



NATIONAL CENTER *for* CHILDREN & FAMILIES  
ADVANCING POLICY, EDUCATION, & DEVELOPMENT

TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

**~STUDY LINKS HOUSEHOLD ORDER TO CHILDREN'S  
EARLY READING ABILITIES~**

Can organizing your home help your child to become a better reader? Maybe. A new study on the effects of the home environment on early reading growth has found evidence of a link between the reading abilities of 5 and 6 year old children, and the orderliness of their homes. The study appears in the October 2008 edition of Merrill-Palmer Quarterly.

Researchers at Teachers College, Columbia University and the Ohio State University found that household order, characterized by routines and cleanliness was positively associated with a range of early reading abilities in a sample of 455 kindergarten and first-grade twins. However, this association only held for mothers whose own reading abilities were above the national average. When the sample was split by mother's reading level, household order explained reading growth among children of mothers with above-average reading skills, while the child's interest in and enjoyment of reading explained reading growth among children of mothers with average reading ability.

Dr. Anne Martin, one of the researchers, noted that perhaps the same mothers who are above average readers are also those who are more likely to keep a tidy home and to implement daily household routines. So, mothers looking to enhance their child's early reading skills should be encouraged to grab their organizers and even their brooms, as keeping an orderly home may have an even greater impact on our children than we previously thought.

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