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### Document

#### **Contemporaneous and Longitudinal Associations Between Social Behavior and Literacy Achievement in a Sample of Low-Income Elementary School Children**

**File number :**  
CS-PC-24e

#### **Bibliographic reference :**

Miles, S.B., & Stipek, D. (2006). Contemporaneous and Longitudinal Associations Between Social Behavior and Literacy Achievement in a Sample of Low-Income Elementary School Children. *Child development*, 77(1), 103-117.

#### **Abstract :**

##### **Research Overview**

The goal of this American longitudinal research was to evaluate the nature and evolution of the relationship between student social behaviour and literacy achievement (ability to read, write and calculate). The authors paid special attention to the aggressive and prosocial behaviours of low-income students more likely to fail at school, according to the authors, in order to examine the effect of these behaviours on literacy achievement.

The authors were guided by the following research hypotheses: 1) the relationship between literacy skills and aggressive behaviour is stronger in the third and fifth grades than in the earlier grades, 2) poor literacy achievement at the beginning of school can predict increases in aggressive behaviour, 3) prosocial behaviour facilitates learning, but learning does not promote prosocial behaviour, and 4) the effect of prosocial behaviour on literacy achievement is stronger in the early elementary grades than in the higher grades.

##### **Methodology**

Data came from the School Transition Study, which assessed nearly 400 low-income students over a six-year period (1996-2002).

The study followed two student cohorts: one sample of 237 students in kindergarten and one sample of 140 students in grade one. The students in each cohort were then re-assessed in the third and fifth grades.

Student social behaviour was assessed by teachers using a questionnaire, while literacy achievement was assessed individually using a reading test.

##### **Main Results**

Results showed a strong association between social skills and literacy achievement. The researchers also found that the two kinds of behaviour studied had distinct implications for literacy achievement. The strength of the relationship between aggressive behaviour and literacy achievement increased over time, while the strength of the relationship decreased with prosocial behaviour.

Though their hypotheses were confirmed, the authors clarified their findings with respect to aggressive behaviour. They found that aggressive behaviour and literacy achievement were not correlated among kindergarten and grade one students. The association between both variables seemed to emerge later, with the result that for the two cohorts, it became significant in the third and fifth grades.

In addition, poor literacy achievement during kindergarten seemed to predict aggressive behaviour in grade three. This differed from grade one where, unlike other grades, students with difficulty in literacy showed immediate signs of aggressive behaviour.

#### **Links :**

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#### **Key Words :**

Literacy, Sociability, Social Skills, Prosocial Behaviour, Aggressiveness, Aggression, Aggressive Behaviour, Longitudinal Study, Socio-economic Status, Elementary, Primary, Preschool, Newsletter2

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