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PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY READING INITIATION

RELACJE RODZIC-DZIECKO W KONTEKŚCIE WCZESNYCH INICJACJI CZYTELNICZYCH

Streszczenie: W artykule podjęto problematykę dotyczącą znaczenia relacji rodzic-dziecko dla zaangażowania rodziców w podejmowanie wspólnych inicjacji czytelniczych z dziećmi. Badania ilościowe przeprowadzone w grupie rodziców dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami rozwojowymi (N=198) oraz bez specjalnych potrzeb rozwojowych (N=194) pozwoliły na ustalenie związków pomiędzy deklarowanym przez obie badane grupy rodziców zaangażowaniem w podejmowanie wczesnych inicjacji czytelniczych a przejawianymi przez nich zachowaniami wspierającymi lub przymusowymi, samooceną własnych zachowań w kontakcie z dzieckiem oraz oceną zachowań dziecka, a także na rozpoznanie predyktorów zaangażowania rodziców dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami rozwojowymi i bez specjalnych potrzeb rozwojowych w podejmowanie wspólnych inicjacji czytelniczych z dziećmi. Wyniki badań wskazują m.in., że głównym predyktorem zaangażowania rodziców w podejmowanie wspólnych inicjacji czytelniczych w obu badanych grupach są działania wspierające/zaangażowane. Dodatkowo w grupie rodziców ze specjalnymi potrzebami rozwojowymi wskazano na mediacyjną rolę dokonywanej przez rodziców dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami rozwojowymi oceny zachowań dziecka w relacji między ujawnianymi przez nich zachowaniami wspierającymi/zaangażowanymi a zaangażowaniem w podejmowanie wczesnych inicjacji czytelniczych z dziećmi.

Słowa kluczowe: rodzice, specjalne potrzeby rozwojowe, czytanie, wczesne inicjacje czytelnicze

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Summary: The article presents the question of the importance of the parent-child relationship for the involvement of parents in reading initiation with their children. Quantitative research conducted on a group of parents of children with special development needs (N=198) and children without special development needs (N=194) made it possible to identify the relationship between the involvement in early reading initiation declared by both groups of parents surveyed and their supportive or coercive, self-assessment of their own behaviour in contact with the child and assessment of the child's behaviour, as well as to identify predictors of the involvement of parents of children with and without special development needs in undertaking joint reading initiation with children. The results of the research show, among other things, that the main predictor of parental involvement in joint reading initiation in both groups surveyed is supportive/engaged activities. In addition, in the group of parents with special needs, the mediating role of the parents' assessment of the child's behaviour in the relationship between their reported supportive/engaged behaviours and involvement in early reading initiation with children was indicated.

Keywords: parents, special development needs, reading, early reading initiations.

Introduction

One of the key issues undertaken in social science research on home literacy environments relating to reading activities or the availability of reading resources at home that can be used to develop children's literacy skills (Puglisi et al. 2017), currently appears to be the issue of the determinants of early reading initiations carried out in parent-child diads (Kuracki 2022). Intensity and direction of children's early literacy in the home environment (*emergent literacy, early literacy*), including both code-focused formal experiences, such as teaching letters and modelling literacy, and meaning-focused informal experiences, such as sharing reading material in the form of play, storytelling together, or taking the child to libraries and bookshops (Sénéchal, LeFevre 2002), in view of the source literature appear to be related to, among other things, the broad demographic and socio-economic context of the family. Thus, empirical work has relatively often attempted to explain parental involvement in the process of early reading initiation – with mixed results – through the lens of socio-demographic variables, i.e., income, cultural differences, parental language skills (Clark 2003; Dickinson, Tabors 2001; González et al. 2005; Pianta 2004; Taylor 1983; Whitehurst, Lonigan 1998), as well as the access to the social space and the professional responsibilities of the parents (Hart, Risley 1995; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2010), marginalising somewhat the issues of their psychosocial resources and parenting skills. In the light of theoretical findings emerging from, among other things, a sociocultural perspective (Wygotski 1978) and social and

pragmatic (Tomasello 2000), as well as the lack of conclusive data explaining what determines the quality of family reading practices, it seems reasonable to undertake further research aimed more at identifying the psychological determinants of parental involvement in the process of early reading initiation.

In search of determinants of parental involvement in early reading initiation

The activities that take place in the family environment to develop children's language and literacy skills are undoubtedly an important step towards their independent discovery and understanding of the world around them. Participation with more experienced partners, i.e., parents and carers, in activities using a variety of text-based materials, in line with William Teale and Elizabeth Sulzba's (1989) concept of literacy development, enables the child to explore not only the abstract but also the pragmatic aspect of reading and writing. However, creating an environment conducive to the accumulation of linguistic experiences that activate the child's cognitive and motivational resources, including episodes of shared participation (Schaffer 1994), is a complex process in which, in addition to the socio-economic resources of the family and the methodological skills of the parents, their educational sensitivity, insight and attention to the quality of their relationship with the child can play an important role.

Parents' ability to make accurate self-evaluations of their child's behaviour, as well as their supportive/engaged behaviour towards the child, expressed through patience, acceptance and positive emotions, form the basis for improving their own parenting competence from a psychological and pedagogical point of view, and can be seen as one of the key prerequisites for any constructive parent-child relationship, and thus important factors in activating parents to engage in a variety of development activities with their children, including early initiation to reading. However, these factors seem to become particularly important when children display difficult behaviours of an externalising and/or internalising nature, which are not always understood by the parents, and the intensity of which is observed in the clinical picture of many deviations and development disorders.

Children's maladaptive behaviour and the often-associated loss of interest in engaging in play activities can not only significantly impede communication with parents, but also undermine their motivation to initiate joint activities, leaving them feeling helpless and powerless. This state of affairs is supported by a number of studies which have observed that the quality and frequency of shared reading sessions in parent-child dyads, including children's declining interest in the reading process and in reading games suggested by parents, decreases significantly (Deckner et al. 2006; Reynolds, Werfel 2020; Schneider, Hecht 1995). Furthermore, according to a survey of mothers of children with autism spectrum disorders (Seymour et al. 2013; por Dłużniewska, Kuracki 2018, 2020; Kuracki 2019; Lai et al. 2015), including an increase in the child's problematic behaviour, there is an increase in the parents'

ineffective coping strategies, which in turn may over time lead to the disclosure of a number of maladaptive behaviours towards their own children (Smith et al. 2008), which literature tends to place on a continuum of hostility – coerciveness (Lovejoy et al. 1999). Hence, although the literature emphasises that the degree of parental involvement in children's education in the broadest sense is related, among other things, to the ways in which parents perceive their own parental role and their expectations of their own child (Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler 2005), it also seems likely that it may be conditioned by the parents' assessment of the child's behaviour. These premises, which require further empirical verification, may prove helpful in explaining the differences observed in comparative analyses of families raising children with special development needs and children with harmonious development in the frequency and course of family reading interactions. (Dolezal-Sams et al. 2009; Grindle et al. 2019; Light, Kelford-Smith 1993; Peeters et al. 2009; Pino 2000; Westerveld, Bysterveldt 2017). The findings furthermore show that parents of children with disabilities feel less effective in their own involvement in activities to support their child's development than parents of children without disabilities (Rogers et al. 2009).

Therefore, taking into account the existing knowledge, which comes from both theoretical considerations and empirical reports, the authors of this article have attempted to search for mechanisms that explain the involvement of parents of children with and without special development needs in the organisation of an environment conducive to early reading initiation as an integral part of educational interventions aimed at stimulating child development.

Own research methodological assumptions

The following research objectives have been set for this quantitative paradigm project:

1. Identification and comparison of parents of children with special development needs and parents of children without special development needs' self-assessment of supportive/engaged and coercive/hostile parenting behaviours.
2. Identification and comparison of self-assessment by parents of children with special development needs and parents of children without special development needs of their own behaviour in contact with the child and assessment of the child's behaviour during joint activities.
3. Identification and comparison of parental declared involvement in early reading initiations of children with and without special development needs.
4. Identification of the relationships between the involvement in early reading initiation declared by the two groups of parents surveyed and the supportive or coercive behaviours they display, their self-assessment of their own behaviour when interacting with their child, and their assessment of their child's behaviour.

5. Identification of predictors of involvement of parents of children with and without special development needs in undertaking shared reading initiations with their children.

The research objectives formulated in this way are guided by the following questions:

1. Are there, and if so, what are the differences between the self-perceptions of parents of children with special development needs and parents of children without special development needs in terms of supportive/engaged and coercive/hostile parenting behaviours?
2. Are there any differences, and if so, what are they, between parents of children with special development needs and parents of children without special development needs in the way they self-assess their own behaviour when interacting with the child and in the way they assess the child's behaviour during shared activities?
3. Are there, and if so, what differences exist in the declared involvement of parents of children with and without special development needs in early reading initiations?
4. Are there, and if so, what are the relationships between the commitment to early reading initiated by the two groups of parents surveyed and the supportive or coercive behaviours they exhibit, their self-assessment of their own behaviour in interacting with their child, and their assessment of their child's behaviour?
5. What factors determine the joint initiation of reading with children in a group of parents of children with and without special needs?

The research used a diagnostic survey method. In the Polish adaptation, the authors of this study used the following questionnaires as research instruments: Parent Behavior Inventory by M. Christina Lovejoy, Robert Weis, Elizabeth O'Hare and Elizabeth C. Rubin (1999), Parent Cognition Scale by Jeffery D. Snarr, Amy M. Smith Slep and Vincent P. Grande (2009), as well as Family Literacy Activities Inventory by Lay See Yeo, Winston W. Ong, and Charis M. Ng (2014).

The Parent Cognition Scale (PCS) consists of 30 items and is used to assess two factors: Child Responsible – an assessment of the child's behaviour (from the parent's perspective), such as: waywardness, demandingness, not listening to the parent, excessive stubbornness, etc.; and a Parent Causal – parental self-assessment in contact with the child, taking into account the extent to which the parent perceives their own negative behaviour i.e. inconsistency, not giving the child enough attention, difficulty in setting limits for the child, lack of patience and confidence when taking care of the child. The reliability analysis carried out in connection with the Polish adaptation and validation of the tool showed high α coefficients in both study groups: parents of children with special development needs ($\alpha=0.94$ – the whole tool, $\alpha=0.83$ – 1st factor, $\alpha=0.85$ – 2nd factor) and parents of children without special development needs ($\alpha=0.94$ – the whole tool, $\alpha=0.82$ – 1st factor, $\alpha=0.81$ – 2nd factor).

The Parent Behavioral Inventory (PBI) consists of 20 items and is used to assess parental behaviour in contact with the child, seen in two dimensions: hostile/coercive behaviours, understood as those expressing a negative or indifferent attitude towards the child and may include, among other things, threats, physical punishment and violent reactions to the child's needs, and supportive/engaged behaviours, i.e., those showing acceptance of the child expressed, among other things, in undertaking joint activities with them, expressing warm feelings towards them and providing them with emotional support. A 6-point Likert scale was used for each statement. The Polish adaptation and validation of the tool showed high reliability coefficients α in both study groups: parents of children with special development needs ($\alpha=0.72$ – the whole tool, $\alpha=0.84$ – hostility/coercivity scale, $\alpha= 0.85$ – support/engagement scale) and parents of children without special development needs ($\alpha= 0.78$ – the whole tool, $\alpha=0.85$ – hostility/coercivity scale, $\alpha= 0.95$ – support/engagement scale).

The Family Literacy Activities Inventory (FLAI) consists of 17 items and examines parental involvement in early reading initiation. The instrument is divided into 4 factors. The first, Parental Activation of the Child in Reading and Writing, consists of 7 items and deals with parental behaviour aimed at initiating activities that encourage the child's exposure to the printed word, such as: looking at or reading books together, promotional materials, learning to write simple words, etc. The second, Modelling Reading and Writing by the Parent, contains 4 items and refers to reading and writing activities that the parent does in the presence of the child. The third and fourth: Going to the bookshop together and Going to the library together, contain four and two items respectively and refer to activities by the parent to encourage the child to visit places where he or she can come into contact with books.

The reliability analysis conducted in the Polish adaptation and validation of the tool showed high α coefficients for both groups of parents surveyed: those raising children with special development needs (total score $\alpha = 0.872$, 1st factor $\alpha = 0.848$, 2nd factor $\alpha = 0.775$, 3rd factor $\alpha = 0.717$, 4th factor $\alpha = 0.834$) and raising children without special development needs (total score $\alpha = 0.876$; 1st factor $\alpha = 0.766$, 2nd factor $\alpha = 0.808$, 3rd factor $\alpha = 0.787$, 4th factor $\alpha = 0.841$).

Purposeful random sampling was assumed in the research being carried out. The research group consisted of 198 parents (149 females, 49 males) raising children aged 3 to 7 years with special development needs (including ASD, auditory disability, visual disability, intellectual disability, Down syndrome, congenital syndrome and multiple disabilities) and 194 parents (114 females and 80 males) of children aged 3 to 7 years without special development needs. The age of the parents surveyed ranged from 24 to 50 years ($M = 35.09$, $SD = 5.27$). The research was carried out in pre-school institutions and mainstream, integrated and special elementary schools, as well as in early childhood development centres operating in selected towns in the Mazovian and Lower Silesian provinces.

Results achieved

In order to answer the first three research questions concerning the existence of differences between parents of children with and without special development needs in terms of supportive/engaged and coercive/hostile parenting behaviour, self-assessment of their own behaviour when interacting with their child, and assessment of their child's undesirable behaviour during joint activities and involvement in early reading initiation, an analysis of the mean scores obtained by the two groups for each variable was carried out and compared using Student's t-test for independent samples. According to the data presented in Table 1, the mean levels of supportive/engaged and hostile/evasive behaviours reported by parents of children with special development needs were not significantly different from the mean levels of these behaviours reported by parents of children without special development needs. Parents of children without special development needs, however, scored significantly higher than parents of children with special development needs on both self-ratings of their own behaviour when interacting with their child, on ratings of their child's behaviour during joint activities, and on overall parental involvement in early literacy initiation and its components, i.e. parental activation of the child in reading and writing, parental modelling of reading and writing, organising joint trips to the bookstore, and organising joint trips to the library.

In order to answer the fourth research question, which was to determine the relationship between the two study groups' stated commitment to early reading initiation and parents' supportive or coercive behaviours, their self-assessment of their own behaviour in interacting with their child, and their assessment of their child's behaviour, the study conducted r-Pearson correlations. Consistent with the results in Table 2, the analyses in both study groups showed significant moderate correlations between parental involvement in early reading initiations and the supportive/hostile behaviours displayed. In contrast, there were no significant correlations between parental involvement in early reading initiation and hostile/coercive behaviours in either group. In both the group of parents of children with special development needs and the group of parents of children without special development needs, there were also weak positive correlations between parental involvement in early reading initiation and parents' self-assessment of their child's behaviour. Only in the group of parents of children with special development needs were there also weak positive correlations between parents' involvement in early reading initiation and their assessment of the child's behaviour.

In search of an answer to the question of the determinants of shared reading initiations with children in the two groups of parents studied, regression analysis was conducted. The data for parents raising children with special development needs were analysed first. After correlation analysis, three possible predictors of parents'

Table 1. Differences in the variables studied between the group of parents of children with special development needs (N=198) and parents of children without special development needs (N=194)

| Variable | Parents of children with special development needs | | Parents of children without special development needs | | t | Df | p |
|---|--|-------|---|-------|-------|---------|--------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | | |
| Supportive/Engaged behaviours | 4.39 | 0.563 | 4.46 | 0.722 | 1.025 | 390 | 0.306 |
| Hostile/Coercive behaviours | 1.66 | 0.809 | 1.68 | 0.863 | 0.126 | 390 | 0.900 |
| Child Responsible | 4.12 | 0.789 | 4.51 | 0.692 | 5.177 | 385.374 | <0.001 |
| Parent Causal | 4.65 | 0.751 | 4.86 | 0.647 | 2.902 | 390 | 0.004 |
| Parent engaging child in reading and writing | 2.98 | 0.723 | 3.17 | 0.499 | 3.051 | 350.525 | 0.002 |
| Parent modeling reading and writing | 2.43 | 0.712 | 2.61 | 0.661 | 2.671 | 390 | 0.008 |
| Going to the bookstore | 2.54 | 0.602 | 2.78 | 0.615 | 3.851 | 390 | <0.001 |
| Going to the library | 1.59 | 0.791 | 1.94 | 0.825 | 4.254 | 390 | <0.001 |
| Parental involvement in early reading initiations | 2.58 | 0.529 | 2.80 | 0.465 | 4.341 | 390 | <0.001 |

M – arithmetic mean, SD – standard deviation, t – Student's t-test value, Df – freedom degrees, p – significance level.

Prepared on the basis of SPSS 28.o.

Table 2. Correlations (r-Pearson) between declared involvement in early reading and peri-reading initiations and manifested supportive or coercive behaviours, self-assessment of one's own behaviour in contact with the child, and assessment of the child's undesirable behaviour in a group of parents of children with special development needs (N=198) and parents of children without special development needs (N=194)

| Variables | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Parental involvement in early reading initiations | Rspe | .433** | -0.074 | 0.202** | 0.224** |
| | Rbspe | .403** | -0.126 | 0.075 | 0.251** |

Explanations: Rspe – parents of children with special development needs, Rbspe – parents of children without special development needs, 1 – Supportive/Engaged behaviours, 2 – Hostile/Coercive behaviours, 3 – Child Responsible, 4 – Parent Causal

** correlation significant at the level of $p < 0.01$ * correlation significant at the level of $p < 0.05$

Prepared on the basis of SPSS 28.o

Table 3. Statistics indicating the percentage of variation explained by the R^2 of the two models: the first, including the main effect, and the second, including the mediator

| Model | R | R^2 | Standard estimate error | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|-------|-------|---------|-------------------------|--------|-----|-----|--------|
| 1 | 0.433 | 0.188* | 0.229 | 45.332 | 1 | 196 | <0.001 |
| 2 | 0.452 | 0.205** | 0.226 | 25.087 | 2 | 195 | <0.001 |

* predictors in the model: supportive/engaged behaviour

** predictors in the model: supportive/engaged behaviour, assessment of child's responsible behaviour

Prepared on the basis of SPSS 28.0 (Model 4, Hayes, 2013)

involvement in their children's early reading initiations were identified. Based on the regression coefficients, conducted using the input method, supportive/engaged behaviour ($\beta = 0.439$; $p < 0.001$) and child's behavioural assessment ($\beta = 0.208$; $p = 0.016$) were found to be significant predictors among parents of children with special development needs. Whereby supportive/engaged behaviour is by far the stronger predictor. The parent causal variable was presented as statistically insignificant in this model. The next step was to substitute the data into model 4 with a mediating variable (Hayes, 2013) to determine whether the child's behaviour rating could act as a mediator between the independent variable supportive/engaged behaviour and the dependent variable parental involvement in early reading initiation (table 3).

From the above data, it can be concluded that both models, both the one that only considers the independent variable, supportive/engaged behaviour ($F(1, 196) = 45.332$; $p < 0.001$, and the model that considers both the mediator and the independent variable $F(2, 195) = 25.087$; $p < 0.001$ are well fitted to the data. With the former model explaining about 19% and the latter about 21% of the variance in the dependent variable. Thus, the model with the mediating variable better predicts the percentage of variance in the overall outcome of parental involvement in early reading initiation.

Analysis of the standardised regression coefficients (table 4) shows that, prior to the introduction of the mediator into the model, the coefficient value for the strength of the direct effect of supportive/engaged behaviour on the overall outcome of family literacy activities is $\beta = 0.433$; $p < 0.001$. When the mediator of child's responsible behaviour score is introduced into the model, supportive/engaged behaviour still remains a significant predictor, but the coefficient value $\beta = 0.411$; $p < 0.001$ decreases, indicating partial mediation of the variable child's responsible behaviour score ($\beta = 0.132$; $p = 0.044$) in the relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

The analysis of the results obtained for the overall effect size, as well as for the direct and indirect effects, allows us to conclude that the inclusion of an increase in supportive/engaged behaviour of 1 unit on the corresponding scale increases the overall score of parental involvement in early reading initiation by a total

of approximately 0.41 units with a confidence interval of [0.289; 0.289], of which 0.39; [0.267; 0.208] units come from the direct influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. 41 units with a confidence interval of [0.289; 0.528], with 0.39; [0.267; 0.508] units coming from the direct influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable and only 0.02 [0.001; 0.057] units from the influence mediated by the child's assessment of responsible behaviour. The magnitude of the mediating role of the child's responsible behaviour rating was confirmed by the standardised indirect effect score obtained by bootstrapping from 1000 replicates.

In the group of parents of children with no special development needs, two variables emerged as potential predictors of parental involvement in early reading initiation. A regression analysis showed that in this case supportive/engaged behaviour was the only significant predictor ($\beta = 0.405$; $p < 0.001$). The standardised coefficient beta indicates that the more often parents report being supportive of their child, the more often they engage in early reading initiation. The proposed model fits the data well $F(1; 192) = 37.314$; $p < 0.001$ and explains approximately 16% of the variance in the dependent variable (Table 5).

Table 4. Unstandardised and standardised coefficients of two regression models: the first, with the effect of the main predictor of supportive/engaged behaviour, and the second, including the mediator child's responsible behaviour score

| Variables | Non-standardised factors | | Standardised factors | t | p |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------|--------|
| | B | Standard error | β | | |
| 1 (Stable) | 0.790 | 0.269 | | 2.938 | 0.004 |
| Supportive/Engaged behaviours | 0.408 | 0.061 | 0.433 | 6.733 | <0.001 |
| 2 (Stable) | 0.518 | 0.298 | | 1.738 | 0.083 |
| Supportive/Engaged behaviour | 0.387 | 0.061 | 0.411 | 6.341 | <0.001 |
| Child's Responsible | 0.088 | 0.043 | 0.132 | 2.030 | 0.044 |

Dependent variable: parental involvement in early reading initiation

Prepared on the basis of SPSS 28.0 (Model 4, Hayes, 2013)

Table 5. Summary model

| Model | R | R ² | Corrected R ² | Standard estimate error |
|-------|--------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 0.403* | 0.163 | 0.158 | 0.47 |

Predictors: (stable), supportive/engaged behaviours

Prepared on the basis of SPSS 28.0

Discussion and conclusions

The aim of the present study was, firstly, to identify and compare the results obtained in two groups of parents, the first raising children with special needs and the second raising children without special needs, in terms of reported supportive/engaged and coercive/hostile behaviour, self-assessment of their own behaviour in contact with the child and assessment of the child's behaviour during shared activities, and reported involvement of parents of children with and without special needs in early reading initiation. Secondly, the authors of the article focused on identifying the relationships that exist in both groups of parents surveyed between involvement in early reading initiation and parents' supportive or coercive behaviours, their self-assessment of their own behaviour when interacting with their child, and their assessment of their child's behaviour. Thirdly, statistical models were sought to identify predictors of parental involvement in early reading initiation for children with and without special development needs.

The results of the study allow us to conclude that the two groups of parents do not differ in terms of the supportive/engaged behaviour they display in their relationship with their child, such as talking together, learning new things, spending time playing games or showing affection to each other, and hostile/coercive behaviour, such as reacting violently to the child's undesirable behaviour, losing control, using punishment and threats, or even making the child feel guilty. Thus, the likelihood of maladaptive mechanisms to respond to a child's challenging behaviour being activated (por. Seymour et al. 2013, Smith et al. 2008), as well as the disclosure of supportive behaviours towards them, appears to be similar under the data obtained in both groups of parents, irrespective of the fact of raising children with and without special development needs.

There were also no statistically significant differences in the parents' evaluation of the child's responsible behaviour and their causal self-evaluation. Both parents of children without special needs and parents raising children with special needs perceive their child's undesirable behaviour to a similar extent, such as stubbornness, disobedience, non-compliance with rules, etc., but also both study groups are characterised by a similar self-reflection of their own negative behaviour, which is manifested in, among other things, inconsistency, insufficient attention, helplessness and lack of self-confidence in dealing with the child.

Parents of children with special development needs, on the other hand, show statistically significantly less involvement in early reading initiation than parents of children without special development needs. Moreover, these differences are present in each of the areas examined, from activities involving the child in reading and writing, to modelling behaviours related to the use of the written word, to collecting the child's book collection and joint visits to the bookshop and library, which seems to be consistent with the findings of other studies in this field

(Dolezal-Sams et al. 2009; Grindle et al. 2019; Light, Kelford-Smith 1993; Peeters et al. 2009; Pino 2000; Westerveld, Bysterveldt 2017).

In the educational activities of parents of children with special development needs, activities such as looking at and reading books and other printed materials together, organising an environment conducive to contact with the written word, or, for example, setting up a library and borrowing books, are much less frequent than in the educational activities of parents of children without special development needs.

It cannot be ruled out that the reason for such differences is the specific nature of caring for a child with special development needs, the associated expectations regarding the progress observed in the child's development and the parents' belief in their own competence in introducing their child to contact with the printed word (cf. Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler 2005).

Attention is also drawn to the relationships established through correlation analysis between the variables studied, which show that both in the group of parents of children with and without special development needs, an increase in supportive/engaged behaviour and a higher awareness of parents' own behaviour also increases their involvement in early reading initiation. This suggests, on the one hand, that an increase in parental behaviour that provides positive emotions, satisfaction and support for the child increases parents' activity and enthusiasm to engage with their child in activities aimed at developing their child's language and literacy skills and, on the other hand, that an increased awareness of their own educational activities increases parents' willingness to engage in activities that prepare their child for literacy. The only difference observed is in the relationship between parents' involvement in early literacy and their assessment of their child's responsible behaviour. This relationship is found only in the group of parents of children with special development needs, and it can be concluded that the more often parents rate their child's behaviour as positive, the more likely they are to engage in various reading and reading-related activities with their child. This is corroborated by the results of the above-mentioned studies, which show that the frequency of parent-child reading sessions also increases with an increase in the child's interest in the play activities suggested by the parents (Deckner et al. 2006; Reynolds, Werfel 2020; Schneider, Hecht 1995).

A little more information about the mechanisms responsible for parents' involvement in early reading activities in both groups of parents is provided by the regression models obtained. It turns out that for parents of children without special development needs, the only significant predictor influencing early reading initiation activities is supportive/engaged behaviour. It is likely that in this case the implementation of the child's exposure to the printed word is embedded in daily activities as a way of stimulating the child's development in the parenting process.

In the group of parents of children with special development needs, in addition to the supportive/engaged behaviour, the implementation of early reading initiation

is also influenced by the assessment of the child's behaviour, as shown above. It can therefore be assumed that this group of parents perceives the implementation of a child's contact with the printed word as requiring a certain degree of readiness, which they try to assess on the basis of the child's behavioural manifestations. They may also make the initiation of early reading activities partly dependent on this. Comparing the two models discussed, it can be said that in the second case, the parents' actions are less spontaneous.

The research carried out may point to the need for adequate preparation of parents raising children with special development needs in order to implement practices in the area of early reading initiation. The interventions designed should not only take into account the socio-economic resources of the family, which has been the main focus of researchers so far (Clark 2003; Dickinson, Tabors 2001; Gonzalez et al. 2005; Pianta 2004; Taylor 1983; Whitehurst, Lonigan, 1998), but also the psychological and parenting skills of parents, with a focus on managing challenging child behaviour and using appropriate motivational strategies. It also seems reasonable to undertake further in-depth research that could fill the missing area of ignorance regarding the predictors of parental behaviour that shape the parent-child relationship in the process of initiating a child to participate in various forms of contact with the printed word.

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