

The Attitudes and Reading Behaviors of Parents

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Nationwide, 32% of fourth grade students read at or below the “basic” level (NCES, 2013), and students who cannot read at proficient levels by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school later (Hernandez, 2012). In Kansas, there are drastic disparities in reading proficiency by socioeconomics and race (Kids Count, n.d.). Using the Social Cognitive theory, this study sought to uncover parents’ personal attitudes and reading behaviors, which can influence their children’s. Additionally, this study wanted to ask what barriers prevent parents from encouraging their children’s reading. A mix of quantitative (collected through a survey) and qualitative data (focus groups with parents of K-3 students— “lost years” in the research) were used. Results indicate that overall, parents have favorable attitudes towards reading, but there are disparities in parent behaviors. Parents also mentioned changes in curriculum as being a major barrier to their own reading involvement.