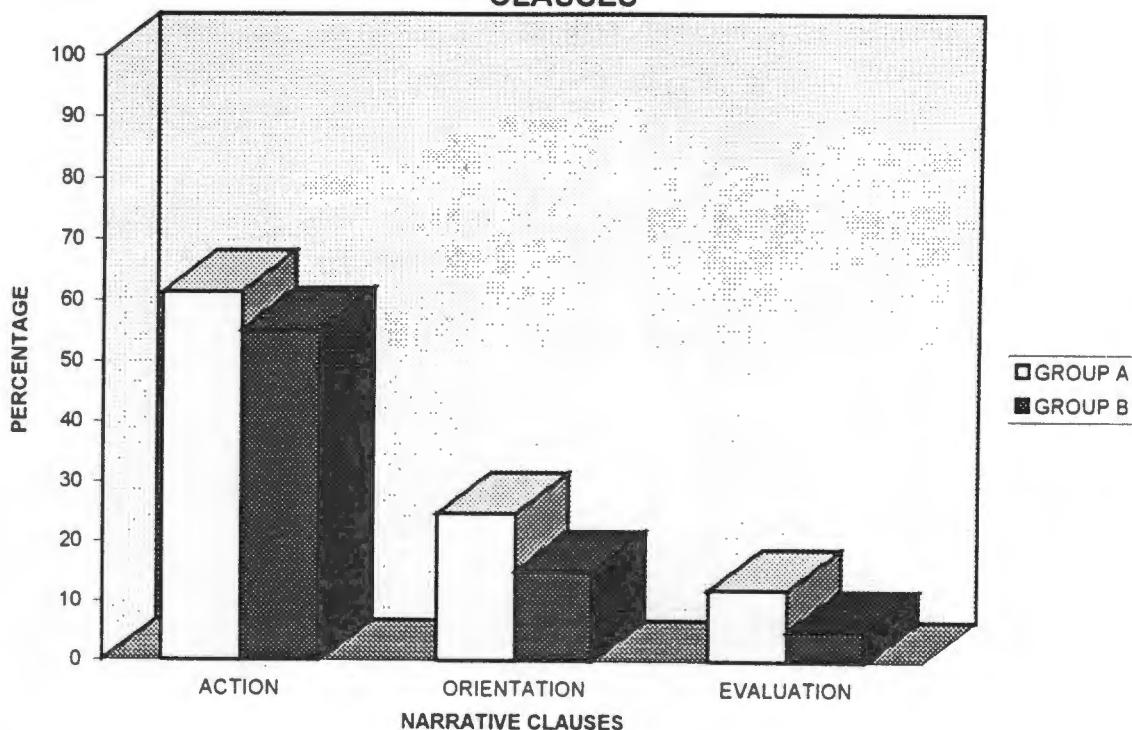
So my mommy say

I must go sleep

So after that so my mommy give me more medicine."

L.Z. ( 6 years 4 months)

**FIGURE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL NARRATIVE CLAUSES**



None of the narratives elicited from either group displayed the classic high-point structure as described by Labov (1972). Peterson and McCabe (1983) found that at age five, children tended to produce narratives which ended at the high point, whereas by age six there was a high incidence of the classic narrative structure in which the narrative builds up to a high point, followed by an evaluation and a resolution. The results obtained in this study do not concur with those of Peterson and McCabe (1983). Two possible reasons for this may be that either the subjects all displayed a delay in narrative development or that high point narratives are not peculiar to this socio-cultural group. This is an area that requires

further research before any conclusive statements can be made.

In addition, both the fictional and personal narratives produced by both groups were noticeably lacking in use of subordinate clauses. This is an indication that their expressive language abilities are not age-appropriate.

#### 1.10 Test for Reception of Grammar (TROG)

While it is not ideal for use on South African populations, the TROG was selected due to its ease of administration and scoring as well as clarity and reasonable appropriateness of stimuli. The test has not been locally standardised, hence the norms can only serve as a guideline rather than an accurate measure of subjects' ability or developmental level with regard to grammatical comprehension. Nevertheless, with all this in mind the TROG was found to be reasonably appropriate for obtaining a baseline measure of subjects' language abilities.

The mean raw scores attained on the TROG were 9.4 for Group A and 6.6 for Group B. The differences in group means were not found by the t-test to be statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). The average age equivalent attained by Group A was approximately five years, as opposed to the average Group B age equivalent of

approximately four years and six months. The mean chronological ages of the children were approximately six years zero months and six years one month for groups A and B, respectively. The performance of both groups of subjects on this test was found to have a moderate positive correlation (0.69) with their performance on the test of Word Definitions. This outcome was to be predicted, since both of these tests capture decontextualised language ability.

In the light of the previously mentioned limitations of the TROG with regard to this population, the age equivalents should not be strictly applied. Furthermore, any judgements pertaining to language abilities of subjects as assessed by the TROG should be guarded in view of the fact that the TROG was developed and standardised for monolingual speakers of standard English, whereas the subjects in this study are from bilingual and bi-dialectal linguistic environments.

#### 1.11 Goodenough-Harris Draw-a-Man Test

The mean raw score achieved by Group A was 16.5, with scores ranging from 8 to 26. The mean score for Group B was 11.4, with scores ranging from 9 to 15. The differences in group means were found to be statistically significant on the Mann-Whitney Test ( $p < 0.05$ ). For Group A the mean non-verbal IQ was 96, which falls within the average range. The mean for Group B was 80, which is low average, nearly borderline mental handicap. The above

descriptions of intellectual levels are those used for the Junior and Senior South African Individual Scales (JSAIS and SSAIS), which are commonly used IQ tests in South Africa (Van Eeden, 1992). Thus, not only is there a 16 point difference in mean non-verbal IQ between the groups, but also these means fall within different areas of the normal curve.

While it may be argued that the large discrepancy in the scores of the two groups may be due to lack of exposure of the Group B subjects to draw-a-man activities, it can be countered that all of the subjects in the study had completed 10 months of pre-school education at the time the study was conducted. Therefore, even if they had not had this kind of exposure at home, they would have done so at school. The IQ differences between the groups have implications for the outcome of this study since they may account for an important source of between group differences in literacy knowledge. The IQ question is a highly complex one which is beyond the ambit of this study. Hence conclusive statements cannot be made about the impact of IQ on the other variables measured in this study.

The difference in mean non-verbal IQs therefore precludes the ascribing of between-group differences in literacy knowledge merely to home supports for literacy. However, some of the very factors

which constitute home support for literacy, such as access or exposure to books and magazines and exposure to story reading, have also been identified as home environment factors which influence IQ (Jensen, 1981). Therefore, the IQ differences between the groups could, in turn, also be regarded as a reflection of environmental differences. Moreover, the influence of SES on IQ has been well documented. Jensen (1981) reports that indices of SES show correlations of 0.4 to 0.5 with children's IQs and that SES accounts for 15 to 20% of the variance in IQ. In the light of the SES differences between the groups in this study, it is therefore not surprising that group differences in mean IQ exist.

Synthesis :

In the foregoing section the better performance of Group A relative to Group B on all subtests of the ELAP is very evident. However, when viewing the mean percentages scored by Group A on the various subtests, it is apparent that even these children did not attain very high scores. Thus, both groups performed poorly, with Group A performing well relative to Group B but not relative to the maximum possible scores.

With reference to the three broad areas encompassed by the ELAP, namely, print knowledge, metalinguistic awareness and language ability, the performance of either group did not point to particular

areas of deficit. Rather, they performed poorly in all areas. For most subtests, the mean percentages scored by Group A subjects were between 50 and 60%. The Concepts about Print test was the only one on which the mean for Group A exceeded 60%. Similarly, for Group B, the Concepts about Print test was the only one for which the group mean exceeded 50%. Generally the mean percentages for Group B on other subtests ranged from 30 to 40%. However, the Concepts about Print test is but one aspect of print knowledge and the children's performance on other tests of print knowledge is indicative of deficits in this area. The subtest which elicited the lowest scores in both groups was the test of Letter Recognition. However, as discussed before, the inclusion of this test for this sample was found to be problematic. In addition to the test of Letter Recognition, Group A also scored poorly on the test of Rhyming Words. Other tests on which Group B performed poorly were Sounds in Words and Environmental Print.

An interesting finding which emerged from statistical analysis is that for the entire sample, moderate to high positive correlations existed between performance on the Word Definitions test and performance on the subtests of Story Comprehension, Environmental Print, Functional Awareness of Print and the TROG. It is not surprising that the Word Definitions test correlates with the TROG and the test of Story Comprehension, since they are all language tests with

emphasis on decontextualisation. However it is interesting that the Word Definitions test also correlates positively with the subtests of Environmental Print and Functional Awareness of Print, which capture print knowledge.

Ten of the 11 subtests of the ELAP were quantitatively scored and of these, statistically significant differences between the two groups were found for six subtests, namely, Environmental Print, Sounds in Words, Concepts about Print, Functional Awareness of Print, Word Definitions and the Goodenough-Harris Draw-a-Man Test. Thus, in addition to the significant differences in group performance on tests of literacy knowledge, the children in the two groups also exhibited significant differences in non-verbal IQ as assessed by the Draw-a-Man test.

With regard to the assessment profile itself, the test stimuli, with a few exceptions, were found to be culturally appropriate. As has been alluded to, the test of Letter Recognition was found to be problematic in that it was not comprehensive enough to tap the children's knowledge of the alphabet. All other subtests were considered to be adequate, although there were specific items deemed inappropriate for this sample. Nevertheless, the ELAP has been successful in achieving its aim of providing valuable qualitative information about the children's emergent literacy knowledge. While

the profile in its present form allows for easy identification of children whose emergent literacy knowledge is significantly lacking, it is less effective for children with less obvious deficits in this area. This is due to the absence of norms appropriate to South African pre-schoolers. In addition to providing conclusive identification of children at risk, adequate norms would also allow for plotting of developmental levels. Given the limitations with regard to normative information, the ELAP, in its present form, nevertheless has utility as a diagnostic tool for local use. However, revision and standardisation of the instrument would enhance its diagnostic value.

## **2. Parent Interviews**

Despite the intrusive nature of home interviews, most of the parents consented without hesitation. Both the personal nature of the interviews, as well as the fact that the researcher was able to gain entry to the home environments, enabled much useful information to be gleaned. Outcomes pertaining to family structure, socio-economic indicators, parental uses of literacy and general home supports for literacy are presented and discussed in the following section. In addition to the categories listed previously, information regarding the developmental history of each child was requested

from the parents. None of the parents reported their children to have delayed milestones. On the whole, none of the subjects had developmental or medical histories which deviated from the norm. The fact that the early development of most of the children was reportedly within normal limits, suggests that their poor performance in many areas on the ELAP may not necessarily be due to inherent deficits but rather to environmental factors.

The information obtained during the parent interviews with regard to the various categories is presented below, In addition, Appendices 21 and 22 include family profiles on each of the subjects. These profiles are narrative accounts compiled by the researcher subsequent to the interviews. The profiles serve as synopses of the information gleaned and also provide "portraits" of individual subjects and their family environments.

## 2.1 Family Structure

### 2.1.1 Family Size :

Fifty percent of Group A families had two children and 43.8% had three children. In Group B, 62.5% of families had two children and 12.5% had three children. One Group B family had six children, whereas none of the Group A families had more than three. Thus, it

is evident that both groups comprised mainly small families. The predominance of small families implies greater potential for parent-child interaction as well as lower demands on their limited financial resources.

#### 2.1.2 Position in the Family :

The majority of subjects in the study were the youngest children in their families : 56.3% in Group A and 50% in Group B. The fact that approximately half the subjects had older siblings implies a high degree of potential access to literacy models.

#### 2.1.3 Marital Status of Parents :

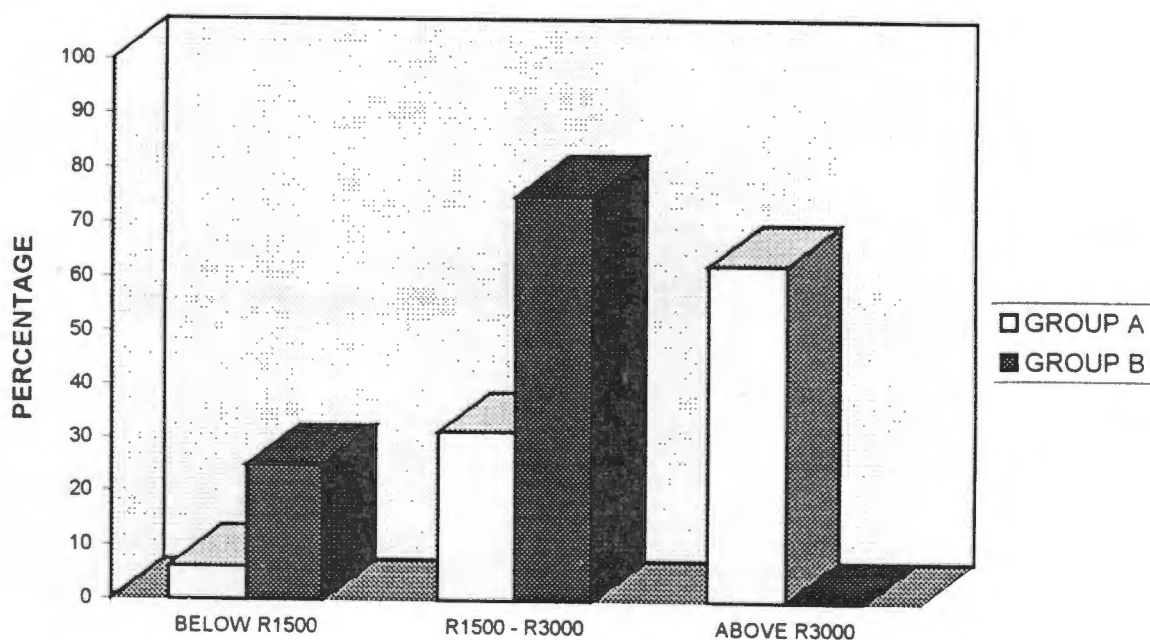
Two children in Group A (12.5%) and three children in Group B (37.5%) were from single parent families. Of the five single-parent families in the sample, two were the result of divorce, while the rest were due to children being born out of wedlock. None of the children in divorced families had regular contact with their fathers. Thus, these children from single parent families only had one parent who could potentially serve as a literacy model.

## 2.2 Socio-economic Indicators

### 2.2.1 Monthly Family Income :

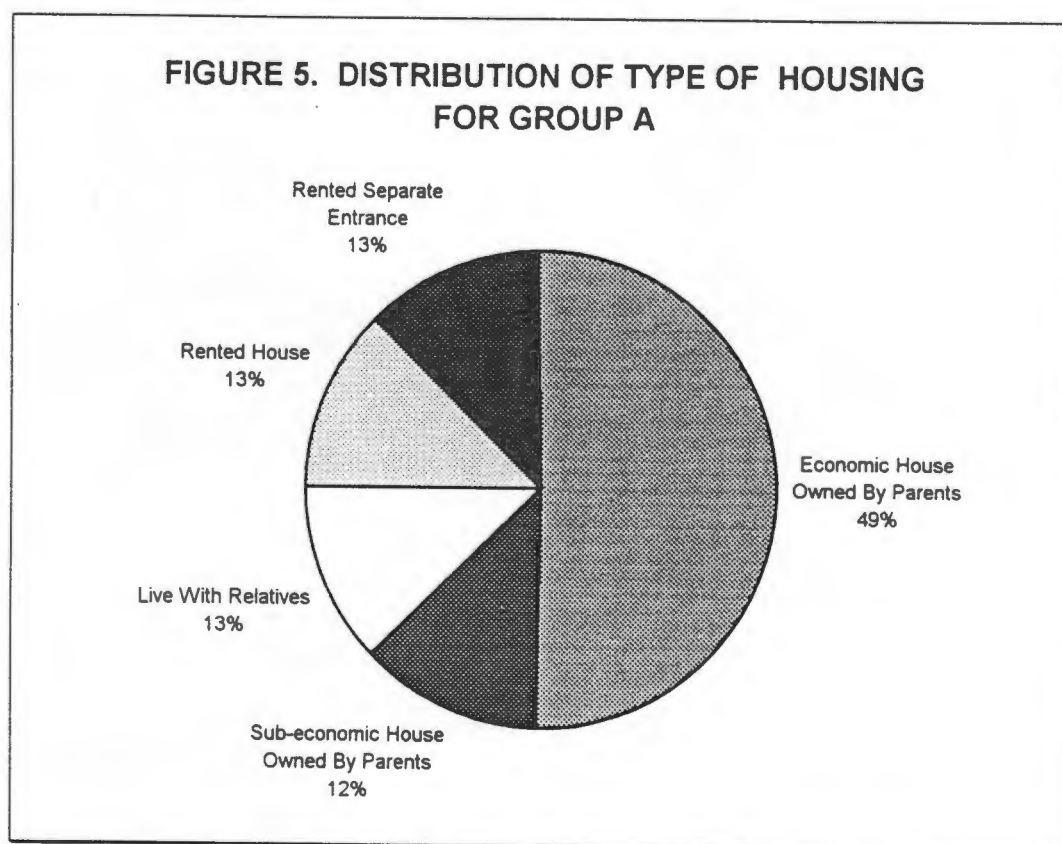
The majority of Group A families (62.5%) had monthly incomes in excess of R3000-00, while the majority of Group B families (75%) had monthly incomes between R1500-00 and R3000-00 (see Figure 4).

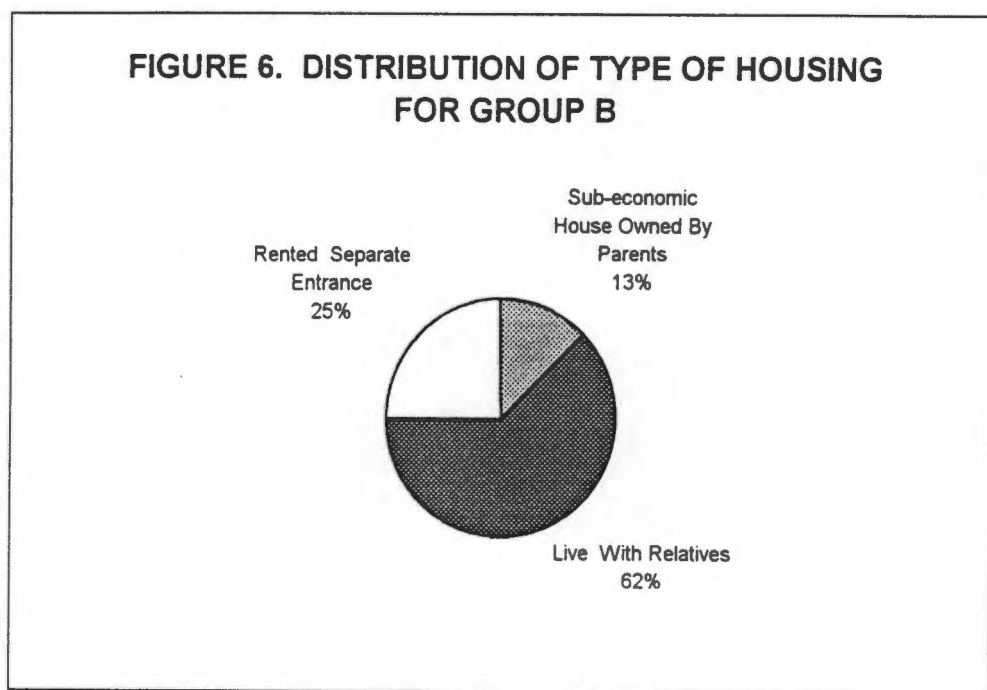
**FIGURE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME**



### 2.2.2 Housing :

The majority of Group A families (50%) owned their homes, while 62.5% of Group B families lived with relatives (refer to Figures 5 and 6).





### 2.2.3 Parental Education :

In Group A, 68% of the mothers had completed standards 8 to 10, as opposed to only 25% in Group B. The majority of Group B mothers (50%) had completed standards 6 and 7 (see Figure 7). The majority of Group A fathers (57.2%) had completed standards 8 to 10, while for Group B there was no single level of education completed by the majority. Thirty three percent of Group B fathers had completed standards 6 and 7 and standards 8 to 10, respectively (See Figure 8).

FIGURE 7. MATERNAL EDUCATION

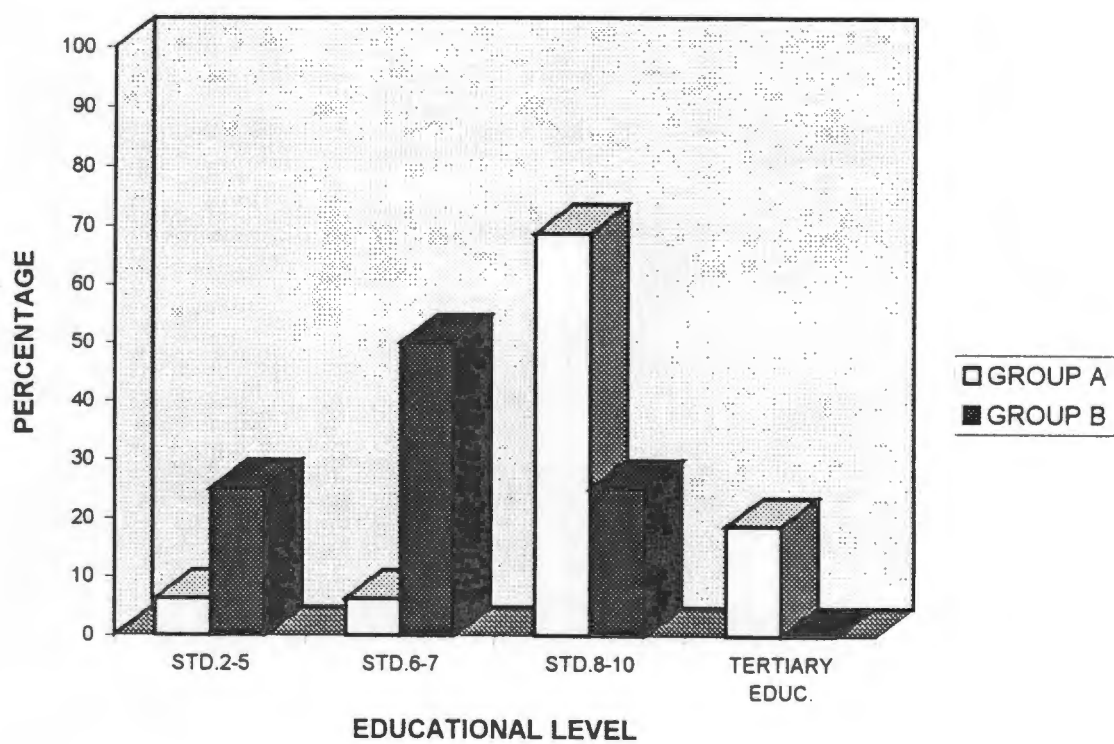
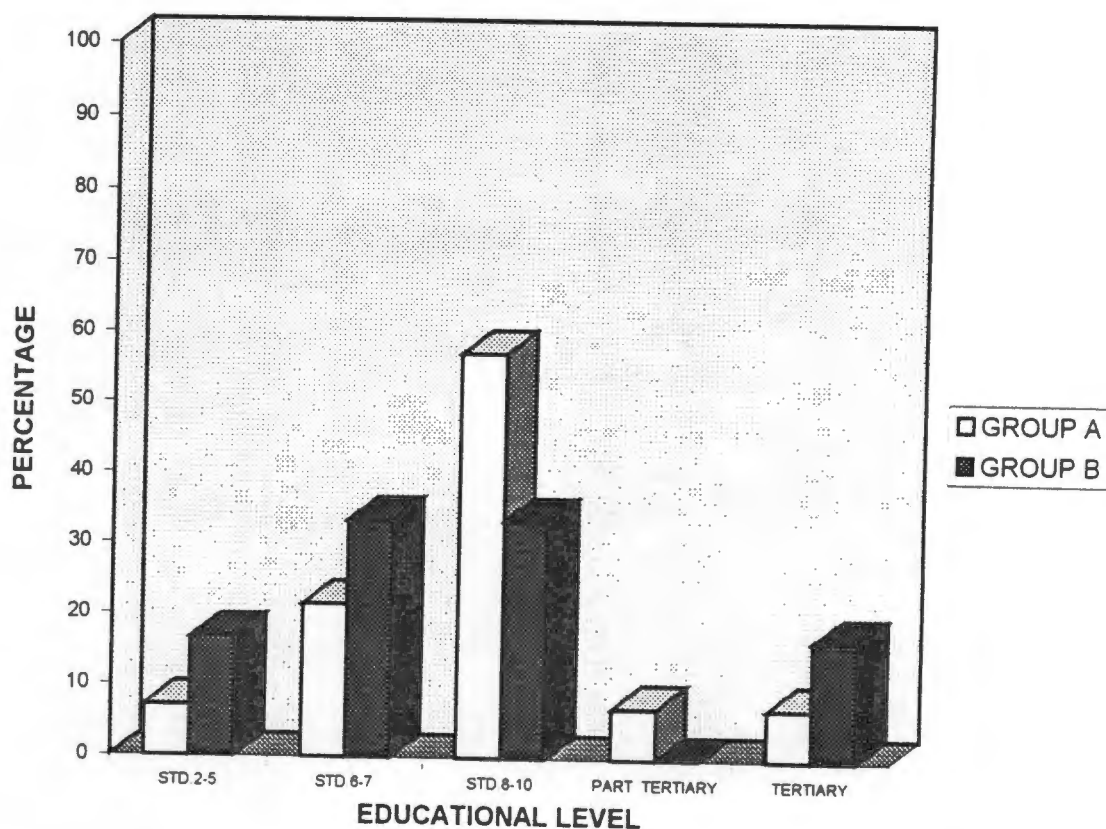


FIGURE 8. PATERNAL EDUCATION



#### 2.2.4 Parental Occupations :

Fifty one percent of Group A mothers were employed in a clerical capacity and 25% were economically inactive. Most of the Group A fathers were skilled artisans (28.5%), semi-skilled artisans (21.4%) or clerical workers (21.4%). Economically inactive fathers constituted 7.1% of the group. In Group B the mothers were mainly semi-skilled artisans (37.5%) or economically inactive (37.5%). Sixty percent of Group B fathers were semi-skilled artisans and none

were economically inactive. Maternal and paternal occupational categories are depicted in Figures 9 and 10. A description of the occupational categories, which were derived from those used by the Human Sciences Research Council, is provided in Appendix 20. From the information pertaining to parental occupations it becomes apparent that among Group A parents there is a preponderance of clerical workers, whereas among Group B parents semi-skilled artisans, such as production workers, are in the majority.

FIGURE 9. PATERNAL OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES

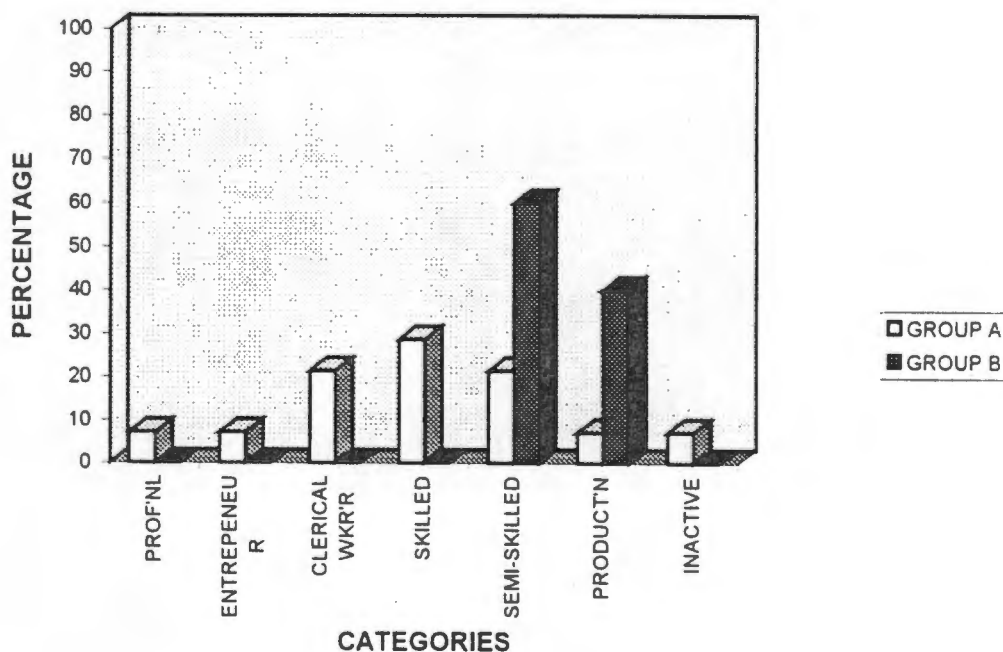
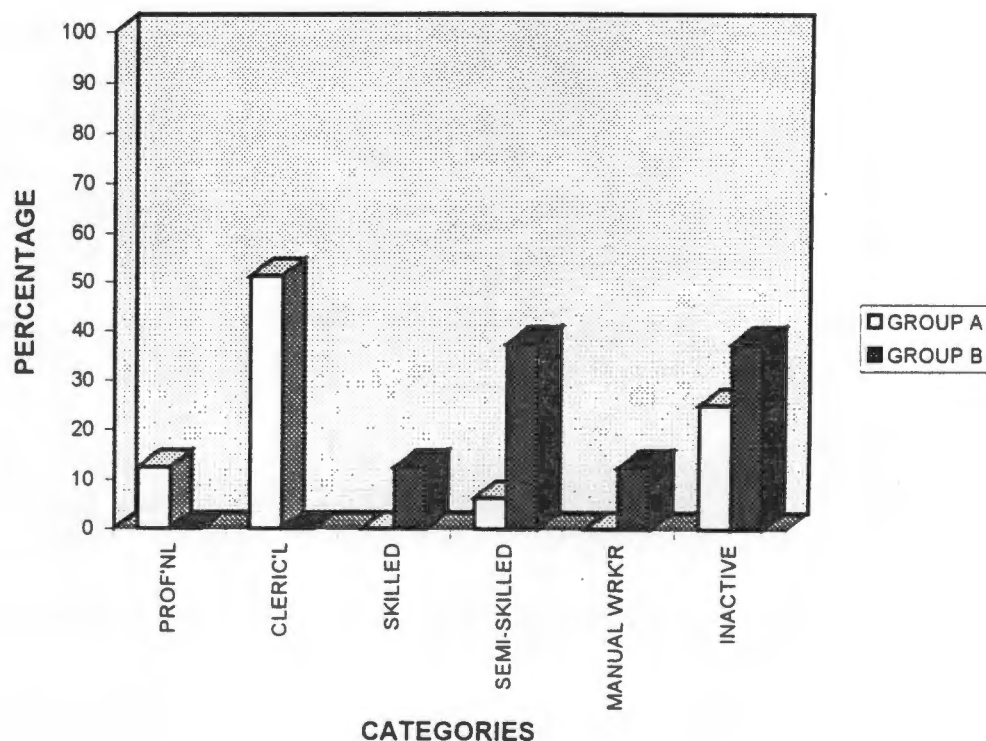


FIGURE 10. MATERNAL OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES



Initially the two subject groups were identified on the basis of the school the children attended, the teacher's assessment of their family background and on the parental occupations listed in the teacher's records of the children. Subsequent to the parent interviews it emerged that, on the whole, the group allocation of families was accurate. However, there were two families in Group A and one family in Group B who would have been more correctly placed within the alternative group. According to the six-fold social status classification described by Horton and Hunt (1984), Group A families would qualify as lower-middle class, which comprises mainly

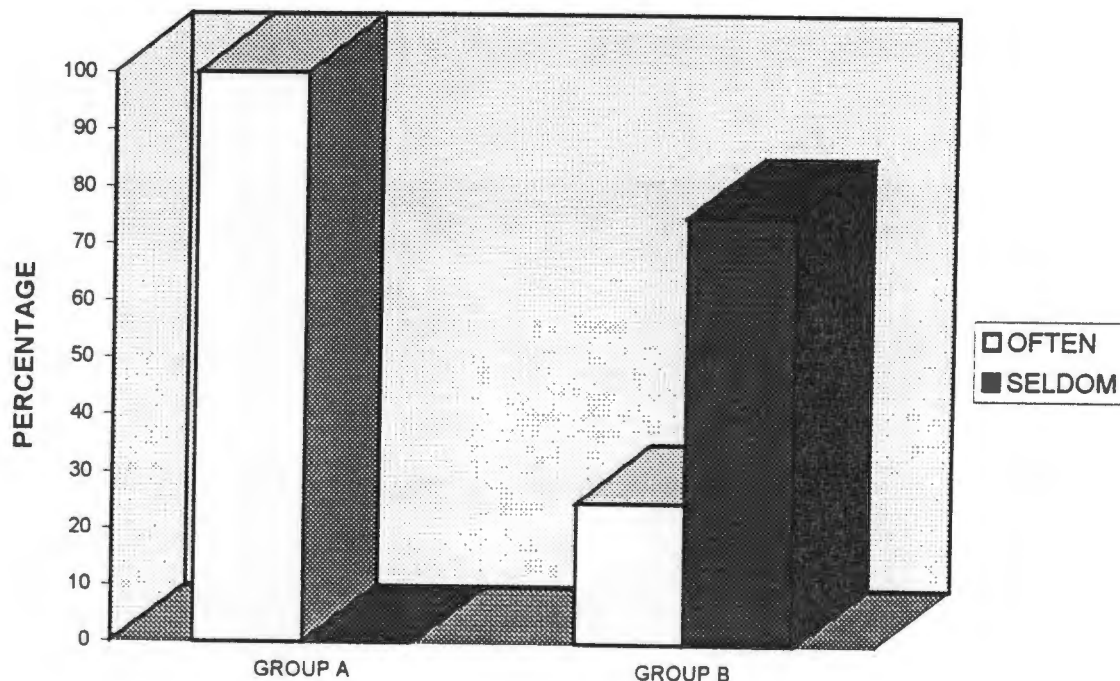
white collar workers, semi-professionals, supervisors and craftspeople. Group B families would constitute the upper-lower class, who are mainly blue collar workers in steady employment.

### 2.3 Parental Uses of Literacy

#### 2.3.1 Uses of Literacy in the Workplace :

Twelve of the 16 Group A mothers (75%) were employed, as were four of the eight Group B mothers (50%). In Group A, 100% of the working mothers used literacy skills at work. By contrast, 75 % of the Group B mothers did not use literacy for work purposes (see Figure 11). This finding is congruent with the higher levels of education identified in Group A mothers, since it is more likely that persons with higher levels of education and, by implication, higher levels of literacy, would procure employment which involves literate activity.

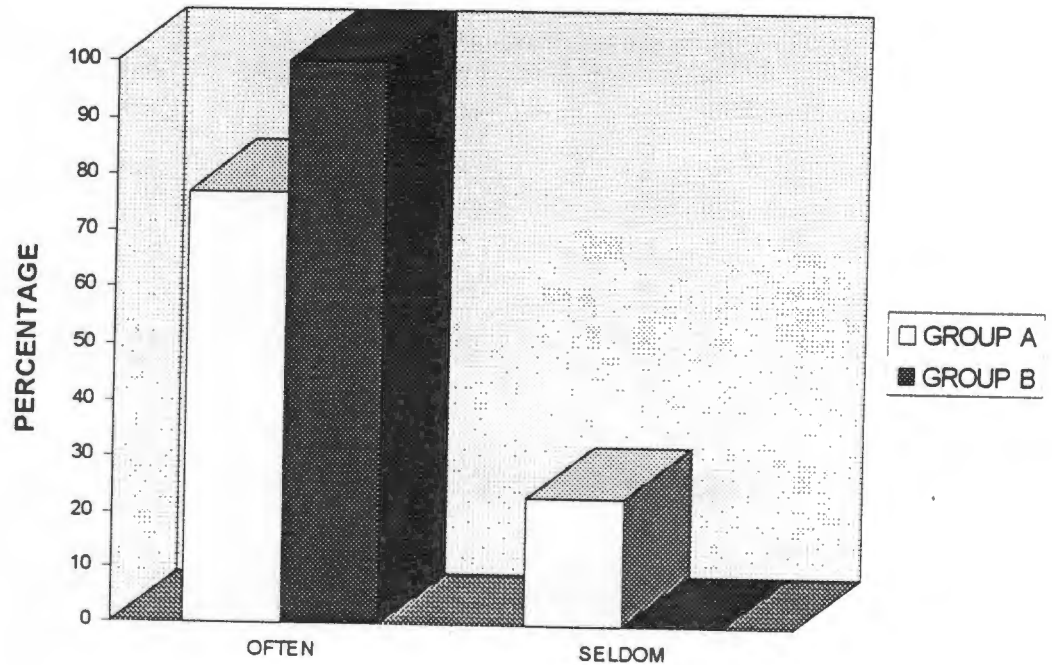
FIGURE 11. MATERNAL USES OF LITERACY IN THE WORKPLACE



In Group A, 13 of the 14 fathers and in Group B, all five fathers were employed. Seventy five percent of Group A fathers and 100% of Group B fathers used literacy in the workplace (see Figure 12). This finding was contrary to expectations in that it was not predicted that such a high percentage of Group B fathers would utilize literacy in the workplace. On the basis of educational levels and occupational categories, a large difference between the paternal groups was not expected. Paternal educational levels for both groups were similar, but there were differences in occupational categories. The occupations of group A fathers were more or less evenly spread across the clerical, skilled artisan and semi-skilled

artisan categories, while Group B fathers were mainly semi-skilled artisans. Thus, at face value, the occupational categories of fathers in both groups did not predict very high usage of literacy, although they did indicate that Group A fathers ought to have had slightly greater literacy usage. The finding that more group B fathers engaged in literacy at work was therefore surprising. Although there is no apparent explanation for this outcome, it is suggested that perhaps if the frequency of engagement in literacy activities in the workplace was ascertained a different picture may have emerged. Also, information regarding paternal uses of literacy was , in most cases obtained from mothers and it may be possible that they had a distorted perception of their spouses' use of literacy in the workplace.

FIGURE 12. PATERNAL USES OF LITERACY IN THE WORKPLACE

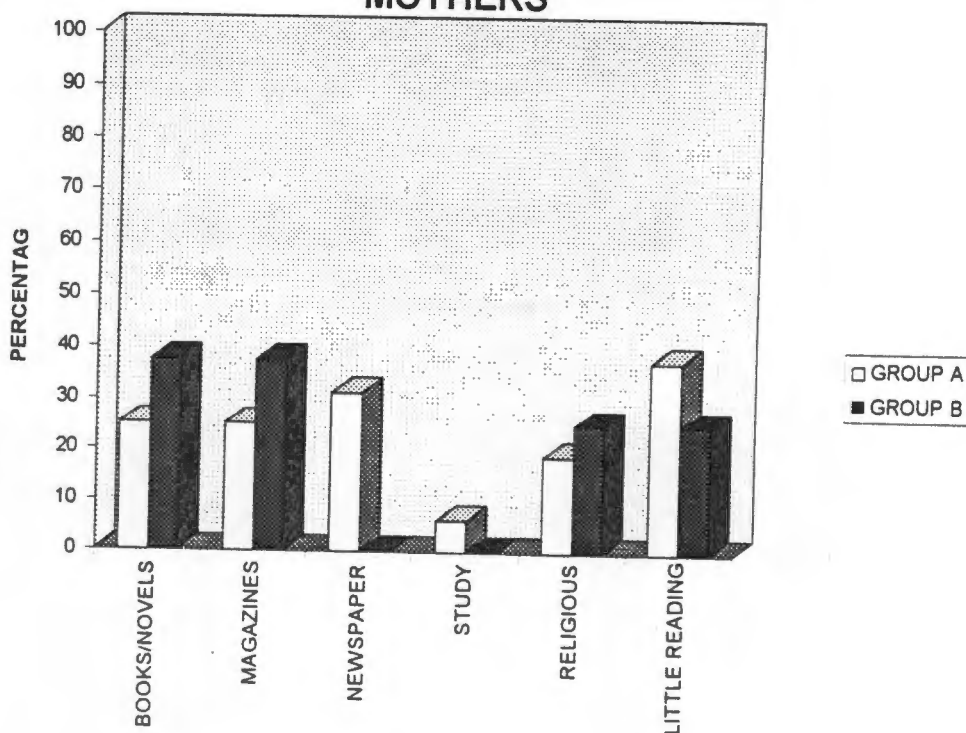


### 2.3.2 Reading Materials Used in the Home :

A greater percentage of Group B mothers read books and novels, magazines and religious material than did Group A mothers (see Figure 13). On the other hand, 31% of Group A mothers read the newspapers, whereas none of the Group B mothers did so. 37.5% of Group A mothers did little or no reading, while only 25% of their Group B counterparts fell into this category. Of the Group B mothers who read magazines, all of them reported reading the "You" magazine, which targets mainly female readers and includes news about film and television stars, as well as articles on

sensational events. While there were also mothers in Group A who read "You" magazine, there were a few who read "Reader's Digest", which is of a higher literary standard. Many Group B mothers read Mills and Boon romance novels, which are pulp fiction. By contrast, the Group A mothers who read novels, tended to read the work of internationally acclaimed popular fiction authors such as Danielle Steele. It would seem that, for the mothers, there is no relationship between parental uses of literacy in the workplace and reading practices in the home. There is also no clear link between socio-economic status and maternal use of reading materials in the home. It may also be possible that the greater percentage of Group B mothers engaging in reading at home is linked to the greater percentage of economically inactive mothers in this group.

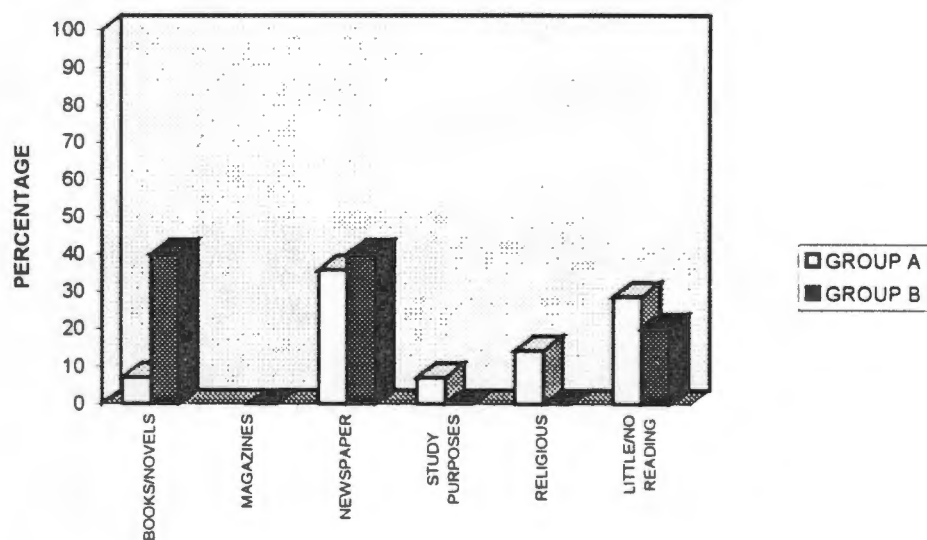
**FIGURE 13. HOME READING MATERIALS OF MOTHERS**



Forty percent of Group B fathers read both novels/books and newspapers, while 7.14% of Group A fathers read novels/books and 35.7% read newspapers (see Figure 14). Most of the interviews were conducted with the mothers and few were able to identify specific authors whose books their husbands read. One Group B mother reported that her husband enjoyed reading books by James Hadley Chase, a pulp fiction author. In Group A, 7.1% and 14.3% of fathers engaged in reading for study purposes and religious reading, respectively, whereas none of their Group B counterparts did. Of the fathers who indicated that they did little or no reading,

28.6% were in Group A and 20 % in Group B. The above results point to greater engagement in home reading activities by the lower income fathers. In contrast to the survey on mothers, the group of fathers, that is Group B, who reportedly used literacy to a greater degree in the workplace also engaged in more reading at home.

**FIGURE 14. HOME READING MATERIALS OF FATHERS**



### 2.3.3 Literacy Activities in the Home :

The families in both groups reported engaging in very similar literacy activities. For Group A, the most common literacy activities were Bible reading (100%), story reading to children (81.3%), sending

birthday or Christmas cards (81.3%), reading the newspaper (68.8%) and doing crossword puzzles (68.8%). For Group B the most common literacy activities were Bible reading (87.5%), story reading to children (87.5%), sending birthday or Christmas cards (62.5%) and reading the newspaper (62.5%). For both groups the least common activities were singing from hymn sheets and writing letters. Of the literacy activities listed on the questionnaire, Bible reading received the highest percentage of positive responses by both groups. The term "Bible reading" is used in an inclusive sense, referring to both the Christian and Muslim holy scriptures. Although high percentages of parents reported reading the Bible in their homes, when asked in another section of the questionnaire about their reading habits, they did not include Bible reading. This discrepancy could have occurred for two reasons, namely that parents viewed Bible reading as different from other types of reading or that parents tended to provide the more socially desirable response. The high reported frequency of story reading will be discussed in a later section.

The information obtained regarding occupational and domestic uses of literacy is not felt to be sufficiently comprehensive since there is no indication of frequency, duration or even complexity level of literacy activities. The fact that no frequency information pertaining to literacy activities was obtained, may also account, in part, for the

rather unexpected finding that more Group B fathers used literacy in the workplace and that more Group B mothers engaged in reading at home. Although many parents reported that they engaged in reading either at home or in the workplace, it was not ascertained how frequently this occurred. Frequency data may thus have resulted in a different pattern of literacy practices emerging. In addition, the results obtained may have been influenced by the gleaned information from an indirect source, as in the case of paternal uses of literacy, and also by respondents' desire to provide socially desirable responses.

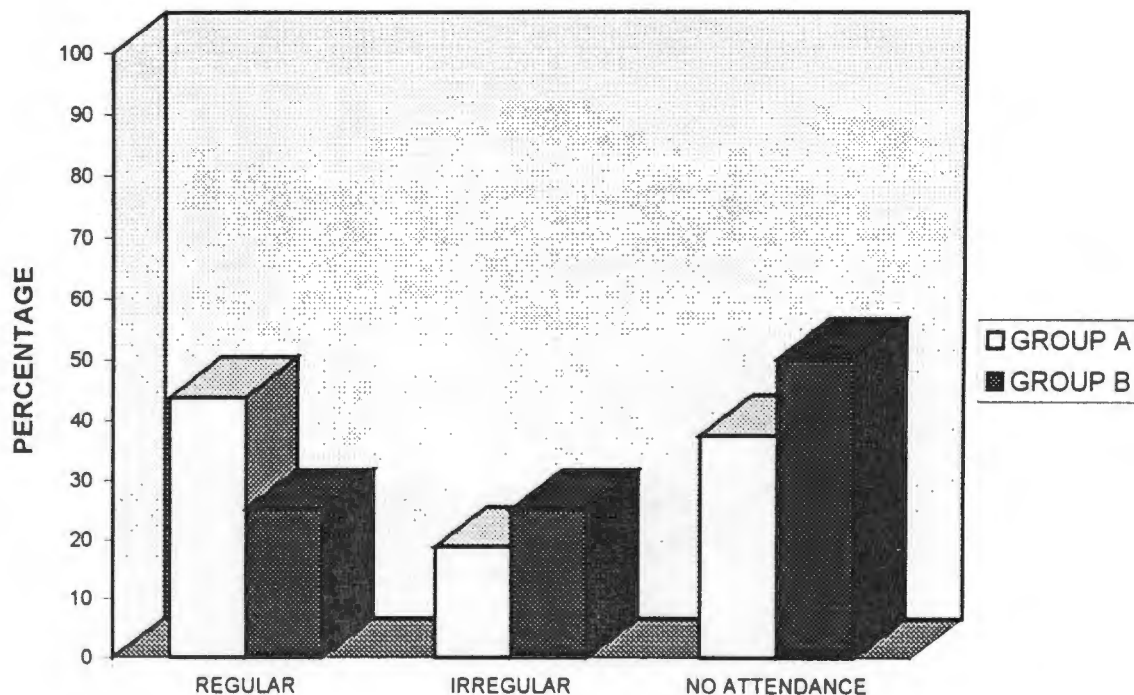
The findings have shown that all the children have access to at least one parental model of literacy, although there is no qualitative information with regard to literacy models. With regard to the domains of literacy activity within the home identified by Teale (1986), the most common ones were storybook time; participating in information networks and entertainment. This differs slightly from the findings of Purcell-Gates (1994) that entertainment and daily living routines were the most common domains of literacy activity among low SES families.

## 2.4 Other Home Supports for Literacy

### 2.4.1 Library Attendance :

The library attendance of both groups was rather poor. The regular library attenders comprised 43.8% of Group A as opposed to 25% of Group B (see Figure 15). Fifty percent of Group B children and 37.5% of Group A children did not attend the library at all. When probed about reasons for irregular or lack of library attendance, many parents, especially those who were employed, said that they found it inconvenient or did not have the time to take their children to the library. Some parents admitted that they simply had not considered introducing their children to the library. Several parents reported that they had just recently obtained library membership for their children but had not started attending yet. Since the Kensington Library is within approximately two kilometres of the homes of all the subjects in the study, lack of access is not viewed as a factor contributing to poor library attendance. Instead, it would appear that poor attendance is due to parents either not having sufficient time or not regarding library attendance as important or necessary.

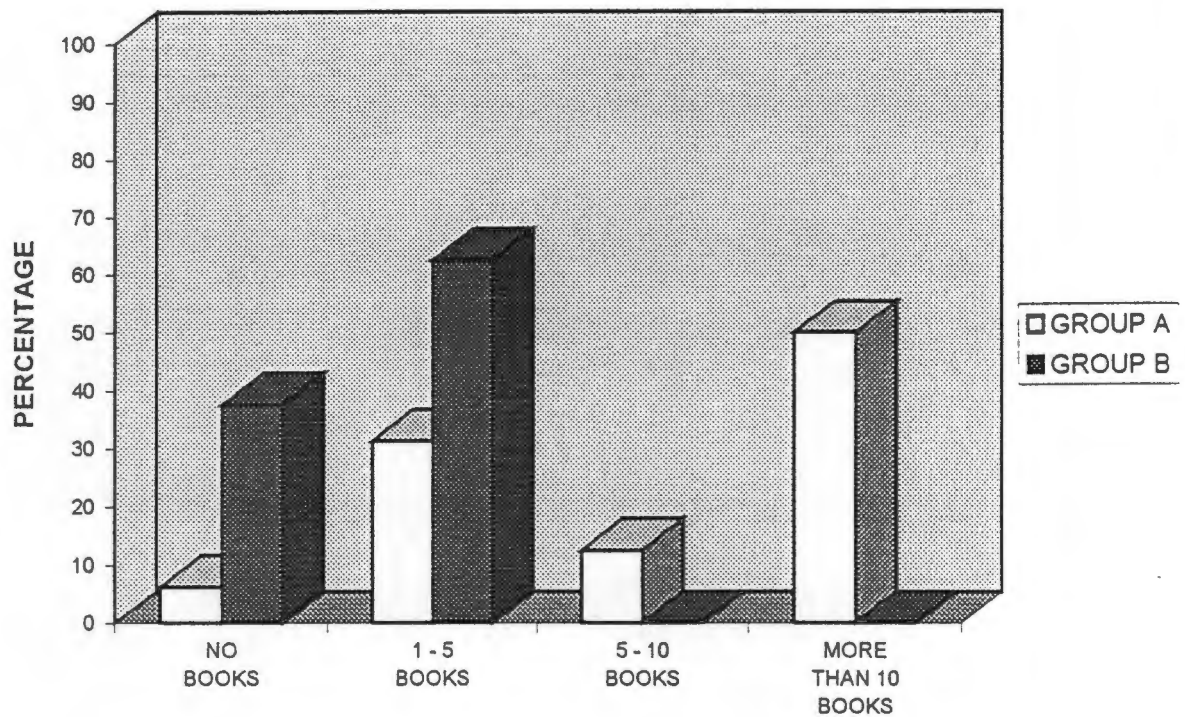
FIGURE 15. LIBRARY ATTENDANCE



#### 2.4.2 Book Ownership :

The majority of Group A children (50%) owned more than 10 books, while the majority of Group B children (62.5%) owned between 1 and 5 books (see Figure 16). In Group B, 37.5% of the children did not own any books, whereas only 6.3% of Group A children fell into this category. The pattern of book ownership which has emerged in the two groups is considered to be linked to the differences in family income.

FIGURE 16. BOOK OWNERSHIP



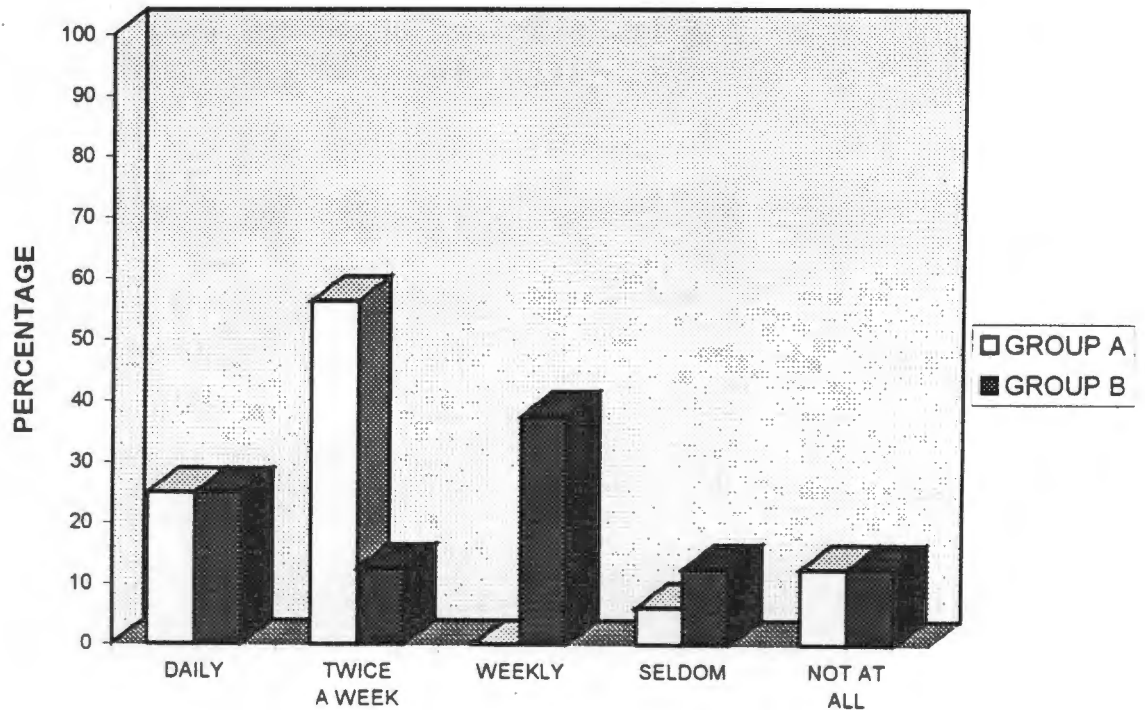
### 2.4.3 Exposure to Story Reading :

The parents of 25% of the children in both groups reported reading to their children between five and seven times per week (see Figure 17). The majority of Group A children (56.3%) heard stories two to three times weekly, while the largest percentage (37.5%) of group B children heard stories once a week. In both groups, 12.5% of the children were not read to at all. These findings contrast with those of Teale (1986), who found that only 15% of the low income

families in his study engaged in storybook reading.

From the above it can be seen that Group A children are exposed to story reading activities more frequently than their Group B peers. However, in examining the information provided by individual parents with regard to story reading, book ownership and library attendance, it was found that in many cases children owned between one and five books and did not belong to the library, yet parents reported reading to them three or more times per week. This finding therefore alerts one to the possibility that parents may have been providing socially desirable responses. This has methodological implications in that parental report is perhaps not the most accurate means of obtaining information with regard to story reading practices in the home.

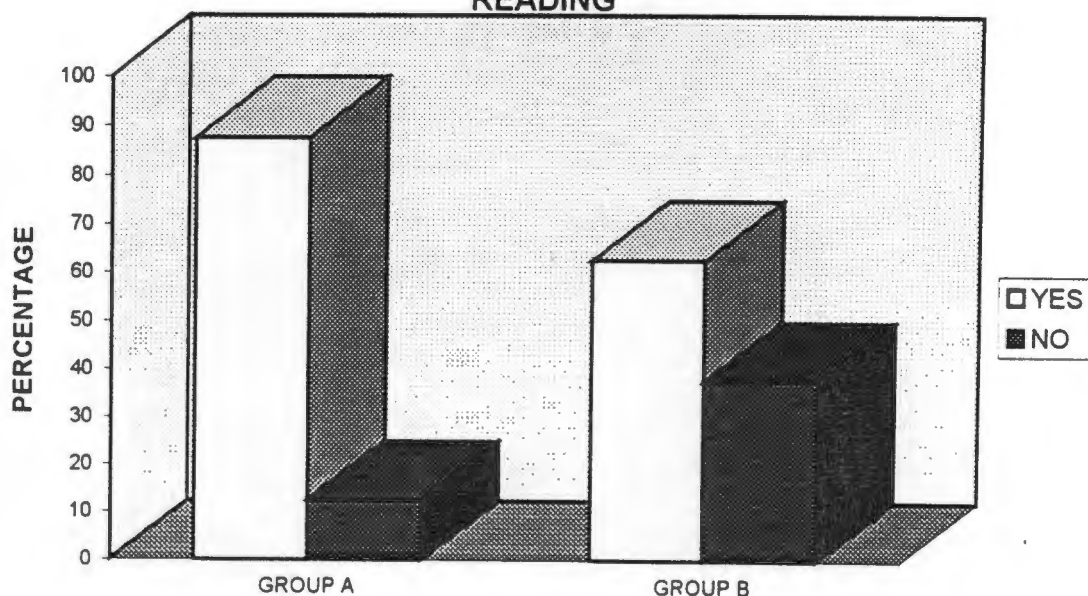
FIGURE 17. STORY READING BY ADULTS OR SIBLINGS



#### 2.4.4 Children's Requests for Story Reading :

In both groups the children were reported to display much eagerness for being read to. Eighty seven point five percent of Group A and 62.5% of Group B children actually requested that their parents or siblings read to them (see Figure 18). The interest displayed by the children in story reading is most likely to be activated by previous pleasurable engagements in this activity.

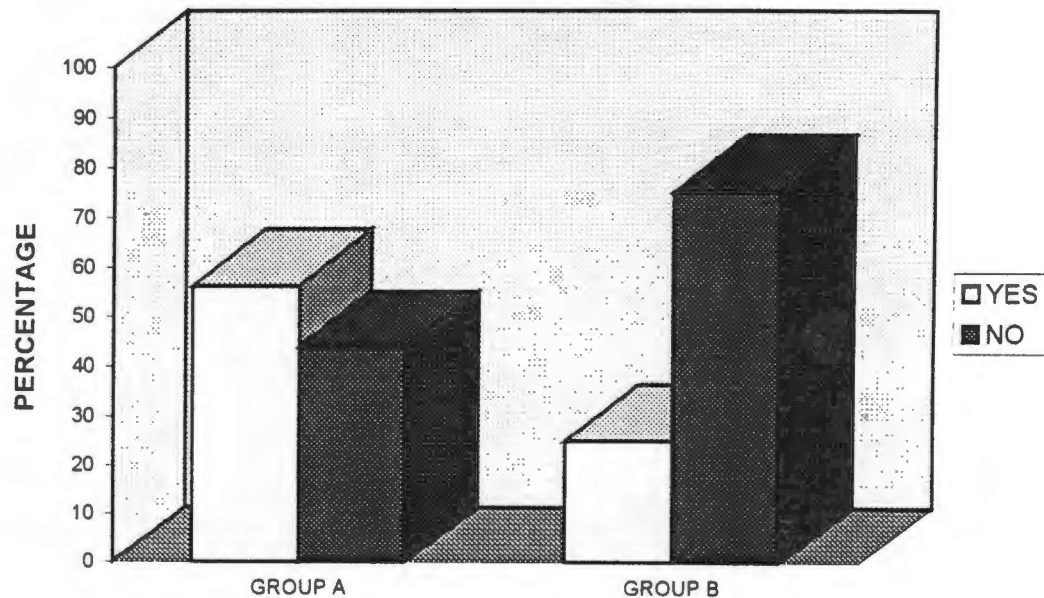
FIGURE 18. CHILDREN'S REQUESTS FOR STORY  
READING



#### 2.4.5 Exposure to Nursery Rhymes in the Home :

Generally, exposure to nursery rhymes in the home was limited. Only 56.3% of Group A and 25% of Group B children were taught nursery rhymes (see Figure 19). For many of the children, this exposure was due to older siblings rather than parents. Many parents indicated that they had not seen it as their role to teach nursery rhymes and that these would be encountered at school.

**FIGURE 19. LEARNING OR TEACHING OF NURSERY RHYMES AT HOME**

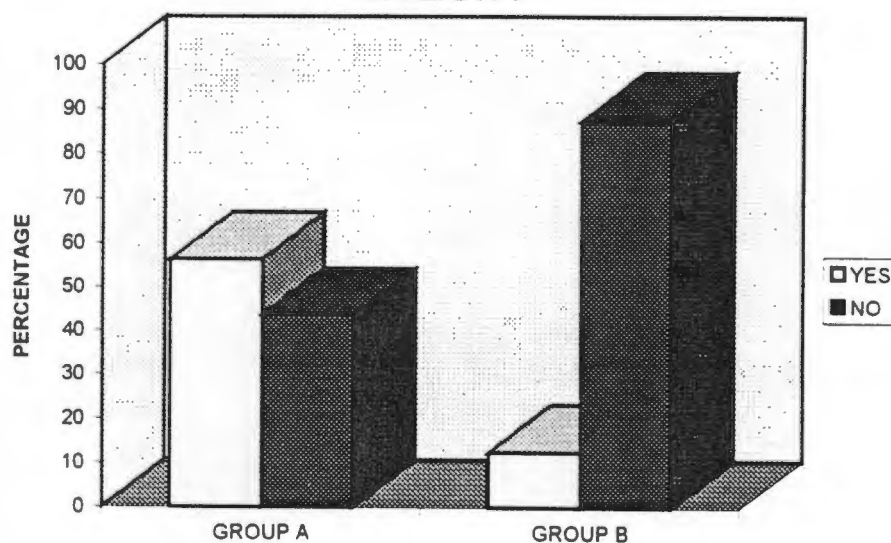


2.4.6 Access to Fostering of Literacy by Siblings or Adults other than Parents :

Fostering of literacy was reported to be available to 56.3% of Group A and only 12.5% of Group B children (see Figure 20). In most cases, additional literacy models were provided by older siblings, although for some children this role was assumed by aunts or grandmothers. Considering that 50% of the subjects in Group B had older siblings, the reported access to fostering of literacy for these children is very poor. It is hypothesized that the siblings of these

children have not had positive engagements with literacy. The lack of access to additional literacy models is unfortunate since siblings and extended family have a valuable role to play in augmenting the home supports for literacy provided by the parents.

**FIGURE 20. ACCESS TO FOSTERING OF LITERACY**

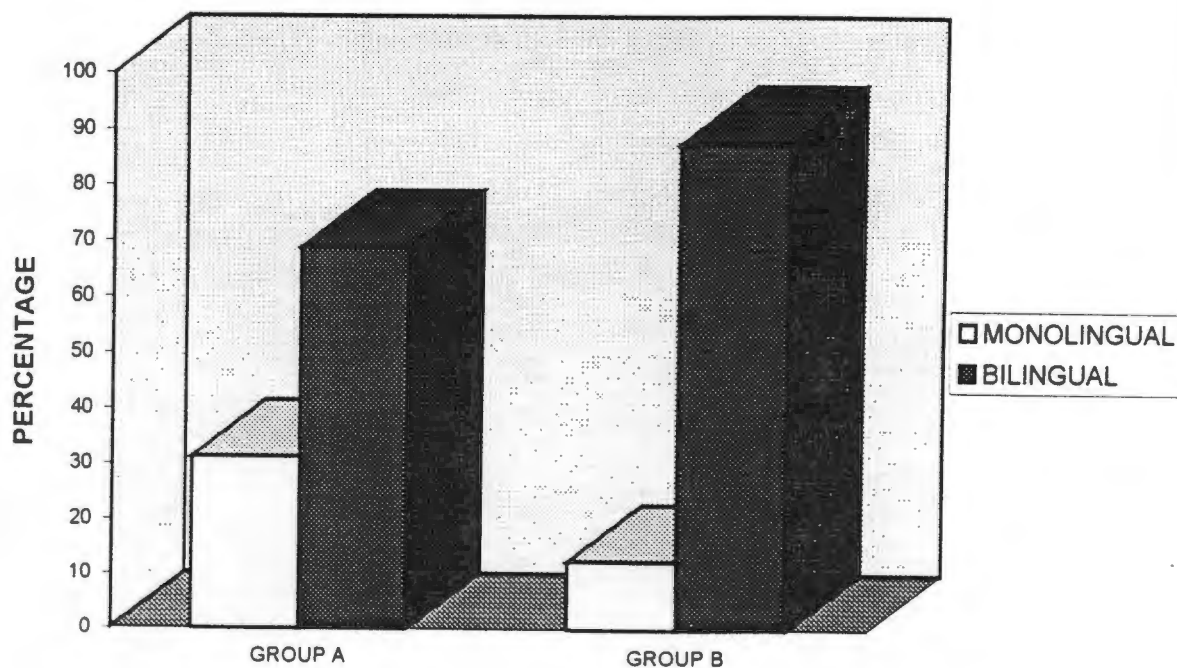


#### 2.4.7 Home Language :

English-Afrikaans bilingual families comprised 68.8% and 87.5% of Groups A and B, respectively (see Figure 21). In addition, the majority of parents in these bilingual families are mother-tongue speakers of Afrikaans. The influence of Afrikaans grammar and vocabulary was strongly evident in the English spoken by many of

the parents. There were also some parents who had extremely poor command of English. As has been alluded to earlier in this dissertation, the above scenario has significant implications for the children's language development and the level of competence in English which they acquire. In addition, the high incidence of bilingualism in the home environments of subjects is considered to have contributed to their poor performance on language-related subtests of the ELAP. Furthermore, given the importance of oral language in the acquisition of literacy, children from bilingual homes where neither of the parents are mother-tongue speakers of English, are likely to be at a disadvantage.

FIGURE 21. LANGUAGE USAGE IN THE HOME

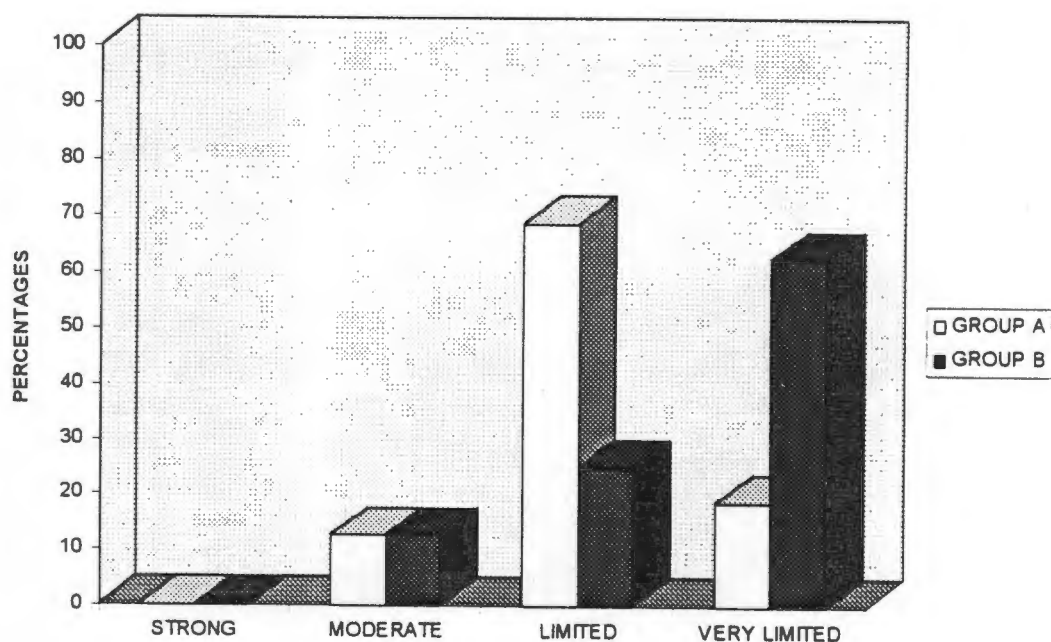


#### 2.4.8 Home Literacy Environment :

On the basis of information obtained during the home visits, home literacy environment scores were assigned to each of the subjects (Refer to Appendix 19 for scoring criteria). None of the home environments were found to be strongly literate (See Figure 22). The majority of Group A subjects (68.8%) were from home environments with limited literacy orientation, whereas 62.5% of Group B subjects were from homes in which literacy artifacts and activities were very limited. On a more subjective level, the researcher did not have a sense of literacy being embedded in the

lives of the families who were involved in the study. Instead, it appeared that literacy played a peripheral role. This is in sharp contrast to the experience of Taylor (1983), who described literacy as forming "part of the very fabric of family life" in a group of middle class American families.

**FIGURE 22. HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENTS**



Note : To facilitate interpretation of this chart, please refer to Appendix 19

Information obtained during the parent interviews revealed many differences between the two groups of subjects. Analysis of the

socio-economic indicators confirmed that Group A children had more favourable socio-economic circumstances than their Group B peers. The Group A children had better home supports for literacy in terms of access to libraries, book ownership, story reading and exposure to nursery rhymes. This group of children also had greater exposure to literacy models in the form of siblings and adults other than their parents. Thus, Group A, the group who performed better on the ELAP, also had more favourable home supports for literacy. This outcome is in line with the finding of Share et al. (1983) that a relationship existed between home supports such as library membership, book ownership and frequency of book reading, and reading ability at school entry.

With regard to parental literacy models, most children had at least one parent who engaged in reading at home. Interestingly, a greater percentage of Group A fathers and mothers reported doing little or no reading at home. Despite the fact that many of the home environments provided limited fostering of literacy, it seemed that many parents were not sure of their role and that they would be able to provide better support for literacy if given appropriate guidance. This assertion is supported by the research of Purcell-Gates (1994) which showed that parents' participation in family literacy programmes had a positive influence on the frequency of literacy events in the home and on mother-child interactions around

literacy. In contrast to the informants in this study, Heath (1983) found that adults in the black working class community of Trackton did not perceive it as their role to actively promote language or literacy development.

In terms of the actual data collection, it proved extremely useful to have conducted personal interviews with parents as opposed to distributing self-administered questionnaires. Face-to-face interaction with respondents allowed the researcher to probe responses and also to clarify questions when respondents were unsure. However, a problem with conducting personal interviews is the possibility that respondents will produce socially desirable responses. Visits to the homes of the families were useful in that the researcher was able to observe their physical environments from a literacy perspective. The Parent Questionnaire and Home Supports for Literacy Questionnaire (See Appendices 17 and 18) which provided the framework for the interviews were found to be fairly successful and appropriate. However, subsequent to analysis of the results, it was found that in certain cases questions needed to be more specific or followed up with additional questions. For example, where parents were asked about the frequency of reading to their children, it would have been useful to probe about the reading material which they used.

While the interviews yielded much valuable information, it has become clear that certain additional data would have been useful. The need for additional quantitative and qualitative information regarding literacy activities of parents, siblings and other persons within the children's home environments is evident. In addition to ascertaining whether or not families engage in various literacy activities, it would have been useful to determine the frequency and duration. While it would have entailed difficulty from a practical perspective, observation of these families would have provided this additional information and would have made it possible to gain some idea of whether literacy activities are central or peripheral to their daily functioning. Furthermore, by in-depth observation it could have been determined whether or not qualitative differences exist between the two groups with regard to their engagement in similar literacy activities. Thus, there is a strong argument for the utilisation of ethnographic research methodology, which has been employed in large scale international studies, in order to uncover additional information. However, this was not possible, given the constraints of time, human and financial resources applicable to the present study.

### 3. Summary of Findings :

The results of the study showed that although all the children had some degree of literacy knowledge, the group of children from more favourable socio-economic home environments performed better on tasks assessing emergent literacy skills and knowledge. The children from better socio-economic environments also tended to have home environments which were more promotive of literacy. However, even though the subjects in Group A performed better than their peers on the ELAP, they did not exhibit high levels of proficiency. Similarly, while the home environments of Group A children are more supportive of literacy than those of Group B, there remains room for improvement. Thus, although the subjects in both groups exhibited varying degrees of emergent literacy knowledge, many of them have "at-risk" status for literacy acquisition, due to their poor performance in certain literacy-related skills.

The foregoing section has covered the findings emerging from the ELAP and the parent interviews in some detail and discussed the strengths and limitations of each. The following section will discuss the study and its outcomes from a broader perspective.

#### 4. General Discussion

Having covered the findings of this study in detail, it is now pertinent to evaluate and contextualise the study with regard to specified aims and other research in the field. In the first instance, this study has successfully achieved its stated goal of developing an appropriate assessment profile for South African pre-schoolers. Given the multi-cultural nature of the South African population, it is obviously not possible to adopt a single assessment instrument for pre-schoolers from all ethnic groups. Nevertheless, this study attempts to address the need for culturally appropriate assessment instruments. Secondly, the study has generated much needed information about the emergent literacy knowledge of a group of South African children. While the nature of the sample precludes generalisations, the study has made inroads into a domain in which very little research has been conducted and therefore serves as a pilot for further studies. Thirdly, this research has succeeded in obtaining valuable data on the home literacy environments of the children. This information is particularly important since it is necessary to have insight into the status quo regarding home environments prior to undertaking to effect change.

Although the study has been successful in achieving its aims, it is acknowledged that the small sample size and lack of random

sampling constitute a limitation in that generalisations and conclusive statements cannot be made on the basis of its outcomes. However, the aim of the study was to be exploratory and to generate qualitative data regarding emergent literacy. Thus, while generalisations cannot be made, the information gleaned could be used to inform the development and planning of larger scale studies which could generate more conclusive outcomes.

With regard to the undergirding research questions, the study has succeeded in generating partial answers. One research question concerned the performance of the two groups of subjects relative to each other. The results showed that the groups differed substantially in terms of emergent literacy knowledge as well as home supports for literacy. Statistical analysis revealed that there were significant differences between the two groups in several aspects of emergent literacy knowledge. However, it was also found that the two groups of subjects showed statistically significant differences in non-verbal IQ. Given the documented influence of SES on IQ (Jensen, 1981), it may be that the group differences in IQ may merely be a reflection of the differences in home environments. Furthermore, in view of the difficulty in separating out the environmental and hereditary components of IQ, it is not possible to make conclusive statements about the relationship between IQ and performance on the ELAP without the

influence of SES.

While the results of the study show a link between home supports for literacy and levels of emergent literacy knowledge, the contribution of pre-school education to children's literacy knowledge must be recognised. Although there is agreement that both home and school environments contribute to literacy knowledge, it is not possible to unravel the relative contribution of each factor.

Due to the nature of the information obtained, it was not possible to perform statistical operations on the information pertaining to home supports for literacy. Nevertheless differences between groups in this area were clearly evident. The differences in home supports for literacy between the two groups also showed strong connections to socio-economic status. However, this finding should not be seen as support for the automatic assumption that low SES families do not provide children with environments conducive to literacy development. Rather it is the determinants of SES such as education, occupational status and income which impact upon the extent to which and the manner in which families are able to foster literacy. Thus, families of lower SES are more likely to provide limited support for literacy, but this need not necessarily be the case. It also needs to be acknowledged that the outcomes of this study reflect the home literacy environments which parents are

currently providing with their existing resources and levels of insight.

This does not imply that parents do not have the potential to ameliorate these environments, given access to the necessary guidance and assistance.

The other major research question pertained to the outcomes of the study in relation to international research. Due to differences such as research methodology, target population and sample size, any attempt to establish connections between this study and international studies can, at best, only be at a superficial level. In keeping with the findings of other researchers, the general tendency in the present study has been for children from low SES families to achieve poor scores on tests of literacy knowledge and for their home environments to provide limited support for literacy (Purcell-Gates, L'Allier & Smith, 1995; Share et al, 1983; Teale, 1986). Within Group B there was only one exception in the form of one subject who had fairly favourable home supports for literacy. Thus there was not overwhelming support for the contention of researchers such as Purcell-Gates et al. that many lower SES families are indeed able to provide good support for their children's literacy. On the other hand, among the group with more favourable socio-economic circumstances, were many children who scored poorly on testing and had limited home support for literacy. This

outcome supports the contention of the researcher that it is not only families of low SES which have difficulty promoting their children's literacy.

Furthermore, it was identified that the two subject groups differed with regard to the degree to which the families actively encouraged children's literacy by reading stories, buying books, taking them to libraries, etc. The parents of both groups reported engaging in similar literacy activities and all the children had access to at least one model of literacy. The current study only identified quantitative differences between the groups but this does not mean that there were no qualitative differences in home literacy environments. By contrast, Heath (1983) found that the groups participating in her study differed markedly in terms of the types of literacy activities in which they engaged, as well as the manner in which these engagements occurred.

Broadly speaking, the findings of the present study concur with those of international studies. However, whereas the latter have found mainly low SES children to be lacking in home supports for literacy, the findings of this study imply that the problem is more pervasive and does not only apply to families at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. Comparison of socio-economic status across countries is always problematic due to differences in economic and

social conditions. However, some interesting comparisons between local pre-schoolers and those elsewhere would be possible if some of the international studies could be replicated on a local population.

## CHAPTER SEVEN : CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that the children from this particular community are, in varying degrees, at risk for difficulty in acquiring conventional literacy, with those from families of lower socio-economic status being at a greater disadvantage. Although all the children had some home support for literacy, in many cases it was very limited. While the findings of the study clearly indicate the need for intervention, it is also evident that there is still a great deal of information which needs to be acquired. Thus, we need to chart the way forward both in terms of directions for future research and implications for intervention.

### 1. Directions for Future Research

As has been said before, one of the broad aims of this research was to serve as a pilot study to inform the development of more extensive research into this virtually unexplored domain of enquiry in South Africa. Although the study has succeeded in generating much useful information, it has raised many questions and also identified areas which require further exploration. The following are some suggestions for future research :

- 1.1 Revision, validity and reliability testing, and standardisation of the ELAP. By refining the ELAP further and obtaining local norms, its utility as a diagnostic tool will be greatly enhanced.

The profile would then allow for accurate and timeous identification of children at risk for reading difficulties.

- 1.2 Further exploration of home supports for literacy within this community and other communities, utilising an ethnographic research methodology. The present study has succeeded in gleaning some quantitative information regarding home supports, which has been useful. Nevertheless it has been limited in that it has not captured information pertaining to the frequency and duration of literacy activities as well-as the nature of literate interactions.
- 1.3 Additional research within this community, utilising a larger, randomly selected sample. Furthermore, the families should be screened beforehand to ensure that subjects are more accurately placed into groups according to their socio-economic status. A larger and more stringently selected sample will allow for greater generaliseability of findings.
- 1.4 Given the diversity of socio-linguistic groups which reside in South Africa it is essential to extend research in this field of enquiry to other communities. That is, there is a need for assessment instruments, developmental data and home environment information appropriate for all communities. This will increase the pool of local

data and assist practitioners in administering appropriate assessments to children of all socio-linguistic groups.

1.5 Related to the need for inclusion of all socio-linguistic groups is the issue of developing assessment instruments in other languages. During the selection of subjects for the present study, it became evident that an assessment profile in Afrikaans is necessary, particularly in "coloured" communities where the lower SES families tend to be Afrikaans-speaking. This would, of course, be the most obvious and the easiest starting point. Given that South Africa has 11 official languages, the indigenous languages should also receive attention, provided that they serve as media for literacy instruction in schools.

1.6 In order to make more accurate comparisons between the local situation with regard to emergent literacy and the findings of international studies, replications of some of the latter could be undertaken on local populations.

## **2. Implications for Intervention**

The results of this study have shown that there are many children in this community who are at risk of difficulty in acquiring literacy. While the

children from the lower SES families tended to be more at risk, the children from families with more favourable circumstances were also implicated. This outcome seems to indicate that the problem may be one which is widespread in historically disadvantaged communities and that it is likely to be of a greater magnitude in low SES communities. It is therefore necessary to embark on intervention programmes in order to ameliorate this situation. Early identification of children at risk for literacy problems is crucial since the prognosis for improvement is then usually more favourable. It is also more viable to target pre-schoolers since the situation in most schools, as discussed in chapter four, is not favourable for children who have difficulty in coping with formal reading instruction.

Intervention at pre-school level will yield the following benefits : facilitating the acquisition of literacy in all children and pre-empting or reducing the magnitude of later reading difficulties in children who are at risk. By facilitating the transition of pre-schoolers to literacy, their chances of success in school will be greatly increased. This would also mean a reduction in the number of school drop-outs due to reading failure. Improved reading skills of pupils would mean better school progress and a greater motivation to complete basic schooling. Increased educational levels result in better job opportunities, which, in turn, have economic spin-offs.

While increased education may not in all cases contribute to improved financial status, it has implications for self-esteem as well as quality of life. Given the plight of families in South Africa, there is a dire need to upgrade quality of life and while it is extremely difficult to eradicate problems completely in the short term, interventions such as reducing illiteracy rates will help in the long term. While adult basic education has a significant role to play in promoting literacy, it may be argued that it would be more effective to expend energy and resources in the prevention of illiteracy by targeting children. Furthermore, given that optimal perceptual development takes place in the first nine years of life, it follows that it is easier to teach a child to read than an adult, particularly if perceptual problems exist. In addition, adults are exposed to many other pressures and responsibilities which impinge upon the time and energy which they have available for learning to read. Therefore it is contended that if we desire that future generations of South Africans have access to full social, economic and political participation, steps need to be taken to empower them by fostering literacy. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)(ANC, 1994) emphasizes the importance of human resource development. Our children represent the future of this country and the development of this important human resource should therefore be given priority.

Having presented a case for emergent literacy intervention, it is important to look at how this can be implemented. Since it has been ascertained that

the home environments of many children are not sufficiently facilitative of literacy, it would be appropriate to embark on family literacy programmes. Parents need to be made aware of the importance of the pre-school years for literacy development and of the crucial role which they have to play during this period. Parents need to be given practical guidance with regard to providing literacy models and engaging children in literate activities. Although the role of parents in promoting children's literacy is extremely important, other adults could also make a valuable contribution. Given the important role of extended family in certain communities, it is imperative that intervention should extend beyond parents of pre-schoolers. Thus it would be helpful to engage the community at large in awareness campaigns. Whereas parents would perhaps require more specific intervention than could be provided by awareness campaigns, the latter could serve to introduce a greater awareness of literacy to future parents.

While the contribution of parents to children's literacy development is paramount, it must be acknowledged that the best efforts at intervention may not be successful in mobilising parents. Also, the life circumstances of many parents may severely limit their capacity to fulfil their role. This is where the role of educate workers (persons working in pre-school environments, who have informal training), pre-school teachers and junior primary teachers needs to be extended in order to provide children with the literacy experiences which are lacking at home. In order for educators to do this effectively, they require guidance on how to implement emergent

literacy programmes for pre-schoolers. This can be done by introducing an emergent literacy component into their pre- or in-service training programmes. Input into the training of educare workers is particularly important since, in Cape Flats communities, they are usually the persons providing pre-school education to children below five years. Since educare workers are typically persons with informal, in-service training, it is crucial that they be assisted in providing pre-schoolers with environments which are conducive to fostering their literacy development. An emergent literacy perspective will enable educare workers to prepare children effectively for formal reading instruction. While pre-school and junior primary teachers are trained in structured pre-literacy activities and formal literacy instruction, they often encounter pupils who are not ready for those levels yet and require an introduction to literacy at more basic levels.

The various aspects of intervention described above may be embarked upon by teachers and educare workers and those responsible for their training, as well as librarians and community workers. In addition to the above persons, the speech-language therapist (SLT) has a significant role to play both at discipline-specific and generic levels. Traditionally, the domain of literacy has not been regarded as being within the ambit of SLTs in South Africa. However, this perspective is changing and there is greater awareness of the potential contribution of SLTs in the sphere of literacy. Unfortunately, this new perspective is not being sufficiently translated into practical application.

The first role of the SLT is that of identifying pre-schoolers who are at risk for later reading difficulties. Given the significance of language for the acquisition of literacy, it follows that children with oral language deficits are predisposed to reading, writing and spelling difficulties. Therefore, when presented with a child with oral language deficits, the SLT should be alerted to the possibility of later problems in acquiring literacy. It is therefore important that the therapist conduct a comprehensive assessment which should include assessment of emergent literacy skills. Also, even when pre-schoolers are referred for problems other than language deficits, their literacy skills should still be assessed. Thorough diagnostic assessment of pre-schoolers will provide direction for prophylactic intervention, thereby pre-empting or minimising later problems.

Following identification of children at risk for reading problems, the next step to be embarked upon by the SLT is intervention. This intervention could either take the form of individual or group therapy. Where children are receiving individual therapy for oral language difficulties, it is not only appropriate but imperative that the SLT include literacy-based intervention. While the therapist should feel compelled to intervene with children who have been identified as being at risk for literacy problems, there is also no harm in engaging in pre-literacy activities with children who do not show signs of having difficulties related to literacy development. SLTs who practice in schools are in a particularly favourable position in that they usually conduct language enrichment sessions in pre-school and junior

primary classrooms. It would therefore be ideal to incorporate a strong literacy focus into these enrichment programmes. In addition to general promotion of literacy by story reading and encouraging an interest in books, intervention by SLTs should take place at a more specific level, that is, by targeting areas such as phonological awareness and decontextualised use of language which have been found to impact significantly upon literacy. Traditionally, language intervention with pre-schoolers has been geared towards improving oral communication per se. Given the documented role of oral language skills in the acquisition of literacy and the emergence of literacy during the pre-school years, it is essential that SLTs engage in language intervention which is geared towards developing generic oral communication skills as well as those oral language skills which are particularly crucial for written language development.

Since the work of SLTs involves a great deal of counselling of parents, pre-school teachers and educare workers, this area presents additional opportunities for SLTs to promote the concept of emergent literacy development. During counselling sessions, SLTs could educate parents and teachers with regard to their role in fostering literacy and provide them with concrete methods of doing so. While SLTs have a valuable contribution to make within their practise of the discipline, there is also a opportunity for intervention at a more generic level. For example, SLTs could contribute to the emergent literacy training of teachers and educare workers and also to community projects aimed at promoting more literacy-

orientated home and community environments for pre-schoolers from disadvantaged backgrounds.

From the foregoing discussion it is strongly evident that there is a large amount of work to be done in South African communities with regard to research and intervention in order to foster the literacy development of pre-schoolers. The success of any ventures in this regard depends largely on collaboration between all the stakeholders. As Minns (1990) so aptly states, in order to help children to

"...become literate in the fullest sense, we need to set up total literacy environments for our children, which embrace the views of parents, teachers and children and encompass learning in the home, the community and the school" (p113).

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## APPENDIX 1

**SUBTESTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (CAP) :  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT (Mason & Stewart,  
1989)**

## Emergent Literacy

- Environmental Print
- Letter recognition
- Sounds in Words
- Story and Print Concepts
- Writing

## Language

- Sentence Repetition
- Listening Comprehension
- Vocabulary, definitions and superordinates
- Picture Memory
- Picture Story Sequence

## Basic Concepts

- Social Competence, Attitudes and Traits
- Social and Communicative Competence
- Number Concepts
- Colour Concepts
- Body Awareness concepts
- Positioning Words

## APPENDIX 2

SUBTESTS OF THE SCHOOL-HOME EARLY LANGUAGE AND LITERACY  
BATTERY -KINDERGARTEN (SHELL-K) (Dickinson & Tabors,  
1991)

- \* Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
- \* Selected subtests from the Early Childhood Diagnostic Assessment : The Comprehensive Assessment Program (CAP) (Mason & Stewart, 1989) :
  - Environmental Print
  - Letter recognition
  - Sounds in Words
  - Story and Print Concepts
  - Writing concepts
- \* Test of Non-Verbal Intelligence (TONI) (Brown, Sherbenou & Johnsen, date unknown) (cited by Dickinson & Tabors, 1991)
- \* Story Comprehension : "The Snowy Day" by Ezra Jack Keats
- \* Definitions Task (adapted from the Vocabulary, definitions and superordinates test of the CAP)
- \* Picture Description Task
- \* Narrative Construction Task

## APPENDIX 3

## ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT

**STIMULI:** logos of Pick & Pay, OK, Edgars, CNA, Shoprite-Checkers, Hyperama, Simba, Spur Steak Ranches, Kentucky Fried Chicken and M-Net.

**ADMINISTRATION :**

1. The child is asked to name those logos which s/he recognises.
2. For those items which the child was unable to name, the examiner provides the name and asks the child to indicate the corresponding logo.

**SCORING :** Assign 2 points for each logo which is correctly identified. The logos which the child knows receptively are indicated on the score sheet but not tallied in the final mark.

**MAXIMUM SCORE :** 20

**APPENDIX 4**  
**LETTER RECOGNITION**

**STIMULI :** Alphabet flip charts from the CAP

Upper case : R P H F A D Y M E B

Lower case : b e m y d a f h p r

**ADMINISTRATION :**

1. Present the upper case chart and ask the child what s/he sees.
2. Point to the first letter and ask the child to name it. Continue with the following letter.

Scoring : Assign 2 points for each letter correctly named.

If child misses 3 consecutive letters, ask :

3. Do you see any letters you know ?

Scoring : Assign 2 points for each letter correctly named.

For each letter which the child cannot name, say:

4. Point to the \_\_\_\_\_.

Scoring : Assign 1 point for each letter which the child can recognise but not name.

5. Present the lower case letters and repeat 2 - 4 above

**EXTENSION TESTING :** Child is presented with an alphabet poster and asked to name the letters of the alphabet in sequence. This is not scored.

**MAXIMUM SCORE :** 40

APPENDIX 5  
SOUNDS IN WORDS

STIMULI: "Sounds in words" flipcharts from CAP

WORD INITIAL SOUNDS:

SCORING: Assign 1 point for each correct answer.

Show first item to child and say:

1. Here's a listening game for us to play. Look at these pictures. Sing, sew, run. Show me the ones that begin with the same sound.

If student responds incorrectly or does not respond, give an example and score 0. Say:

**Sing** and **sew** go together because they begin with the same sound. Hear them-SS-ING, SS-EW.

Flip to the next page. Say:

2. Listen: **cat, ball, bag**. Show me which two begin with the same sound.

If child has 0's for questions 1 and 2, assign 0's for question 1-6. Then flip to page with pictures of the man, pan, and mouse and read directions to question 7.

Otherwise, flip to the next page. Say:

3. Listen: **bath, tyre, boy**. Show me which two begin with the same sound.

Flip to the next page. Say:

4. Listen: **man, cow, milk**. Show me which two begin with the same sound.

Flip to the next page. Say:

5. Listen: **sheep, road, ring**. Show me which two begin with the same sound.

Flip to the next page. Say:

6. Listen: **fish, dog, foot**. Show me which two begin with the same sound.

**WORD FINAL SOUNDS:**

**SCORING:** Assign 1 point for each correct answer.

Flip to the next page and say:

7. Here's another listening game for us to play. Look at these pictures. **Man, pan, mouse**. Show me the ones that END with the same sound.

If student responds incorrectly or does not respond, assign a 0 and say:

**Man** and **pan** go together because they end with the same sound. Hear them-MA-NN, PA-NN.

Flip to the next page. Say:

8. Listen: **fan, sat, cat**. Show me which two end with the same sound.

If child has 0's for questions 7 and 8, discontinue and assign 0's for questions 7-12

Otherwise, flip to the next page. Say:

9. Listen: **car, fish, star**. Show me which two end with the same sound.

Flip to the next page. Say:

10. Listen: **wall, ball, bat**. Show me which two end with the same sound.

**MAXIMUM SCORE : 10**

## APPENDIX 6

## RHYMING WORDS TEST

## ADMINISTRATION :

A. The child is presented with stimulus pictures for each word. Each word is articulated clearly as the picture is presented. The child is then asked to point to the pictures of the two words which sound almost the same.

## STIMULUS WORDS :

- |     |       |       |      |
|-----|-------|-------|------|
| 1.  | cat   | hat   | ring |
| 2.  | moon  | spoon | dog  |
| 3.  | cot   | cap   | tap  |
| 4.  | cone  | cake  | bone |
| 5.  | sun   | bib   | gun  |
| 6.  | train | rain  | rake |
| 7.  | bat   | coat  | boat |
| 8.  | clock | sun   | sock |
| 9.  | wall  | ball  | bird |
| 10. | duck  | truck | cup  |

B. Ask the child to produce a word which rhymes with the following rhyming pairs :

- |     |       |       |
|-----|-------|-------|
| 11. | cat   | hat   |
| 12. | cone  | bone  |
| 13. | sun   | gun   |
| 14. | clock | sock  |
| 15. | duck  | truck |

MAXIMUM SCORE : 15

**APPENDIX 7**  
**CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT**

**ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING :**

Say : "Here is a little book."

Ask the child the following questions. Score as indicated.

1. **Where is the front of the book?**  
*Scoring:* Assign 1 point if the child indicates the front cover of the book.
2. **Where is the back of the book?**  
*Scoring:* Assign 1 point if the child indicates the back cover of the book.

The examiner should now orient the book so that it is right side up and the front cover is directly in front of the child. The cover should face the child. Say:

3. **Show me where there is something to read.**  
*Scoring:* Assign 1 point if child points to the print on the cover or within the book.
4. **This book is called....(Name of book). Where do you think is says that?**  
*Scoring:* Assign 1 point only if the child points to the print on the cover.
5. **Open the book to the first page of the story.**  
*Scoring:* Assign 1 point if the child opens the book to the correct page.

If child did not open the book to the first page, the examiner should now do so. Say:

6. **Where is the top of the page?** (Pause for response).
7. **Where is the bottom of the page?**
8. **Show me where you read.** (Pause for response.)  
*Scoring:* Assign 1 point if the child indicates that the left page is read before the right page.

**Present child with printed letters and words.**

9. **Pick up one letter.**
10. **Pick up one word.**

**MAXIMUM SCORE : 10**

**APPENDIX 8**  
**FUNCTIONAL AWARENESS OF PRINT**

**ADMINISTRATION:**

Present the test items to the child, one at a time.

For each item ask the following:

1. "What's this?"

If the child unable to name the item, the examiner provides the name and proceeds to question 2.

2. "Do you know what we use it for?"

**SCORING:** Assign 2 points for a response which includes a name and functional definition of the item.  
Assign 1 point for name or definition only.

**MAXIMUM SCORE :** 10

## APPENDIX 9

## STORY COMPREHENSION

## STIMULUS :

SCRIPT OF "THE BEAR UNDER THE STAIRS" BY HELEN COOPER

William was scared of grizzly bears.  
And William was scared of the place under the stairs.  
It was all because one day he thought he'd seen a bear there under the stairs.  
And he'd slammed the door shut - wham, bang, thump!

William worried about the bear.  
He wondered what it might eat.  
"Yum, yum" the bear said in William's head.  
"I'm a very hungry bear. Perhaps I'll eat boys for tea."  
So William saved a pear for the bear who lived under the stairs.

And when no one was watching, William took out his pear, opened the door, threw the pear to the bear who lived under the stairs and slammed the door shut - wham, bang, thump!

William kept his eyes shut tight so he didn't see the bear who lived under the stairs, but he knew what it looked like.

Every day William fed the bear that lived under the stairs. He fed it bananas, bacon and bread. He fed it hazelnuts, haddock and honey. But he always kept his eyes shut tight and slammed the door shut - wham, bang, thump!

After a while there was a strange smell in the air near the bear under the stairs.  
The smell got stronger and stronger until his mum noticed.  
"Ooh, there's an awful pong", she said  
"I think I'd better do some cleaning."  
"No!" said William. "Don't go in there."

Mum lifted William onto her lap.  
"William, whatever's the matter?" she asked.  
So William told her all about the hungry bear there under the stairs.  
Then William and mum went to fight the bear that lived under the stairs.  
Brave William had his eyes wide open all the time.  
And when they opened the door, he saw an old furry rug, a broken chair, no bear, no scare and horrible, stinky food everywhere.

So William and mum cleaned up.  
Then they went shopping and bought William a little brown grizzly bear of his own.  
It had such a nice face that William was never scared of bears ever again.

**ADMINISTRATION** : The examiner reads the story aloud and asks the questions on the relevant pages.

1. Why was William afraid of the place under the stairs?  
(p2)
2. Why did William decide to feed the bear? (p3)
3. What do you think would have happened if the bear didn't get any food? (p3)
4. Why did William slam the door shut every time? (p4)
5. Why was there a bad smell coming from under the stairs? (p12)
6. Was there a real bear? (p12)
7. What made William think that there was a bear under the stairs? (p12)
8. What did William's mommy do to make him feel better?  
(p13)
9. Was William still afraid of bears? (p14)
10. Do bears live in houses? Where do they live?

**MAXIMUM SCORE** : 10

## APPENDIX 10

## WORD DEFINITIONS TEST

## ADMINISTRATION :

A The examiner requires no materials. Begin with an example, say:

Here's a thinking game about words. When I say a word, I want you to tell me what it means.

**Truck. What's a truck**

Pause for the child's response. If the response is not clear, say, emphasizing the word is:

**What is a truck? What kind of thing is a truck?**

After child answers, regardless of the response, say:

**Yes, a truck is something we ride in, and we can carry things in it.**

## STIMULUS ITEMS 1 - 13:

bird, foot, umbrella, flower, bicycle, clock, alphabet, donkey, diamond, hat, knife, nail, thief.

**SCORING :** Assign 2 points for a response that classifies or describes a use for the word. Assign 1 point for locating or describing the appearance of the word. Assign a 0 for a vague answer, use of the word in a sentence, a wrong answer, or a non-verbal response. Examples of points assigned for various answers follow each item in parentheses.

Maximum score = 2

**NOTE:** if the child attempts to give a nonverbal response, say: **Tell me.**

## SPECIFIC SCORING GUIDELINES

1. Bird : animal = 2  
flies = 1  
names a type of bird = 1  
has wings/feathers/beak = 1  
lives in a nest = 1  
eats seeds = 1

2. Foot for walking/running = 2  
on your leg = 1  
has toes = 1  
put shoes on = 1
  
3. Umbrella keeps you dry when it rains = 2  
keeps you dry = 1  
has a handle = 1  
for the rain = 1
  
4. Flower plant = 2  
grows = 1  
you can pick it = 1  
smells nice = 1  
you can plant it = 1  
found in the garden = 1
  
5. Bicycle for going places = 2  
for riding = 2  
has wheels = 1
  
6. Clock telling time = 2  
goes tick tock = 1  
has numbers on = 1
  
7. Alphabet the letters you need to know for learning  
to read = 2  
child names specific letters = 1  
to help you read = 1
  
8. Donkey for carrying people and/or things = 2  
for riding = 1  
has long ears = 1  
almost like a horse = 1  
goes "hee-haw" = 1
  
9. Diamond a stone used to make jewellery = 2  
a precious stone = 2  
shiny = 1  
for rings = 1
  
10. Hat to wear on your head = 2  
to wear = 1  
to protect you from the sun = 2  
to wear when its sunny = 2  
to wear in the rain = 2

11. Knife            for cutting food = 2  
                       for cutting = 1  
                       sharp = 1  
                       to butter bread = 1  
                       for eating with = 1
12. Nail            holds things together = 2  
                       you knock it in with a hammer = 2  
                       on your finger = 1  
                       for scratching = 2
13. Thief            someone who steals = 2  
                       someone who steals money/jewellery, etc.=  
                       2

**B For the second part of this subtest, the examiner should begin with an example. Say:**

Here's a game about what things are called. What are red and blue? What are they called?

Pause for the child's response. Then say:

**Yes, red and blue are called colours. Now tell me another colour.**

**SCORING:** Assign 2 points if child can label set and think of another example. Assign 1 point if child can either label set or think of another example. Assign 0 points if child can neither label the set nor think of another example.

14. **What are shirts and pants? (clothes)  
 Now tell me another. What is another kind of clothes?**
15. **What are dogs and mice? (animals, pets)  
 Now tell me another kind of animal (or pet).**
16. **What are houses and shops? (buildings)  
 Now tell me another kind of building.**
17. **What are bananas and apples? (fruits, food)  
 Now tell me another kind of fruit (or food).**
18. **What are tables and chairs? (furniture)  
 Now tell me another kind of furniture.**
19. **What are books and newspapers? (things to read)  
 Now tell me something else to read.**

**MAXIMUM SCORE :            38**

## APPENDIX 11

## NARRATIVE TASK

## ADMINISTRATION :

This task is administered to a pair of subjects at a time : one child is the respondent and the other observes.

(i) **Fictional narrative** : "The Bear under the stairs" is read and the respondent is asked to retell the story.

(ii) **Personal narratives** : Following some conversation with the examiner, the respondent is asked to share his/her experiences of visiting the doctor or hospital, witnessing an accident and celebrating Guy Fawkes

All responses are tape-recorded and transcribed according to clauses.

## ANALYSIS AND SCORING :

(i) **Fictional Narrative** :

The subjects' responses were analysed in terms of the number of clauses and subordinate clauses in the narrative. The narratives were also analysed according to the number of elements of story grammar which are expressed. Scoring guidelines were as follows :

Setting :

Score 1 point for:-	A story about a boy called William William was afraid of bears
---------------------	---

Episode :

- Initiating event :

Score 1 point for :-	William saw/thought he saw a bear under the stairs
----------------------	--

- Reaction :

Score 1 point for :-	William was afraid that the bear might eat him; William was afraid of the bear
----------------------	--

- Action / attempt :

Score 2 points for :-	William fed the bear (1 point) so that it wouldn't
-----------------------	--

eat him (1 point)

- Outcomes / consequences :

Score 1 point for :- The food started smelling

Score 1 point for :- William was forced to tell his mother

Score 1 point for :- William and his mum went into the room under the stairs

- Ending :

Score 1 point for :- Mum showed William that there wasn't a real bear

Score 1 point for :- William was never scared of bears again (because of the friendly bear which his mum had bought him)

**MAXIMUM SCORE : 10**

**(ii) Personal Narratives :**

Only the longest of the personal narratives of each subject was analysed. The total number of independent clauses and subordinate clauses in the narrative were added to calculate the length of the narratives. The narrative clauses were then analysed in terms of Labov's (1972) categories of action, orientation and evaluation, according to the following definitions :

**Action** : statement referring to any activity engaged in by participants in the narrative.

**Orientation** : "statements that provide the setting or context of a narrative, including participants, time, location, general conditions, ongoing events, tangential information and objects or features of the environment" (Peterson & McCabe, 1983 p32).

**Evaluation** : statements or words that tell the listener "what to think about a person, place, thing, event or the entire experience" (Peterson & McCabe, 1983 p32).

Of the total number of clauses, the percentages of action, orientation and evaluation clauses were calculated.

## APPENDIX 12

## STIMULUS ITEMS FOR THE TROG

## 1. VOCABULARY CHECK

The aim of the vocabulary check is to ascertain whether or not subjects are familiar with the vocabulary items in the Test for Reception of Grammar.

**Administration :** A series of cards, each containing eight pictures, is presented to the subject. The child is requested to point to each of the words named by the examiner.

The vocabulary items are presented below in groups of eight, as they appear on the stimulus cards.

elephant	food
hat	man
bag	bird
book	knife
spoon	box
sheep	cow
woman\lady	pencil
table	tree
flower	dropping
cat	drinking
drink	jumping
shoe	pushing
girl	carrying
chair	chasing
horse	standing
ball	looking
dog	big
circle	red
square	tail
boy	yellow
cup	fat
star	brown
wall	blue
apple	black

## 2. RECEPTION OF GRAMMAR

**Administration :** The subject is presented with a series of cards, each containing four pictures.

**Instruction :** " Listen carefully and point to the picture that goes with what I say".

- A1 shoe  
2 bird  
3 comb  
4 apple
- B5 eating  
6 picking  
7 sitting  
8 running
- C9 long  
10 tall  
11 red  
12 black
- D13 the boy is running  
14 the big cup  
15 the dog is sitting  
16 the red ball
- E17 the boy is not running  
18 the dog is not drinking  
19 the girl is not jumping  
20 the dog is not sitting
- F21 the boy is jumping over the box  
22 the girl is sitting on the table  
23 the man is eating the apple  
24 the woman\lady is carrying the bag
- G25 they are sitting on the table  
26 the cow is looking at them  
27 they are jumping over the wall  
28 the elephant is carrying them
- H29 the girl is pushing the horse  
30 the boy is chasing the sheep  
31 the man is chasing the dog  
32 the cow is pushing the woman\lady
- I33 she is sitting on the chair  
34 the woman\lady is carrying him  
35 he is sitting in the tree  
36 the horse is looking at her
- J37 the cats look at the bail  
38 the boy stands on the chairs  
39 the boys pick the apples  
40 the girl drops the cups
- K41 the knife is longer than the pencil  
42 the box is bigger than the cup  
43 the shoe is bigger than the bird  
44 the horse is taller than the wall
- L45 the girl is chased by the horse  
46 the elephant is pushed by the boy

- 47 the horse is chased by the man  
48 the cow is pushed by the man
- M49 the cup is in the box  
50 the pencil is on the box  
51 the circle is in the star  
52 the knife is on the shoe
- N53 the boy chasing the horse is fat  
54 the pencil on the shoe is blue  
55 the cow chasing the cat is brown  
56 the circle in the star is yellow
- O57 the box but not the chair is red  
58 the cat is big but not black  
59 the horse but not the boy is standing  
60 the boy is sitting but not eating
- P61 the pencil is above the flower  
62 the comb is below the spoon  
63 the star is above the circle  
64 the square is below the star
- Q65 not only the bird but also the flower is blue  
66 the box is not only big but also blue  
67 not only the girl but also the cat is sitting  
68 the girl has not only food but also a drink
- R69 the pencil is on the book that is yellow  
70 the girl chases the dog that is big  
71 the square is in the star that is blue  
72 the dog chases the horse that is brown
- S73 neither the dog nor the ball is brown  
74 the pencil is neither long nor red  
75 neither the boy nor the horse is running  
76 the boy has neither hat nor shoes
- T77 the book the pencil is on is red  
78 the cat the cow chases is black  
79 the circle the star is in is red  
80 the boy the dog chases is big

**SCORING** : All test items are arranged in blocks of four. In order to score one point, each of the four items in a block must be correct. The number of blocks passed are then added to provide a raw score, which is then converted to an age equivalent in years. Thus, the raw score obtained represents the number of blocks out of 20 on which the subject has scored correctly.

## APPENDIX 13

## THE GOODENOUGH-HARRIS DRAW-A-MAN TEST

**ADMINISTRATION :**

The subject is provided with a sheet of blank paper and some pencil crayons

Instruction : "I want you to draw a picture of a man. Make the very best picture that you can. Take your time and work carefully."

**SCORING :**

Drawings were scored with reference to the 73 item scoring scales provided in the test manual. The test thus has a maximum possible score of 73. Items were scored either correct or incorrect, with no half points being allocated. Raw scores were then converted to standard scores or non-verbal IQs by referring to tables provided in the manual.

## APPENDIX 14

<b>EMERGENT LITERACY ASSESSMENT PROFILE</b>
---

NAME : \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_

**TEST OF RECEPTIVE GRAMMAR (TROG)**

Total blocks passed: \_\_\_\_\_

Age Equivalent: \_\_\_\_\_

C.A.:

**ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /20

**FUNCTIONAL AWARENESS OF PRINT SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /10

**CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /10

**STORY COMPREHENSION SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /10

**SOUNDS IN WORDS SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /10

**LETTER RECOGNITION SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /40

**WORD DEFINITIONS SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /38

**GOODENOUGH-HARRIS DRAW-A-PERSON TEST**

Raw Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-verbal IQ: \_\_\_\_\_

**RHYMING WORDS SUBTEST**

Raw Score: /15

**ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT**

	ITEM	EXPRESSIVE			RECEPTIVE	
1		0	1	2	0	1
2		0	1	2	0	1
3		0	1	2	0	1
4		0	1	2	0	1
5		0	1	2	0	1
6		0	1	2	0	1
7		0	1	2	0	1
8		0	1	2	0	1
9		0	1	2	0	1
10		0	1	2	0	1

**TOTAL :**  
**MAXIMUM POINTS: 20**  
**(Receptive Totals not scored)**

**SOUNDS IN WORDS**

	INITIAL SOUNDS			FINAL SOUNDS	
1	0	1	6	0	1
2	0	1	7	0	1
3	0	1	8	0	1
4	0	1	9	0	1
5	0	1	10	0	1

**TOTAL:**  
**MAXIMUM SCORE: 10**



**FUNCTIONAL AWARENESS OF PRINT**

	<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SCORE</u></b>		
1	tv guide	0	1	2
2	telephone directory	0	1	2
3	calendar	0	1	2
4	newspaper	0	1	2
5	map	0	1	2

**TOTAL:**  
**MAXIMUM POINTS: 10**

## APPENDIX 15

RAW SCORES OBTAINED ON THE ELAPGROUP A

NAME	TROG	ENVMTL PRINT	FUNCTIONAL PRINT	CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT	STORY COMPREHENSION	SOUND IN WORDS
	18	20	10	10	10	10
L.B	12	12	4	8	8	3
L.M	6	10	5	6	3	0
K.F	12	16	4	9	6	7
C.M	8	14	5	4	6	8
T.S	7	12	5	6	5	4
C.P	12	18	8	6	8	7
G.P	7	10	7	8	3	7
N.S	5	8	6	6	4	5
Z.A	9	10	5	7	3	4
C.F	8	8	7	8	4	4
Z.S	15	14	7	9	7	8
J.T	9	10	8	6	8	10
B.A	7	6	3	9	3	5
M.H	11	8	6	6	5	9
R.S	15	12	6	6	5	7
K.D	7	14	6	8	5	4

NAME	LETTER RECOGNITION	WORD DEFINITION	DRAW-A-PERSON	RHYMING WORDS
	40	38		15
L.B	12	24	17	6
L.M	2	18	25	3
K.F	2	22	21	9
C.M	0	26	16	6
T.S	0	21	12	12
C.P	12	29	20	7
G.P	0	20	18	9
N.S	1	19	19	7
Z.A	0	15	8	1
C.F	0	24	8	5
Z.S	18	27	14	10
J.T	0	26	19	10
B.A	0	13	16	3
M.H	8	23	26	14
R.S	22	25	16	9
K.D	1	20	9	7

**RAW SCORES OBTAINED ON THE ELAP****GROUP B**

NAME	TROG	ENVMTL PRINT	FUNCTIONAL PRINT	CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT	STORY COMPREHENSION	SOUND IN WORDS
	18	20	10	10	10	10
J.P	6	2	4	6	3	1
J.D	5	14	4	5	5	3
S.G	5	6	2	5	3	4
M.K	10	12	8	4	2	1
C.G	3	0	2	4	1	0
L.H	8	4	2	6	6	5
L.Z	8	6	4	4	5	0
C.M	8	6	2	7	3	7

NAME	LETTER RECOGNITION	WORD DEFINITION	DRAW-A-PERSON		RHYMING WORDS
			RS	IQ	
	40	38			15
J.P	2	15	15	98	5
J.D	0	16	10	75	7
S.G	0	16	12	80	8
M.K	0	23	11	77	3
C.G	0	12	11	77	0
L.H	0	17	9	75	4
L.Z	0	15	10	78	14
C.M	10	17	13	82	8

## APPENDIX 15

**PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

NAME OF CHILD

RESPONDENT:

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

**MARITAL STATUS OF PARENT\S:**

Married

Unmarried

Widowed

Divorced

**EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARENTS:**

Below Std.2

Std. 2 - 5

Std. 6 - 8

Std. 8 - 10

Tertiary Education. Specify

Other (Non-formal training, short courses, etc.)

**HOME LANGUAGE :****PARENTS' OCCUPATIONS:**

Mother:

Employer:

Father:

Employer:

**MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME:**

Below R1500

R1500 - R3000

Above R3000

**HOUSING:**

Type of Housing:

free standing  
semi-detached  
flat  
other

House:

rented  
owned by parents  
sub-let

Number of occupants in the household:

**PARENTAL USES OF LITERACY**

**AT WORK:**

Mother:

Father:

**AT HOME:**

Mother:

Father:

## APPENDIX 18

## QUESTIONNAIRE: HOME SUPPORTS FOR LITERACY

## 1. Which of the following items can be found in your home?

Books	_____	Dictionaries	_____
Atlases & Maps	_____	Encyclopaedias	_____
School workbooks	_____	Reports	_____
Letters to and from school	_____	Newspapers	_____
Magazines	_____	Television guides	_____
Comics etc.	_____	Junk mail	_____
Notes from one family member to another	_____	Religious pictures with captions	_____
Merit awards	_____	Personal letters	_____
Kitchen cannisters with labels	_____	Labels on food, jars, cans, medicine & bathroom products	_____
Postcards	_____	Political pamphlets	_____
Discount coupons	_____	Recipe books	_____
Sport catalogues	_____	Diaries	_____
Christmas & birthday cards	_____	Gift lists	_____
Birthday Calendars	_____	Sewing & Knitting Patterns	_____
T-shirts/sweatshirts with logos	_____	Photograph albums	_____
Records, cds	_____	Supermarket till slips	_____
Pencils	_____	Khokis	_____
Crayons	_____	Pencil crayons	_____
Chalk	_____	Papers	_____
Note pads	_____	Note books	_____
Chalkboards	_____	Folders	_____

## 2. Which of the following activities occur in your home?

Writing shopping lists	_____
Cooking from recipe books	_____
Reading novels	_____
Reading the newspaper	_____
Doing crossword puzzles	_____
Looking up TV programmes in a TV guide	_____
Bible reading	_____
Singing from hymn sheets	_____

Reading from prayer books \_\_\_\_\_  
 Writing letters \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sending birthday\Xmas\Eid cards \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reading story books to your children \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Which of the following does your child do at home:**

Writing patterns \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pretend reading \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pretend writing \_\_\_\_\_

**How often does this occur?**

every day \_\_\_\_\_  
 once a week \_\_\_\_\_  
 once a month \_\_\_\_\_  
 never \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Does your child visit the library? Yes\No If yes, how often?**

once a week \_\_\_\_\_  
 once a month \_\_\_\_\_  
 hardly ever \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Do you read to your child? Yes\No If yes, how often?**

every day \_\_\_\_\_  
 two to three times per week \_\_\_\_\_  
 once a week \_\_\_\_\_  
 once a month \_\_\_\_\_  
 very seldom \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Does your child ever ask you to read\tell a story? Yes\No  
 If yes:**

often \_\_\_\_\_  
 sometimes \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Have you taught your child nursery rhymes? Yes\No  
 If yes:**

often \_\_\_\_\_  
 sometimes \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Is there another adult (family member or friend) who encourages your child to  
 enjoy books? Yes\No**

**9. Does your child own any books? Yes\No**

**If yes, how many?**

1 to 5

5 - 10

more than 10

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## APPENDIX 19

**HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT RATING**

<b>RATING</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
3	Literacy permeates the home environment. Parents engage very frequently in literacy activities. There is a large variety of books and other literacy artifacts in the home.
2	Parents engage in literacy activities, fairly frequently. There is a basic supply of books and other literacy artifacts in the home.
1	Parents engage in limited amounts of literacy activities. There is a small number of books and other literacy artifacts in the home.
0	Parents seldom engage in literacy activities. There are very few books and other literacy artifacts in the home.

## APPENDIX 20

CATEGORIES OF PARENTAL OCCUPATIONS  
(Glanz, 1995)

1. Salaried Professional\Middle Management eg. teachers, social workers, senior\administrative positions in civil service, police service, etc.
2. Foreman\Supervisor, eg. production supervisor, stock controller.
3. Micro entrepreneur, eg. hawker, street vendor.
4. Clerical Worker  
  
Senior: bank teller, import clerk  
Lower: receptionist, typist; clerk
5. Skilled artisan, eg. plumber, welder, baker, hairdresser.
6. Semi-skilled artisan, eg. shop assistant, security guard, driver, machine operator\production worker.
7. Manual worker, eg. labourer, cleaner, petrol attendant.
8. Economically inactive.

## APPENDIX 21

### FAMILY PROFILES OF GROUP A SUBJECTS

#### FAMILY PROFILE : L.B.

L is the elder of two children and has a 5 month-old sister. L was delivered at full term by Caesarian section due to her mother's inability to dilate. No complications were reported. Her early development was normal and her milestones were within normal limits. Her medical history includes nil of note. L attended Watersprites Nursery School for three years prior to starting pre-primary at Kenmere. After school L spends much time with the next door neighbour who was her caregiver from the age of a few months until she started nursery school at 3 years. She also spends much time with her maternal grandmother who lives in a granny flat on the property. Her favourite activities are watching movies, colouring in, writing and pretend reading. L also does many modelling assignments and television advertisements. Her mother most enjoys sharing puzzles with L. The language used in the home is exclusively English, although both parents received their primary school education in Afrikaans.

#### Socio-economic Information :

L's mother completed std 9 and did a one year tourism course. She has been employed mainly in clerical positions and is currently a shipping import controller at Maersk. She also sells pottery for Terrapotta on a part-time basis and has in the past sold World Book encyclopaedias. The father has std 7 and is a welder. He is employed by Provident Engineering and often works away from home. The joint family income exceeds R3000-00 per month. The parents own their free-standing home, which is well maintained and well furnished. There are no other occupants in the household.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The mother reported a variety of literacy artifacts in the home, although none were evident in the lounge, where the interview took place. The parents have books and buy both daily newspapers. The mother also reads the Reader's Digest. L has more than 10 books of her own and also visits the library twice a month. Her mother reads stories to her two to three times per week and has been doing so since L was one year old. She often requests stories. Her mother has also taught her nursery rhymes. L is also encouraged to read by her grandmother and the neighbour. L enjoys drawing, pretend reading and writing on a daily basis.

### Parental Uses of Literacy :

L's mother utilises the computer to a large extent in her work. She deals with invoices, correspondence and telexes. Her part-time work also entails completion of forms, which L enjoys imitating. At home she reads magazines and the Reader's Digest. The father does not use literacy in his work but reads the daily newspapers.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : T.S.**

T is the younger of two children. He has a sister aged nine, with whom he interacts well. She is in std 2 and achieving well. He was delivered normally at full term. No complications were reported. His early development was within normal limits. No medical problems were reported except that he is prone to wax build-up in his ears. T was cared for by his mother until the age of three, when he attended creche for one year. He then stayed home with his mom again until he started at Kenmere this year. T enjoys watching tv, swimming and playing soccer. He also attends Madressa in the afternoons. Favourite family activities are going to movies, going to the beach and an annual camping trip. The father often works on Saturdays, but the mother spends a great deal of time with the children.

### Socio-economic Information :

T's mother completed std 8 and has worked periodically as a secretary, receptionist or clerk. She is currently a housewife and is doing a computer course. She does part time sales and also assists her husband with admin related to private jobs. His father finished std 8 and completed his NTC 3 in plumbing. The joint family income varies from R2500-00 to above R3000-00. They live in a free-standing house owned by the paternal grandparents. Furnishings are not very modern, but adequate. There are four adults and two children in the home.

### Home Supports for Literacy :

There are reported to be a fair amount of literacy artifacts in the home. There was however, no evidence of this in the lounge, where the interview was conducted. The mom has some books and buys the newspaper every day. T owns more than 10 books but shares some with his sister. His mother takes him to the library every second week. His sister reads to him every day, mainly at his request. His mother started reading to him at the age of two. He was not taught nursery rhymes at home but learnt at

school. There are no adults other than his mother who encourage them to read. However, his dad's younger sister used to live with them when he was much younger and she used to encourage reading. T enjoys pretend reading and writing and pastes his works on the fridge.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

T's mother says that she enjoys reading but that it hurts her eyes, although her eyes are not weak. The only thing she reads is the daily newspaper. Her husband's work entails the reading of plans and he also reads the newspaper at home.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : L.M.**

L is the older of two children. He has a baby brother aged two months. He was delivered at full term by Caesarian section due to the mother's inability to dilate. The mom also experienced hypertension during the pregnancy. No perinatal complications were reported. Milestones were within normal limits. At nine months L had grommets inserted and at two years he had repeat grommets as well as a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy. He was looked after by his mother until 10 months, after which he stayed with a day mother until age three. He attended Watersprites Nursery school for two years before starting at Kenmere. During his leisure time L enjoys writing, drawing, cutting, colouring in and lego. He doesn't particularly enjoy tv but likes documentaries about animals. He shows no interest in books. The family often go to the beach and go camping once a year.

#### Socio-economic Information :

L's mother completed std 8 and has also done a word processing course. She is employed as a bank official at Wesbank, doing administrative work. Her husband completed std 9 and has not done any further courses. He is employed by the City Council as the principal administrator in the motor licensing department. The family income exceeds R 3000-00 per month. They live in a semi-detached council house which is owned by the parents. The home is fairly well furnished. Only the two adults and two children occupy the house.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

There is a fair amount of literacy artifacts in the home. However there was no evidence of any reading material in the lounge, which was where the

interview took place. They buy the Argus sometimes and the mom reads "Living and Loving" and "Value" magazines. L owns more than 10 books and has also just started going to the library. His mother seldom reads to him, but he does occasionally request a story. His mother reports that he soon loses interest in books. He has been taught nursery rhymes at home, although these have often been a review of those done at school, but he shows little interest. There is no other adult who supports his literacy development. L enjoys writing patterns every day but does not engage in pretend reading or writing. The language spoken in the home is exclusively English. However, the mom received her schooling in English and the father in Afrikaans.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

L's mother used to read frequently until she had children. Her favourite author was Catherine Cookson. She does not read for leisure any longer. Her work involves much letter writing. Her husband's job also entails reading and writing letters, but he does not read at home.

#### **FAMILY PROFILE : C.F.**

C is the younger of two children; his sister is 10 years old. He was delivered by Caesarian section at 36 weeks due to lack of foetal movement. No complications were experienced subsequently. His developmental milestones were fairly normal, except that he was a late talker in comparison with his sister. However, the mom could not provide the approximate age at which he started talking. C's medical history includes frequent bronchial infections. He was looked after by his paternal aunt since a few months old until age three, after which time his mother has been at home. C's favourite leisure activities include outdoor play, cycling, reading and drawing. As a family they enjoy braais and going to the beach.

#### Socio-economic Information :

C's mother completed matric and two years at Hewat training College. She has also recently done an introductory computer course. She has been teaching for 14 years and is currently teaching std 1 at The Hague Primary School in Delft. She plans to leave teaching at the end of the year and do administrative work for a computer company. The father is an operator for a company called Schipper Steel. The mother was unable to give much information regarding the nature of his work. The combined monthly family income before tax is between R1500-00 and R3000-00. The family (two adults and two children) live in a separate entrance which is owned by the

paternal grandparents. The home is very neat and well furnished.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

There are reported to be a fair amount of literacy artifacts in the home, although none of this was evident in the lounge, where the interview took place. The mom has some books of her own. They buy the "You" magazine and the Weekend Argus. When I visited the home, C was "reading" a picture dictionary. C owns between one and five books and his mother takes him to the library every three weeks. She reads stories to him about three times per week. His maternal aunt has also played a significant role in encouraging literacy. He often requests that stories be read to him but has never shown an interest in nursery rhymes. C engages in pretend reading about once a week but enjoys colouring in and drawing more often. Home language : the children speak and are spoken to in English, but the parents speak Afrikaans to each other. The father is originally English speaking and the mother Afrikaans.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

Mother is a keen reader and visits the library regularly. She enjoys Danielle Steele and Afrikaans authors such as Ella Spence. Her work as a teacher involves much reading and writing. The father does little reading at home and mainly reads the newspaper over weekends. His job involves reading and recording measurements.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : C.M.**

C has an older sister aged nine years and in std 1. They enjoy a close relationship. C was delivered normally at full term. Apart from slight jaundice, there were no complications. His milestones were within normal limits. The only significant factor in his medical history is an irregularity of the left eye, for which he is being monitored at Red Cross Hospital. His visual acuity is reportedly normal. He has been in the care of his mother since babyhood. Favourite leisure activities are playing with lego and cars, colouring in and watching children's programmes on tv. The family spends time together mainly at weekends, as the mother works overtime during the week and the father is involved in lay ministry. They often spend Saturday afternoons at the N1 City games arcade and visit the Spur once a month.

#### Socio-economic Information :

C's mother has std 7 and works as a despatch clerk for Cape Underwear. Until recently she was a housewife for eight years. prior to that she also worked as a despatch clerk. The father completed matric and spent six months at varsity. Due to student unrest and lack of funds he was forced to leave. He attempted a B.Comm through Unisa but was unable to cope with the demands of family, work and studies. He has been self-employed as a hawker of fish for the last 10 years. The family income is between R1500-00 and R3000-00 per month. They own the property on which they live and it also has two flats which they rent out. No other persons live in the household. The home is neat and adequately furnished.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

There are few literacy artifacts in the home and none were evident in the lounge, where the interview took place. Few literacy activities were reported. They seldom buy the newspaper but the mother occasionally gets the "You" magazine. C and his sister jointly own more than 10 books and also have the "I can read" book and video series. He belongs to the library but hardly ever goes there. He often requests stories and is read to three times weekly, mainly by dad. His maternal aunt has also encouraged him to read. He has learnt nursery rhymes mainly at school and has nursery rhyme records at home, but shows little interest. He occasionally engages in pretend reading and writing. Home language : the children speak and are spoken to in English, while the parents speak Afrikaans. The mother is originally Afrikaans and the father English.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

Neither of the parents enjoy reading. The father only reads the church magazine and occasionally the Bible. The mother's work involves mainly numeracy, in terms of reading and recording quantities, sizes and colours of garments. The father keeps very simple books for his business. He also enjoys typing, which is mainly linked to his church activities.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : N.S.**

N is the younger of two children. Her brother is nine years old. She was delivered normally at full term, with no complications. Developmental milestones were normal. Nil of not in medical history. N was cared for by her mother until she started creche at age four. She was at creche for one year before starting at Kenmere Primary. N enjoys watching tv, drawing and colouring in. The family often visit relatives, go picnicking, or go on outings to the beach or the park.

### Socio-economic Information :

N's mother has std 8 and she has done a three month computer course on Word Perfect, Lotus, etc. She has been a housewife since N was born, but has had receptionist jobs previously. The father completed std 8 and has also done a welding course. He works as a cabinet maker for Woodshop. The monthly family income is above R3000-00. They are renting a semi-detached house, but will soon be moving in with the father's parents, who are building a double storey. The home is modern and well furnished. At present, it is only the two adults and two children in the home. N's brother stays with the paternal grandparents during the week and comes home at weekends.

### Home Supports for Literacy :

A fair number of literacy artifacts is reported to be found in the home. None of this was in evidence in the open plan lounge and kitchen where the interview took place. The parents do have some books and the mother buys the "Reader's Digest". N owns between one and five books and her mother reads to her three times per week. She sometimes requests a story, but mostly her mother reads to her anyway. She does not belong to the library. There are no other adults who encourage her to read. She has often been taught nursery rhymes at home. She often engages in pretend reading and writing and also writes patterns. Home language : English only.

### Parental Uses of Literacy :

Neither of the parents read much as a leisure activity. The father's work involves reading plans.

## **FAMILY PROFILE : M.H.**

M is the middle of three children. Her sister is 12 years and her brother is five months. She was delivered by vacuum extraction after a very long labour. Developmental milestones were normal. No significant factors in the medical history, except frequent colds. M was in the care of a day mother until she started at Gateway creche in 1994. The same person cares for her every afternoon after school until her mother gets home from work. She enjoys books, singing and playing in the park. As a family they attend church regularly and also go the beach, the park and on braais.

### Socio-economic Information :

M's mother has completed a matric as well as short computer courses. She works as a computer programmer for SA Fine Worsteds. The father has std 7 and works at SA Value Engineering as a fitter and turner. He does not have a formal qualification in fitting and turning. The monthly family income is above R3000-00. The family live in a duplex which is owned by them. Furniture and appliances in the home are very modern. There are no other occupants in the household.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The mom reported that there were a fair amount of literacy artifacts in the home. The parents have some books and buy the newspaper and the You magazine. Some books were seen on the shelves of the wall unit in their lounge. M has between five and ten books of her own. She is read to every day, mainly by her sister and sometimes her mother. She often requests stories and is very persistent. She has not been taught nursery rhymes at home and is not exposed to any other adults who encourage reading. Home language : English only.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

M's parents do not engage in reading as a leisure activity. The father sometimes reads the newspaper at home and his work involves very little reading and writing. The mother does not read at home. At work she writes computer programmes and reads and writes documentation pertaining to production, stock and orders.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : K.F.**

K is the youngest of three children. His sister is 15 years and his brother 21. The two older siblings live with the maternal grandmother. His parents have been separated for four years and he has no contact with his father. K was delivered normally, without complications. His early development was normal. Nil of note in medical history. He has been looked after by day mothers until he attended SHAWCO creche in 1994. He is very active and tends to be mischievous. He enjoys playing outdoors and watching tv. His mother spends time with him mainly at weekends.

#### Socio-economic Information :

K's mother completed std 8 and did a typing course. She is a clerk at Rex Trueform. The father has std 4 and is a security guard at the same company. The family income, including his maintenance grant, is between

R1500-00 and R3000-00 per month. K and his mother live in a rented semi-detached house, which is rather dingy and sparsely furnished.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The mother reported that there were a fair amount of literacy artifacts in the home. None of this was in evidence in the lounge, where the interview took place. K does not have any books of his own, nor does he belong to the library. His mother tells him stories three times per week. He has not been taught nursery rhymes at home and is not exposed to adult models of reading. He occasionally engages in pretend reading and writing, but enjoys drawing pictures instead. Home language : his mother is Afrikaans speaking and also speaks to him in Afrikaans sometimes.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

K's mother enjoys reading Mills and Boon books at home. At work she is required to read and write reports and invoices.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : C.P.**

C is the middle of three children. He has two brothers, aged two and nine years. He was delivered by Caesarian section due to complications from the mother's previous pregnancy. No complications were experienced. Developmental milestones were normal and medical history did not include anything significant. He was looked after by his mother until age one. He then stayed with his paternal grandmother for one year before starting creche at SHAWCO. He attended SHAWCO until he started at Kenmere Primary this year. C enjoys reading and playing tv games. They have little time together as a family, but the father is able to spend lots of time reading to the children and taking them to the park.

#### Socio-economic Information :

C's mother finished std 8 and works as a sales assistant at Woolworths. The father has std 8 and also completed the Junior and Senior Certificates in Fire Service and the National Diploma in Fire Technology. He is presently studying towards the Higher Diploma in Fire Technology at Cape Technikon. He is the Assistant Divisional Officer at a fire station. The monthly family income is above R3000-00. The family live in a free-standing house which they own. Furnishings in the home are fairly basic.

### Home Supports for Literacy :

The father reported having many of the artifacts in the questionnaire, but none of these were evident in the lounge, where the interview took place. The parents do not have books but subscribe to the Argus and buy the You magazine. C and his brother jointly own more than 10 books. His father takes him to the library every three weeks and reads to him two to three times per week. He often requests stories. C has not been taught nursery rhymes at home but has learnt them at school. There are no other adults who encourage reading. He engages in pretend reading and writing on a daily basis. He also writes patterns and colours in pictures. Home language : the home language is English, although both parents were schooled in Afrikaans. No Afrikaans is spoken in the home.

### Parental Uses of Literacy :

C's mother reads the "You" magazine and the newspaper at home. Her work does not involve much reading and writing, but she does relieve staff on the terminals and periodically does stock-taking. The father has to compile reports on each fire which is attended to and also presents lectures at the fire station. He is engaged in part time study as well.

## **FAMILY PROFILE : B.A.**

B is the youngest of three children. She has a brother aged 16 and a sister aged 19 years. The home environment is very stressed as the parents are estranged but still living together. For years the father has been engaged in an extra-marital affair which all the children are aware of. B's birth was normal but the mother reports being very ill during the pregnancy. She did not identify any specific illness but indicated that it was related to the home circumstances. B's early development was within normal limits and there are no significant factors in the medical history. She has always been a very nervous and clingy child. She spends most of her time with her mother and does not really have any friends. She started attending school for the first time this year and the separation from her mother was difficult. The teacher also reports that she does not play with the other children and seldom talks in class. B enjoys writing, cutting and pasting and riding her bicycle. She is not allowed to play outside and even rides her bicycle in the house. The mother spends lots of time with the children but they seldom go out. Except for the father, they are all very involved in church activities.

### Socio-economic Information :

The mother completed std 5 and left school during std 6 because it was too far to walk to school. She worked as a stiffening inserter in a shoe factory for 18 years and has been at home since B's birth. The father has std 6 and he is currently a manager at the Olympic Flair shoe factory. The monthly family income is above R3000-00. The parents own a free standing house and there are no other occupants. The home contains very modern furniture and appliances.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The presence of several literacy artifacts was reported, although none were evident in the lounge where the interview took place. The older siblings have books of their own, but the mother reads mainly the Bible. B owns between five and 10 books and does not belong to the library. Her brother or sister read to her twice a week. B sometimes requests to be told a story. She sometimes engages in pretend reading but does pretend writing every day. Nursery rhymes have often been taught at home. There are no other adults who have encouraged an interest in reading. Home language : both parents are originally Afrikaans speaking. They speak English and Afrikaans to the children.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother does not enjoy reading as a leisure activity but reads the Bible daily. The father reads the newspaper occasionally and his work involves a great deal of numeracy.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : Z.A.**

Z is the middle of three children. His brothers are aged 16 years and one month. He was delivered normally at full term and there were no complications. Developmental milestones were normal. He suffered chronic tonsillitis and had a tonsillectomy in 1995. His mother was at home until he was four months old. he stayed with his grandmother for three months and was then with a day mother, whom he still goes to after school in the afternoons. Between the age of three and five years Z attended a Moslem creche in the mornings. Here the emphasis was on religious teaching only. He enjoys outdoor play and does not like structured activities which require concentration. The family do not go out much and spend most of their weekends at home.

#### Socio-economic Information :

The mother finished std 8 and did a short secretarial course. She has been working as a clerk for Berry and Donaldson (import/ export) for 14 years. Her husband also has std 8 and is a clerk at the same company. The monthly family income exceeds R3000-00. They live in a free standing house which is owned by themselves. The home is very modern and very well furnished. There is a domestic worker living with them.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

Mother reports that there are several literacy artifacts in the home. On the lounge walls there were prayers written in Arabic, but no books were seen in the room. Z has more than 10 books of his own and also belongs to the library. His mother reads to him two to three times per week but he seldom requests it. He has not been taught nursery rhymes at home and there are no other adults who encourage literacy. He does not engage in pretend reading or writing unless parents encourage him to do so. Home language : both parents are originally Afrikaans speaking and they speak both languages to the children.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother does lots of religious reading and her work involves doing accounts, invoices etc. The father is not a reader but at work he is required to read and write documentation relating to importing and exporting of goods.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : G.P.**

G is the youngest of three children. He has male and female siblings aged 14 and 10 years respectively. He was delivered at full term by elective Caesarian section, with no complications. He had neonatal jaundice and received treatment for five days. Early developmental milestones were within normal limits. Nil of note in medical history. G was in the care of his paternal grandmother until the age of two years, six months, after which he attended SHAWCO creche until he started at Kenmere Primary this year. He most enjoys outdoor play with friends and also playing with cars. His family do not spend much time together since his mom works odd hours and is also involved in many church activities. They do occasionally go visiting and also to the beach.

#### Socio-economic Information :

G's mother completed std 8 and did a typing course. She is currently busy

with a basic computer course. His father has std 9 and has not done any further courses. The mother works as a doctor's receptionist and also sells bouquets and fruit baskets as an additional form of income. The father works as a leather cutter at Christens Manufacturing, which manufactures handbags. The monthly family income is between R1500-00 and R3000-00. The parents own their semi-detached council house, which is also occupied by the father's brother. The home is sparsely furnished.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

A number of literacy artifacts were reported as being present in the home, although none were evident in the lounge, where the interview took place. The parents do not have any books of their own, but the children have a few. G has about five books and also goes to the library every three weeks. His mother takes him to the library and either herself or his sister read to him about twice a week. He seldom asks for stories to be read to him. He has often been taught nursery rhymes at home and remembers them well. He engages in pretend reading about once per week but very seldom does pretend writing or writing of patterns. There is no other adult who encourages him to read.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother enjoys novels, but does not have much time to read. She reads mainly library books and also religious books. Her work includes completing forms, doing accounts and coding medicines. The father also enjoys novels and reads often. At work he is required to read and record measurements.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : Z.S.**

Z is the older of two children. She has a three year-old sister. She was delivered at full term using forceps due to her size. No complications were reported. Developmental milestones were felt to be within normal limits. No significant factors in the medical history. Since a few months of age she was in the care of her aunt and later a domestic worker until the age of three years, six months, when she attended creche. Z enjoys writing, colouring in, drawing and sand play. As a family they visit their relatives often and go to the beach, the park and also N1 City. The mother is originally from Mafekeng and her parents still live there. Z and her family stayed in Mafekeng for about two years before moving back to Cape Town in December last year. In July this year they moved into their own home

for the first time and are still busy settling in.

Socio-economic Information :

The mother has matric and completed three years at Hewat Teacher Training College. She has seven years teaching experience and is currently not employed. She is doing a bookkeeping course as she plans to leave teaching. The father has matric, basic computer courses and diplomas in waste management obtained when he was employed as an inspector at the municipality. At present he works as a clerk at Syfrets. The monthly family income, when both parents are earning exceeds R3000-00. The parents own a free-standing house, which is also occupied by the mom's younger brother who is a student. The home is modern, with limited but fairly new furniture.

Home Supports for Literacy :

The parents reported that they had a fair amount of literacy artifacts in the home. However, none of this was evident in the lounge where the interview took place. The books owned by the mother are mainly school text books and magazines such as "You" and "Huisgenoot". Z and her sister jointly own more than 10 books. She has also visited the library regularly since age two, but hasn't been since they have been back in Cape Town. Her dad reads to her about five times per week, often at her request. She has learnt rhymes mainly at school and enjoys teaching them to her younger sister. She has received much encouragement to read from her maternal aunt who is a pre-school teacher. Z enjoys writing patterns and pretend reading and writing on a daily basis. Home language : the children are spoken to in English but the parents often speak Afrikaans to each other.

Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother's job as a teacher involves mainly reading and writing. She does not have time to read for pleasure but would read novels if she were able. The father's job involves monitoring of client assets on the stock market and his work includes daily reading of the Business Day section of the newspaper. He also needs to update and capture information on the computer.

**FAMILY PROFILE : R.S.**

R is an only child. She was delivered by suction at full term. No complications were reported. She suffered neonatal jaundice.

Developmental milestones were within normal limits. She has not had any illnesses of note but does have asthma and eczema. Since babyhood she has been cared for by her paternal grandmother until the age of three years, when she attended Watersprites. R enjoys playing school, dolls and writing. The family is not very outgoing but do occasionally go to the beach and on braais.

#### Socio-economic Information :

The mother has matric and works as an administrative assistant for the City Council. The father has std 8 and is a carpenter for Douglas Benson Construction. Neither of them have done any formal or non-formal courses. Their combined monthly income is above R3000-00. They do not own property but live in a separate entrance with the father's parents. The interview was done in the main house, which has outdated but adequate furnishing. They are currently in the process of building a home.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The parents do not have any books or dictionaries, but the mother buys the "Living and Loving" and "Your Family" regularly. They buy the newspaper once a week. R has about five books of her own. She does not belong to the library but will be joining soon. Her mother reads stories to her two to three times per week, often at her request. She has also been given much encouragement to read by her maternal grandmother, who is a teacher. She has also often been taught nursery rhymes by her mother. Home language: both parents are originally Afrikaans speaking. They speak Afrikaans to each other and English to R.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

Neither parents enjoy reading for pleasure. The mother reads magazines and the newspaper and the father reads the Bible occasionally. The mother's work involves much letter writing and reading and entering of information onto the computer. The father uses literacy skills for reading plans and measurements and also for recording of measurements.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : J.T.**

J is the youngest of three children. Her brothers are 15 and 19 years old. The eldest brother is a professional soccer player and the younger is a scholar. She was delivered normally at full term, with no complications. Her developmental milestones were within normal limits. She has not had

any illnesses of note. Since the age of three years she attended Gateway creche, before starting at Kenmere Primary. J is very fond of writing, listening to stories and playing with blocks. The family are very homely and do not go out much, particularly since their car has been out of order for a while.

#### Socio-economic Information :

The mother has a matric as well as three years of teacher training. She has been teaching for 21 years. The father has std 5 and worked as a foreman at Cape Coal until he was retrenched earlier this year. The family live in a free standing house which they bought two years ago. The home is simply furnished. There are no other occupants in the household.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The mother has many books, mostly relating to her studies and school text books. They also have a set of encyclopaedias. She also buys the You magazine and the daily newspaper. J has more than 10 books of her own and also belongs to the library. Lately she has not gone to the library often as her mother has been busy with further studies. J enjoys stories and her mother reads to her every day, often at her request. In fact, she refuses to go to bed if she has not heard a story. She has also been taught nursery rhymes at home and enjoys them. There are no other adults who encourage J's literacy. She also engages in pretend reading, writing and drawing several times a week. Home language : both parents are originally Afrikaans speaking. They speak Afrikaans to each other and English to the children.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

Apart from books related to her studies, the mother reads mainly magazines and the newspaper. She no longer has time to read novels. Her work as a teacher involves a high degree of literacy. Her father reads the newspaper but does not read novels. When he was employed, his work involved reading and writing delivery schedules, weighing, etc.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : K.D.**

K has an older brother of 12 years. Their mother is unmarried and has no contact with or support from their father. K was delivered at full term with the aid of forceps, following long labour. Although her mother suffered post-natal depression, no complications were experienced with K's

delivery. Developmental milestones were felt to be normal. Her medical history includes frequent colds, problems with her adenoids and skin allergies. K was looked after by her mom's sister-in-law until she started at Kenmere Primary this year. Her favourite activities include writing and doing puzzles. She also enjoys washing the dishes for her mother. As a family they occasionally go for drives or to the beach, but this does not happen often as they depend on friends for transport.

#### Socio-economic Information :

The mother has std 8 and has not done any further courses. She works as an order clerk for Waltons Stationery. Her monthly income is R1500-00 per month and she reports finding it extremely difficult to make ends meet. They live in a separate entrance on a property owned by the mother's brother. The interview was conducted in the main house, which was modern and well furnished. However, the mother indicated that her living quarters were not of the same standard.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The mother reports that she enjoys reading but does not have time. She has no books or dictionaries. She does not buy the newspaper but reads it at work. She sometimes buys the "You" magazine. There are generally few literacy artifacts in the home and she seldom engages in literacy activities. K has between one and five books of her own. She does not belong to the library and her mother reports not having the time to read to her, even though she sometimes requests it. She has learnt nursery rhymes from her brother. She engages in pretend reading and writing almost daily. K does not have contact with another adult who encourages literacy. Home language : the mother is Afrikaans but speaks English to the children. The other members of the household are Afrikaans.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother indicated that if she had the time, she would like to engage in leisure reading. Her work involves entering clients' orders onto the computer.

**APPENDIX 22****FAMILY PROFILES OF GROUP B SUBJECTS****FAMILY PROFILE : J.D.**

J is the younger of two children of a single parent. Her brother is 13 years old. She was delivered by Caesarian section due to her large size. No complications were reported. Developmental milestones were normal and the medical history does not include any illnesses of note. She was in the care of her mother until she started school this year. J enjoys outdoor play and watching kids programmes on tv. Her mother was not able to specify which activities or games she enjoys. The family does not go out at all.

**Socio-economic Information :**

J's mother completed std 5. She has not worked since J's birth as she also had to care for her own father who was ill and passed away last year. She has started working as a machinist at Dungeon Clothing a few months ago and is employed on a casual basis. The family's monthly income is below R1500-00. Neither of the children receive financial support from their father. They live in a semi-detached council house which the mother inherited from her father. The home is neat but very sparsely furnished. The mother's sister and three children live with them in the house, while her two brothers and their wives and children live in the separate entrance at the back.

**Home Supports for Literacy :**

J's mother does not own any books apart from her Bible. She also buys the newspaper twice a week. Literacy artifacts and activities in the home are very limited. J does not have any books. She belongs to the library, but does not attend. Her mother does not read to her, but sometimes her cousins do. Occasionally her mother has told her fairy tales. She has not been taught nursery rhymes at home. J sometimes engages in pretend reading and writing patterns. There are no other adults who encourage literacy. Home language : the mother and the other occupants of the household are Afrikaans speaking.

**Parental Uses of Literacy :**

The mother's work does not include literacy activities. At home she reads the Bible, her prayer book and the newspaper.

**FAMILY PROFILE : C.G.**

C has a half sister aged eight years. She was conceived out of wedlock in a previous relationship in which her father was involved. She was removed from the care of her biological mother at a few months of age, due to neglect. Her father or stepmother were unable to give details about the birth, except to say that she was delivered at home because her mother did not get to the hospital in time. There were apparently no complications. No significant illnesses were reported, although she has frequent colds which do not seem to clear up. C was looked after by her paternal aunt before starting at Factreton Primary. Her favourite activities are writing, playing outdoors and watching Kideo. As a family they go to the Waterfront about once a month and sometimes spend weekends with the mother's cousin in Mitchell's Plain.

Socio-economic Information :

The mother completed std 5 and works as a sample machinist at Seasprite Clothing. The father has std 4 and is a machine operator at Kohler Corrugated. The monthly family income is R1500-00. They live with the father's mother in a semi-detached council house. C, her sister and their parents all occupy one small bedroom. Furnishings in the home are meagre. There are three other adults and three children in the household.

Home Supports for Literacy :

The parents do not own any books but buy the newspaper regularly. the mother also reads the "You" and "Your Family" magazines. C does not own any books or belong to the library. She sometimes looks at her sister's library books. About once a week her mother reads the comic section of the You magazine to her, sometimes on request. She has not been taught nursery rhymes by her parents but learns from the other children. C engages on pretend reading and writing every day. She is not exposed to any other adults who encourage literacy. Home language : the mother was educated in English and the father in Afrikaans. They speak Afrikaans to each other and English to the children. The other children in the house speak Afrikaans.

Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother's work involves reading instructions and keeping records of the garments she sews. She also reads magazines and does crosswords. The father has to keep records of the bales of waste paper which he puts together. He also reads James Hadley Chase books when he gets them from friends.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : C.M.**

C has five siblings, aged five, seven, eight, 11 and 13. She was delivered normally without complications. Her developmental milestones were normal and she has had no illnesses of note. She has been looked after by her mother until she started at Factreton Primary this year. Her favourite activities are writing, singing and riding her bicycle. As a family they do not go out much.

#### Socio-economic Information :

Both parents completed std 9. The father studied a 3 year Business and Professional Diploma at Pentech on a part time basis. He works as a stock controller for Games Africa. The mother has always been a housewife. Their monthly family income is between R1500-00 and R3000-00. They live in a free standing house which is owned by the father's mother who also lives with them. The home is neat and adequately furnished.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The parents do not own any books but do have a dictionary and maps. They buy the newspaper daily and also get magazines from a relative. C does not have any books or belong to the library. Her siblings attend the library and allow her to look at their books. Her sisters read to her every day, mainly from their school books. She seldom asks to be read to. Her sisters have taught her nursery rhymes. C does not have contact with other adults who encourage literacy. Home language : both parents were originally Afrikaans and still speak Afrikaans to each other but English to the children.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother reads mainly magazines and the father reads the newspaper. At work he has to write reports, complete log sheets and enter information onto a computer.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : L.H.**

L has a seven year old sister. He was delivered normally, without complications. His speech milestones were delayed but motor development was normal. He had bouts of croup at six months and one year and was

hospitalised. He has been in the care of his mother until starting school at Factreton this year. he received speech therapy from a student at Tygerberg Hospital at age four, for about eight months. He did not return this year because they did not contact the mother. His favourite activities are cutting pictures, playing house and riding his bicycle. His mother occasionally takes them to the beach, the gardens or to the movies.

#### Socio-economic Information :

Both parents have std 8. The mother completed a secretarial course as well as a baking course. She now works as a baker for From the Oven. The father worked as a storeman for Xactocraft but was retrenched recently. They have been divorced for two years and the children visit their father occasionally. The monthly family income is R1500-00, which may decrease if the father is unable to support the children. They live in a rented separate entrance, which is adequately furnished.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The mother does not own any books other than a Bible and a dictionary. She also buys the "You" magazine. Literacy artifacts and activities are limited. L has between one and five books and belongs to the library but does not go often. His mother tells him fairy tales and reads from the You magazine once a week, often at his request. His sister teaches him nursery rhymes. L is not in contact with any adults who encourage his literacy development. Home language : The mother is Afrikaans speaking but speaks English to the children. Her English is very poor.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother reads the Bible at home, but does not require literacy skills at work.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : J.G.**

J is the only child of an unmarried mother. He has had very little contact with his father due to the irregular nature of his work hours. J's mother and father have ended their relationship about six months ago.

J was delivered by Caesarian section because his head would not engage. No subsequent complications were reported. He only walked at one year, five months, which his mother felt was late. There were no illnesses or medical conditions of note. J did not attend creche before starting pre-

school at Factreton Primary and was looked after by his mother. His favourite activities are writing and drawing pictures and he also enjoys outdoor game such as soccer. He and his mother sometimes go to Town and to movies together.

Socio-economic Information :

J's mother has std 7 and his father has matric. Neither of them completed any additional training. His mother has not worked since his birth but has worked as a waitress. His father installs burglar alarms for Modern Burglar Alarms. J and his mother are supported entirely by her parents. Her mother is a machinist and her father is an electrician. The family lives in a freestanding house which they own. The home is fairly modern and well furnished. In addition to J and his mother, there are four other adults and one child in the house.

Home Supports for Literacy :

The mother does not have any books of her own, but sometimes reads the newspaper which her father buys. They have a dictionary but no comics or magazines. J does not have any books of his own, but goes to the library once a week. His mother has been taking him to the library since the age of three. She reads to him every day, although he seldom asks for a story. She has often taught him nursery rhymes. There is no other adult who encourages J's literacy. Home language : both Afrikaans and English are spoken in the home, but J is spoken to in English.

Parental Uses of Literacy :

J's mother does not read as a leisure activity. Her parents, especially her mother read often though.

**FAMILY PROFILE : S.G.**

S is the older of two children. She has a sister aged two. She was delivered by forceps at full term. No other complications were reported. Developmental milestones were within normal limits. Medical history does not include any illnesses of note. She has been looked after by her mother since birth and only started school this year. S's favourite activity is writing. As a family they mainly visit relatives over weekends, but go camping every Christmas. Home language : both parents are Afrikaans, but speak English and Afrikaans to the children.

Socio-economic Information :

S's mother and father both have std 7. The mother is a housewife and the father installs ceilings and partitions. He is not permanently employed and does freelance work. The joint family income is approximately R1500-00 per month. The family lives in a separate entrance with relatives who have a sub-economic council house. The interview was conducted in the main house, which was very simply furnished.

Home Supports for Literacy :

The parents do not own any books, but the mother belongs to the library. They do not buy the newspaper or magazines. S has between one and five books of her own. She is a member of the library but hardly ever goes there. Her mother reads to her occasionally, sometimes at her request. She has not been taught nursery rhymes at home. S does not have contact with other adults who encourage literacy. Home language : the adults speak Afrikaans to each other, but English to the children.

Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother enjoys reading Mills and Boon romance novels, which she gets from the library or from friends. The father also reads books occasionally, if he gets them from friends. His work also requires that he read and interpret plans.

**FAMILY PROFILE : L.Z.**

L has a younger sister of one year. His delivery was normal and no complications were reported. Developmental milestones were within normal limits. There were no significant factors in his medical history. L's mother and paternal grandmother looked after him until the age of four, when he started at creche. His favourite activities are cycling, soccer and cricket. The family do not spend much time together as the father is permanently on night shift and the mother works night shift two days a week. When she works night shift, she stays with her parents in Steenberg, to facilitate travelling. The paternal grandmother then takes responsibility for the children. When they are able to go out together, they go to the beach or to her family in Steenberg.

Socio-economic Information :

Both parents have std 7 and have not completed any additional courses.

The mother is a general worker at Constantiaberg Hospital and the father is a stock controller at Creda Press. The combined family income is R3000-00 per month. They do not own property but live with the father's mother in a sub-economic council house. The home is neat and simply furnished.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

The only books which the parents have are Christian books which the father gets at work. They do not have dictionaries, magazines or newspapers. They engage in very few literacy activities. L has about five books of his own. He does not belong to the library and his mother seldom reads to him. He has not been taught nursery rhymes and does not have access to other adults who encourage reading. He enjoys pretend writing and drawing, but his mother has not observed pretend reading. Home language : both parents are Afrikaans, but they speak English to the children.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother reads Christian books at home, when she has time, but her work does not involve literacy activities. The father does not read at home, but his work requires him to complete forms and record quantities, etc.

### **FAMILY PROFILE : M.K.**

M has two brothers aged 20 and 22. She was delivered normally at full term, without complications. Developmental milestones were normal. Other than asthma, she has had no illnesses of note. M was cared for by her maternal grandmother since birth. She attended creche for six months prior to starting at Factreton Primary. M's favourite activities are writing, cutting pictures and playing with dolls. As a family they visit relatives and sometime go to the beach at weekends.

#### Socio-economic Information :

Her mother completed std 6 and her father std 8. He also did an apprenticeship in cabinet-making, but has not really worked as a cabinet-maker. He is employed as a driver at Bill Riley meat wholesalers. The mother is a printer at Vitria Glassware. The family income, which includes the contribution of the sons, is between R1500-00 and R3000-00 per month. They live in a free standing council house which is owned by the

maternal grandmother. Furnishings in the home are very basic.

#### Home Supports for Literacy :

This was one of the few homes of group B subjects where books were actually evident. The mother has a collection of Afrikaans novels which she bought whilst a member of a book club. They also have a set of children's encyclopedias as well as information books on science and geography. She buys the "Huisgenoot" and sometimes the newspaper. A fair amount of other literacy artifacts were reported to be in the home. M has about five books of her own and belongs to the library. Her mother takes her every second week and reads to her twice a week, sometimes at her request. M has not been taught nursery rhymes at home. She enjoys pretend reading and writing patterns. Apart from her father who sometimes reads to her, there is no other adult who encourages literacy. Home language : M's parents, her brothers and her grandmother all speak Afrikaans, but speak English to her.

#### Parental Uses of Literacy :

The mother enjoys reading novels but does not have as much time as she would like. Her work does not require literacy. The father does not enjoy reading and only reads the newspaper. In his work he needs to read delivery destinations, road signs and invoices, etc.

## APPENDIX 23

## SPEARMAN CORRELATION REPORT

## Spearman Correlations Section (Pair-Wise Deletion)

	TROG_RS	ENVMT	FUNCT	CONCEPTS	STORY	SOUND
TROG_RS	1.000000	0.489258	0.432574	0.332068	0.578431	0.507987
ENVMT	0.489258	1.000000	0.530461	0.200961	0.561310	0.312764
FUNCT	0.432574	0.530461	1.000000	0.116493	0.260930	0.361390
CONCEPTS	0.332068	0.200961	0.116493	1.000000	0.187424	0.343937
STORY	0.578431	0.561310	0.260930	0.187424	1.000000	0.506437
SOUND	0.507987	0.312764	0.361390	0.343937	0.506437	1.000000
LETTER	0.515079	0.308150	0.156719	0.365388	0.338739	0.278631
WORD	0.689989	0.679446	0.725927	0.164604	0.670437	0.598525
DRAW_RS	0.225549	0.225259	0.244718	0.146333	0.264196	0.452982
DRAW_IQ	0.205455	0.134349	0.246155	0.157746	0.194386	0.433404
RHYMING	0.314376	0.245094	0.238998	0.074956	0.479410	0.499568

## Spearman Correlations Section (Pair-Wise Deletion)

	LETTER	WORD	DRAW_RS	DRAW_IQ	RHYMING
TROG_RS	0.515079	0.689989	0.225549	0.205455	0.314376
ENVMT	0.308150	0.679446	0.225259	0.134349	0.245094
FUNCT	0.156719	0.725927	0.244718	0.246155	0.238998
CONCEPTS	0.365388	0.164604	0.146333	0.157746	0.074956
STORY	0.338739	0.670437	0.264196	0.194386	0.479410
SOUND	0.278631	0.598525	0.452982	0.433404	0.499568
LETTER	1.000000	0.422485	0.505635	0.481641	0.256639
WORD	0.422485	1.000000	0.386111	0.310413	0.384802
DRAW_RS	0.505635	0.386111	1.000000	0.961152	0.307205
DRAW_IQ	0.481641	0.310413	0.961152	1.000000	0.346248
RHYMING	0.256639	0.384802	0.307205	0.346248	1.000000