

# FACT SHEET 15

## READING MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE TEACHING LANGUAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL

### 1 CONTEXT

Developing an interest for reading and related skills starts well before school. Having an interest in books at an early age seems to contribute to success, in elementary school and high school, in reading and other subjects beyond basic skills.

### SOURCE

This fact sheet is a brief summary of the results presented in the following fascicle: NANHOU, Virginie, Hélène DESROSIERS, Karine TÉTREAUULT and Frédéric GUAY (2016). "La motivation en lecture durant l'enfance et le rendement dans la langue d'enseignement à 15 ans", *Québec Longitudinal Study of Child Development (QLSCD 1998-2015) – From Birth to 17 Years of Age*, Institut de la statistique du Québec, vol. 8, fascicule 3. [[www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/education/alphabetisation-litteratie/motivation-lecture.pdf](http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/education/alphabetisation-litteratie/motivation-lecture.pdf)] (in French only).

Note that the QLSCD has been following a cohort of children who were born in Québec in 1997-1998.

### 2 HIGHLIGHTS

#### Number of hours spent per week reading for pleasure among 15-year-old Francophone students

Among 15-year-old French-speaking students born in Québec, about half do not read at all for pleasure or read less than an hour during a regular week (27% and 25%, respectively). In contrast, 27% spend three hours or more per week doing this activity. Girls and students whose mother has a university degree are more likely to be avid readers than boys and students whose mothers are less educated (high school diploma or lower education level). On the other hand, the number of hours spent per week reading for pleasure is not significantly related to the level of household income.

The amount of time spent reading for pleasure by Francophone students is positively associated to:

- self-regulation of learning (e.g., planning study time, using effective learning strategies)
- motivation and feeling of competency in the teaching language and mathematics
- school attachment and engagement
- academic performance in the teaching language, mathematics and in all subjects combined

#### Interest in books at an early age, reading motivation in elementary school and performance in the teaching language at age 15 among all students

Compared to children who flipped through books on their own once a week or less at age 2 and a half, those who did so every day had a higher intrinsic level of reading motivation in elementary school.

In turn, the level of reading motivation in elementary school predicts the degree of success in the teaching language at age 15, even after taking into account different socio-demographic characteristics (gender of the student, languages spoken at home, socio-economic background) and reading performance at the beginning of schooling.

Regardless of basic reading skills, reading motivation in childhood (the amount of time the child spends on this activity for fun) contributes to success in the teaching language in high school.



### 3 OF NOTE

Children living in a household where the languages spoken most often by parents were neither French nor English when they were 5 months of age had a higher intrinsic level of reading motivation in elementary school than other children.

### 4 DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENT

#### *Intrinsic reading motivation in elementary school*

Intrinsic motivation is defined as engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction of accomplishing it, without external stimulation or obligations. Measuring intrinsic reading motivation in elementary school is based on three elements that refer to the interest and enjoyment of reading: 1) liking the subject; 2) finding the subject interesting; 3) practising certain activities associated with the subject without being obligated to do so.

#### *Reading for pleasure at 15*

Reading for pleasure at the age of 15 was assessed using the following question: "In the last three months, during a typical week, how many hours did you spend reading for pleasure?"(including books, magazines, newspapers, reading on the computer or the Internet).

\*Please note that due to a translation error, this question was only asked in the French version of the questionnaire.

To learn more about the QLSCD and access the other fact sheets in the kit, visit our website at

[www.iamillbe.stat.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.iamillbe.stat.gouv.qc.ca)

## INTERVENTION PATHS

These results highlight the importance of developing interest in reading well before starting school. To this end, it is essential to educate parents and other stakeholders on the benefits of regularly reading to young children and to provide them with adequate tools in this regard. One of the ways to develop and maintain children's interest in reading is to let them choose reading material that they find interesting.