

## **Creating a Reading Culture in a Preschool in Collaboration with Children, Teachers and Parents\***

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### **Abstract**

Adopting a reading culture is a process that takes shape in family starting from the moment the child is born and school environment. The most critical phase of this process is the “preschool period.” Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to construct a systematic intervention to create a reading culture in the preschool period. For this purpose, the study included “preschoolers, teachers, and parents” as the participants considering them as stakeholders in the process of building a reading culture.

The population of the study is the preschools located in the district of Ereğli, Zonguldak, Turkey and the sample consists of 16 preschoolers at a preschool in Ereğli along with their parents (n=16) and their teachers (n=2). The study was carried out as an action research conducted for a period of 12 weeks. The 12-week intervention timeline is divided into two phases. In the first phase (first six weeks), the seminars on creating a reading culture were given to teachers and parents by a field expert and in-class observations of preschoolers were made. In the second phase, creative reading activities were implemented with the children (as two sections - A and B) for an hour once a week. The data come from observations, interviews, and participant diaries and were analyzed through content analysis.

The study is considered to be crucial for the relevant literature as it includes children, teachers and parents, at the same time, as the three key stakeholders in the process of building a reading culture. At the end of the 12-week intervention, both positive and significant changes were observed both in children and parents as well as in teachers in terms of theoretical and practical aspects of adopting a reading culture.

**Keywords:** Reading Culture, Building Reading Culture, Preschool Period, Children-Teachers-Parents, Children’s Literature.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important variables of becoming a developed society is the individuals' adopting a reading culture. Reading culture is a process that should be empowered through sensitive and conscious efforts starting from the birth of the child. In this context, acquiring a reading culture is "a process related to an individual's engagement with written and visual cultural artifacts woven with a sense of aesthetics and the internalization of the reading habit as a way of life" (İnce Samur, 2016; Sever, 2010).

Reading culture is a sequential, continuous and integrative process. As depicted by Sever (2007:108), reading culture is "a set of behaviors acquired by individuals who: have got acquainted with the world of written cultural artifacts; have reached the competence to share, test and question the messages by this world (s)he familiarized with; and have made a habit of living with the opportunities that those messages offer." According to Yılmaz (2009:134), reading culture means "the level and quality of the relationship between the act of reading and an individual, a social group or a society. In other words, reading culture is an individual's, a social group's or a society's part of life reflected on the domain of 'reading'.

In short, reading culture is both a personal and social life style related to the act of reading. According to İnce Samur (2014), "it is the cluster of behaviors of an individual who: can make effective use of written and visual cultural artifacts; can transfer his/her reading habit to a critical reading skills through this interaction; and can transform all of those gains into a life style starting from the moment of birth at personal and social spheres." On the basis of the aforementioned definitions, reading culture is not only a transformation of the act of reading into a habit, but it is also related to the acquisition of critical thinking skills and conceptualizations both as a personal and a social action.

The process of adopting a reading culture consists of a set of behaviors that should be acquired during the 0-to-14 age period including preschool, primary school, and secondary school (İnce Samur, 2016; Sever, 2010). On the other hand, preschool (0-6 ages) is a period which reflects the most critical and fastest development of a child. Children's development in this period is of vital importance. In this respect, building a reading culture in society is highly important by structuring a systematic intervention through which children are familiarized with the quality works of children's literature both at school and home environment starting from the preschool period.

With the most concise description, reading culture requires a process-based structuring, because as the name suggests, "culture" is a way of life that is formed, developed and settled over a long period of time. It is for sure that an individual could only adopt a reading culture with systematic and conscious practices starting from the moment of birth. In this context, İnce Samur (2014) outlines the steps to create a reading culture among children as follows:

### **Steps to Create a Reading Culture**

#### **Preschool Period: Visual Reading Period (Communicating through Visual and Linguistic Stimuli)**

- Introducing Books to Children (0-2 ages)
- Children's Making Friends with Books (2-4 ages)
- Creating the Love of Books in Children (4-6 ages)

### **Primary School Period: Transition from Visual Reading to Linguistic Reading**

- Teaching Reading and Writing Skills to Children (6-8 ages)
- Instilling Reading Habits in Children (8-10 ages)

### **Secondary School Period: Transition from Linguistic Reading to Critical Reading, Watching, and Listening**

- Teaching Children Critical Skills in Reading, Watching and Listening (10-12 ages)
- Developing Reading Culture in Children (12-14 ages)

As portrayed in the “Steps to Create a Reading Culture,” the period from the birth of the child to the age of 14 is a long and demanding process that build and develop the acquisition of a reading culture. Each period consists of important and critical phases within itself. A child’s preschool years, which is the transition period from infancy to childhood, is the most critical and indicative period of life as the foundations of a reading culture is laid then.

The visual reading period, in which the interest in reading and the love of books are instilled in the child, is the introductory stage of acquiring a reading culture. The primary school period, in which the child’s developmental characteristics (linguistic, cognitive, personality, social, and so on) become evident and the acquisition of reading habits along with linguistic reading is operationalized, is the development stage of acquiring a reading culture. Finally, the secondary school period, in which the reading culture is developed along with the critical reading skills as well as the general habits of reading besides all the physical and psychological changes of the transition period from childhood to adolescence, is the closure stage. A systematic and effective construction of those stages are vital steps that constitute the process of a child’s adopting a reading culture.

The most basic tool for the process of acquiring a reading culture is the literary works in the children’s literature. Children’s books are an effective and determinant element that conveys the process of self-realization in children through a sense of aesthetics, critical thinking, and creativity both linguistically and visually with the richest expressive samples of the native language (Dilidüzgün, 2018: 15; Dowling, 2002: 139; Gander and Gardiner, 2001; Güven and Bal, 2000; Lukens, 1999: 9-10; Maltepe, 2009: 399; Sever, 2010: 21).

The individual is born with the ability to acquire language, but it is also known that language is acquired through social communication within the cultural community. Bruner states that language and literature are also an active element in cultural and cognitive processes. In this context, the early years of life are important for the child to develop some habits. Adults who are conscious of the children’s development are able to strengthen these habits in the best way to make them in line with the developmental characteristics and expectations of children (Aral et al., 2000: 14; Smith and Ballard, 1998: 3). For this reason, it is essential to raise awareness among teachers and family members who play an active role in children’s development in terms of building a reading culture.

There are many studies focusing on reading culture, reading habits, and preschool period. The studies on reading culture include İnce Samur (2016), İnce Samur (2014), Korkuyu (2014), Yıldız (2011). The studies on improving reading habits in children include Allyn (2015), Ekici (2014), Cuthbert (2013), Güneş ve Güneş (2011), Tanju (2010), Turgut Bayram (2009), Swanborn and Gloppe (2002). And the studies on reading in preschool period include Su et al. (2017), Altun (2016), Tezel Şahin ve Tutkun, 2016; Tepetaş Cengiz (2015), Üstübal (2015), Formby (2014), Kalb ve van Ours (2014), Altun (2013), Yaşar Ekici (2013), Demircan (2012), Ekinci Vural (2012), Kirişçigil Doğan (2012), Sukhram and Hsu (2012), Yüksel (2011), Kızıldaş (2009), Sabırlı Özışıklı (2008), Aktan Kerem (2001). In all those studies, the variables such as family, child and teacher are studied

separately. In some studies, family and child cooperation was highlighted in order to improve the reading skill of the child. However, no study has been found to include children, parents and teachers at the same time.

With the broadest description, reading culture is a vital process that positively affects an individual's success in both academic and social life. For this reason, this process should be put into practice starting from the moment the child is born. That is why the preschool period is considered to be the most indicative period for a healthy and appropriate development of an individual in all aspects. In that respect, parents and teachers, who are the main stakeholders in the upbringing of a child, should know well and internalize the process of creating a reading culture. In this context, this study aims to find an answer to the question of what kind of a process should be employed to "create a reading culture in the preschool period" by collaborating systematically with teachers and parents in a 12-week period.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The study was carried out as an action research. Action research is an approach that involves systematic data collection and analysis to bring out issues related to the practice or to understand and solve a problem that has already arisen. And, it is carried out directly by a practitioner, who is involved in the practice, either by himself or with a researcher (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016: 307). In this study, which aims to put the individual in the position of the 'main subject' in the process of adopting a reading culture starting from the moment of the birth, an action research, in which the researcher was also a practitioner, was conducted. Considering "the participant role as well as the data collector role of the researcher" which is frequently emphasized in the qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016: 74), this study entirely reflects the action research approach.

### **Study Group/Participants**

Regarding the contributions of action research, we could mention a lot of advantages such as establishing a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practice, improving education and training practices, ensuring school improvement, empowering teachers and contributing to the professional development of teachers (Gürgür, 2016: 19). In accordance with these advantages, the study group was determined through criterion sampling. The basic understanding in criterion sampling is to study all cases that meet a predetermined set of criteria (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016: 122). The population of the study is the preschools located in the district of Ereğli, Zonguldak, Turkey and the sample consists of 16 preschoolers at a preschool in Ereğli along with their parents (n=16) and their teachers (n=2), who were selected and included in the study through criterion sampling (by considering the convenience of their participation as well as continuous monitoring of the intervention). On the other hand, children and parents, who had health problems or other reasons, were not able to participate regularly each week. Such cases are specified numerically in the tables in the findings section.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

#### **Data Collection Tools**

**Table 1.**

Study Plan <sup>1</sup>					
Design	Stages	Purpose	Model	Method	Technique
Action Research	1	Design of Instruction	Survey	Qualitative	Document Analysis
	2	Situation Analysis and Implementation and Development of Intervention (first phase: 6 weeks)	Survey	Qualitative	Descriptive Recording and Observation-Interview with Audio-Visual Materials (parents/teachers/children) Seminar (parents/teachers) Participant Dairies (parents) Content Analysis
	3	Implementation and Development of Intervention (second phase: 6 weeks)			Descriptive Recording and Observation-Interview with Audio-Visual Materials (parents/teachers/children) Creative Reading Activities (children) Participant Dairies (parents) Content Analysis
	4	Evaluation of Intervention	Survey	Qualitative	Descriptive Observation-Interview and Participant Dairies Content Analysis

The study was carried out with preschoolers, their parents and their teachers during a 12-week period in the fall semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. The data were collected through observations, interviews, and participant diaries. The most important feature of the observation technique is that the observants are in their natural environment. Most behaviors can only be detected objectively in this way (Karasar, 2012: 157). Before, during and after the intervention, any possible changes and developments in the reading culture of both teachers and parents as well as children were observed. Interview, on the other hand, is a data collection (inquiry) technique through verbal communication (Karasar, 2012: 165). There were also a lot of data collected from the teachers and parents through semi-structured interviews and participant diaries. These data collection tools were reviewed and finalized by three field experts.

In the first week, “Pre-intervention Interviews” were conducted to the 5-6-year-old preschoolers of both sections (A and B) by means of one-to-one interview method through which children’s responses were written down. The parents and teachers were also given “Pre-intervention Interview Questions” and asked to fill in those forms by writing. During the first phase (for 6 weeks), both the teachers and parents were given 60-90-minute seminars on building a reading culture by focusing on “*reading culture and children’s literature, what books should be read to what age group in the preschool period and how.*” Additionally, a total of 16 preschoolers from A and B sections were observed within the scope of “Pre-intervention Observations.”

At the end of the sixth week, the teachers and parents were asked to fill in the “Mid-intervention Interview Questions.” On the other hand, “Participant Diaries” were distributed to the parents to be written at home for the second phase (the next six weeks) regarding the creative reading practices done in the school. In this way, important feedback in terms of the developmental periods and reading was provided about the children who were also observed within one class hour during the first six weeks. In the second phase of the study, creative reading activities for children were developed and implemented (through quality books of children’s literature selected by two field experts) for an hour each week.

<sup>1</sup> “Creative Reading Activities and Homework” and “Photographs” at school and home were not included in the paper due to the limited word count. Also, tables and analyzes of the Pre- and Mid-intervention Observations” and “Participant Diaries” are not included; only overall evaluations were provided.

**Activities implemented with children:** Effective reading, creative reading, activating thinking skills, question-answer, empathy with the characters and their friends in the stories, discussion, impersonation, drawing pictures by stimulating imagination, interpretation, reminding, creating context for the story, visualizing the story with shadow play, reenacting the story with materials, noticing the details in the story, effective and creative reading of the books without words with children, reading aloud by watching the video created about the book, conveying thoughts, making general comments, and so on.

At the end of the sixth week, “Mid-intervention Interviews” were carried out with the children by taking notes during one-to-one interviews. On the other hand, “Post-intervention Interview Questions” were administered to the parents and teachers through written forms. “Participant Diaries” were also collected from the parents and a meeting was held with the parents and the teachers through a question-answer session where an overall evaluation was made and further comments were taken.

### Data Analysis

The data which were obtained from observations, interviews and participant diaries were analyzed through content analysis. The basic process in the content analysis is to gather similar data around certain concepts and themes and to interpret them in a way that the reader can understand well (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016: 242).

## FINDINGS

In this section, the findings from the pre-, mid-, and post-intervention interviews, which was carried out within a 12-week work plan, are presented. An overall evaluation of the observation forms and participant diaries is also provided briefly.

### *Findings regarding Pre-intervention Interviews with Children*

In this section, the findings regarding the pre-intervention interview questions directed to the children in the first week of the study is presented.

**Table 2. Children’s first meeting with books**

	f	%
At home	11	68,75
At school	3	18,75
No info	2	12,5

As in Table 2, for the question “When did you first meet a book?” 11 out of 16 children (with the highest rate, 68.75%) answered “at home”, 3 (18.75%) answered “at school,” and 2 answered (12.5%) “I don't remember”.

*ÖA5: My sister's book. / ÖA8: My father bought it. / ÖB8: My brother's books. / ÖB3: When I started school.*

This finding reveals that preschool children meet a book first at home, that is with the help of family members. This point also reveals the importance of families’ awareness of choosing quality works of children’s literature and introducing them to their children.

**Table 3. Title of the first book children read**

	f	%
I don't remember	11	68,75
I remember	5	31,25

As in Table 3, for the question “Do you remember the title of the book?” 11 out of 16 children (with the highest rate, 68.75%) answered “No” and 5 of them (31,25%) answered “Yes.” Children who could not remember the title of the book generally remembered some brief information about the content or the pictures of the book. The books they mentioned were not among the quality works of contemporary children’s literature. And, they gave short or one-word answers to the question “Can you describe a book that you remember?”

*ÖA7: Atatürk. / ÖA2: Vak Vak Wiki./ ÖB6: There was a baby fox. / ÖB5: The Rooster Tale.*

This finding shows that the books in the answers appear to be as an element that does not recalled well in the children’s life or does not appeal well to them.

**Table 4. What does a book mean to you?**

	f	%
Reading	5	31,25
Nice/Good	3	18,75
Art	2	12,5
Tales/Fairies	2	12,5
Animals	1	6,25
No idea	1	6,25
Happiness	1	6,25
Letters	1	6,25

As in Table 4, for the question “What does a book mean to you?” 5 out of 16 children (with the highest rate, 18.75%) answered “nice, good”, 2 children in each group answered “art” or “tales and fairies” and 1 child in each group answered “animals” “happiness” or “letters.” As an important finding, the meaning of books is mostly associated with “reading,” which shows that children match books with reading in their perception. To acquire a reading culture, children’s positive feeling about books is considered as an important step; thus, the answer “happiness” compared to other answers, is considered as a concept expressing the meaning attributed to a book by children, which is a striking point.

**Table 5. Do you like books?**

	f	%
Yes	16	100
No	-	-

As in Table 5, all of the children answered “yes” to the question “Do you like books?” As a follow-up comment regarding the reasons for liking books, the children perceived books as “informative” and “fun.” Moreover, it is interpreted that the children having books around them at home and being engaged with books with the support of their parents could make books a part of their life.

*ÖA5: Because information is hidden in books. / ÖA6: Because books contain games. / ÖB4: Because books make our minds work and help us do our homework. / ÖB2: I like reading books with my mother because books make me sleep.*

This finding emphasizes the importance of the books' being fun, containing games, being a means of spending time with parents, relaxing and helping the children sleep, and being a source of information for children to love books.

**Table 6. Who do you read with mostly at home?**

	f	%
Mother	9	56,25
Father	7	43,25
Sister	4	25
Brother	1	6,25
Uncle	1	6,25
None	1	6,25
Alone	1	6,25

As in Table 6, although some of the children did not give a single answer to the question "Who do you read with mostly at home?" 12 out of 16 children with the highest rate, 56.25%, answered "mother." This finding shows that children mostly read books with their mothers at home. The fact that 9 (43.25%) of them answered "father" with the second highest rate shows that fathers also participate in the reading process like mothers. The results indicating that some children responded as "sister" (f=4) and "brother" (f=1) implied that the children also perform the act of reading with their siblings. All those findings indicate that families have an important role in children's acquaintance with the books in the preschool period and that mothers should be competent enough in choosing children's books and guiding creative reading processes since there are more children who read books with mothers.

**Table 7. Who do you enjoy reading with mostly?**

	f	%
Mother	8	50
Father	6	37,5
Sister	2	12,5
Alone	2	12,5
Brother	1	6,25
None	1	6,25

As in Table 7, for the question "Who do you enjoy reading with mostly?" 8 out of 16 children (50%), answered "mother." As the second highest rate, 37.5% of them gave the answer "father." This finding once again revealed the importance of the parents' role in building a reading culture and their awareness of the children's literature.

**Table 8. Do you have a library at home?**

	f	%
Yes	10	62,5
No	6	37,5

As in Table 8, for the question "Do you have a library at home?" while 10 children (62,5%) answered "yes," 6 children (37,5%) answered "no." The presence of a library in children's houses is an important point for children to access and interact with books. On the other hand, it is also an important issue whether the library is easily accessible for the child or whether the books reflect sufficient quality.



***Findings regarding Pre-intervention Interview Questions Answered by Parents***

In this section, the findings regarding the pre-intervention interview questions answered by the parents in the first week of the study is presented.

**Table 9. When did you read a book to your child for the first time? Do you remember the title of the book?**

	f	%
4-6 ages	7	43,25
0-2 ages	5	31,25
None	3	18,75
I don't remember	1	6,25
2-4 ages	-	0

According to Table 9, for the question “When did you first read or buy a book to your child for the first time?” 7 out of 16 parents with the highest rate, 43,25%, answered “4-6 ages.”

*VA8: I haven't bought any books for my kids. I don't have a habit of reading. / VA6: We bought the first book for my daughter when she was born and we read short stories every night. / VB5: Coloring book when starting kindergarten... / VB7: At age one... It was an illustrated book with a paper cover.*

The answers revealed that children met a book at the age of 4 to 6 when they started preschool, instead of 0-2 ages which should be the right time to introduce books to children. This finding shows that most of the parents are not conscious about how establish ties between the child and books, and therefore the time for children to meet the book is delayed. With the second highest rate (31.25%), 5 parents introduced books to their children at 0-2 ages. It is a striking finding that 3 parents (18.75%) answering “no” did not bring the child and books together in any way. None of the parents participating in the study indicated 2-4 ages as the time to establish a friendship with books, which means an ignorance of the early ages in the process of building a reading culture.

**Table 10. Do you have any knowledge about children's literature?**

	f	%
No	14	87,5
Yes	2	12,5

According to Table 10, for the question “Do you have any knowledge about children's literature? If yes, please explain in short” 14 out of 16 parents with the highest rate, 87,5%, answered “No.”

*VA1: Listen first, then make him listen and practice what he observes. Trying to understand your child. / VA8: A topic that gives information to the child to read and love books according to their age. / VB7: I know Turkish and World classics. Ömer Seyfettin and The Matchstick Girl, Lead Soldier, Ugly Duckling, Maya the Bee. / VB8: Storybooks, Peter Pan.*

Those answers show that most of the parents participating in the study do not have any knowledge about children's literature, which highlights the significance of the current study. Also, the majority of the examples given by the parents did not belong to children's literature. So, this point reveals that the parents do not have sufficient information about how to introduce quality books to their children.

**Table 11. What do you pay attention to when buying books?**

	f	%
Cover design	8	50
Age-appropriate	7	43,75
Interior design	6	37,5
Nothing	4	25
Child's interest	3	18,75
Child's choice	2	12,50
Pedagogical aspects	-	0

According to Table 11, for the question “What do you pay attention to when buying books?” 8 out of 16 parents (50%) stated that they pay attention to the cover design.

*VA3: He buys the book he likes. / VA7: If it includes the topics he likes based on his interests. / VB4: I get short stories with pictures according to my child's age. / VB5: I'm checking, I don't buy if it's bad. If there are no stain on the outside of the book, and it should not be torn.*

The cover design is very important for children's books, but giving priority to the cover and leaving the content behind is an inadequate approach when choosing a book. It is a very important finding that 7 parents (% 43,75) pay attention to the “age” level when choosing a book for their children. In this context, if the cover indicates the lower limit of the age group that the book addresses, it could be a positive guide for parents. As a result, it was seen that the parents had little information about the external-internal features of books, but paid more attention to these features when buying books for their children; however, they did not have enough knowledge about other pedagogical aspects.

**Table 12. Do you allocate time to reading to your child at home?**

	f	%
Yes, 5-20 min. daily	8	50
Yes, 20-40 min. daily	3	18,75
No	4	25
Rarely	1	6,25

According to Table 12, for the question “Do you allocate time to reading to your child at home?” 8 out of 16 parents (50%) stated that they spent 5 to 20 minutes on a daily basis. 3 parents (18,75%) stated that they allocate 20-40 minutes to reading per day. While 4 (25%) parents did not spare any time for reading books, 1 parent stated that they rarely read books to their children. It is a positive finding that 8 out of 16 parents spend 5 to 20 minutes on a daily basis to build a reading culture. However, it is more important to focus on how the reading takes place; in other words, the quality of reading is an issue.

**Table 13. Who reads most to the child at home?**

	f	%
Mother	13	81,25
Father	7	43,75
Sister	2	12,5
No one	4	25

According to Table 13, for the question “Who reads most to the child at home?” 13 out of 16 parents with the highest rate, 81,25%, answered “mother.” 7 parents (43,75%) answered “father” and 2 parents answered “sister” whereas 4 parents indicated nobody to read books to the child at home. This finding shows that the person who reads books to children at home are usually mothers.

**Table 14. When do you usually read to you child at home?**

	f	%
At night/Before sleep	12	75
In the evening	3	18,75
Never	3	18,75
After school	1	6,25
At the weekend	1	6,25
I'm planning to buy books from now on	1	6,25

According to Table 14, for the question “When do you usually read to your child at home?” 12 out of 16 parents, with the highest rate (75%), answered “before sleeping.” 3 parents (18,75%) answered “in the evening” or “never” whereas 1 parent answered “at the weekend” or “after school.”

*VA4: I read in the evening; I think it is more efficient. / VA8: When I come from work in the evening or on Sunday at home./ VB5: At around 5-6 pm in the evening when his father comes home. / VB7: I read before sleeping, I want him to explain the book I read, I think it is efficient.*

It is seen that the parents mostly prefer to read before going to bed and find that time more efficient for reading.

**Table 15. Title of the last book read to the child**

	f	%
Cannot specify a title	9	56,25
Can specify a title	7	43,75

According to Table 15, for the question “What is the title of the last book you read to your child?” while 9 parents (56,25%) could not specify a title, 7 parents, with a close percentage (43.75%), could specify a book title.

*VA5: Good Habits. / VA8: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. / VB4: The Smart Fox and the Black Crow./ VB5: Life Studies.*

As understood from the titles of the books specified clearly, the parents do not know the quality works in contemporary children’s literature and therefore they read their children poor quality books. On the other hand, it was observed that they do not know the basic features such as the author, illustrator and publisher of the book, which are significant elements of a book that enable the book to be perceived as a whole in the process of acquiring a reading culture.

**Table 16. Do you have a library at home?**

	f	%
No	9	56,25
Yes	7	43,75

According to Table 16, for the question “Do you have a library at home? Can you write the title and the author of a book that you bought to your kid?” while 9 out of 16 parents (56,25%) stated that they had a library, 7 parents, with a close percentage (43.75%), stated they didn’t have a library.

*VA2: We have a library. I do not remember the titles of the books, nor do I remember their authors. / VA8: Pinocchio, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. I can’t think of them more, nor do I remember the authors. / VA6: No, he puts them on the computer desk. / VB1: There is a library but no book. / VB4: We don't have a library, but we have books.*

In acquiring a reading culture, it is important for children to have a library of his own, meet books at home in the preschool period, and have an access to books any time. As understood from the parents' answers given in this part, the majority of the children do not have a library of their own. Also, it is seen that the ones having a library at home do not have quality books in their library.

### ***Findings regarding Pre-intervention Interview Questions Directed to Teachers***

**Question 1:** Do you have any knowledge about children's literature?

*AÖ: When I talk about children's literature, I think of "children's classics". (Little Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel, Lead Soldier etc.)*

*BÖ: Short stories, fairy tales and children's classics.*

As reflected in the answers, the teachers do not know the concept of children's literature and cannot define it properly. However, they have knowledge that children's literature consists of children's classics.

**Question 2:** What do you pay attention to when recommending or buying books to your students?

*AÖ: I make sure that it is illustrated, colorful and short. I also care very much that it is educational.*

*BÖ: I pay attention to the fact that it is appropriate for the child's expectation and gender as well as it is colorful, illustrated, short, narrative, informative, and contributive to the child's development.*

As in the answers, the teachers did not have detailed information about the external-internal features and pedagogical aspects in a book selection process, and they did not express the qualities and artistic value that a book should have with respect to the child's age and developmental characteristics, which are the main functions of children's literature. On the other hand, they had knowledge about the general features such as pictures, short descriptions, and children's expectations regarding a children's book. This point indicated that the teachers do not have sufficient expertise in choosing a book to read to their students, and this could create a negative process when instilling the love of books in children.

**Question 3:** Do you allocate time to reading books to students at school?

*AÖ: 5-20 minutes daily.*

*BÖ: 5-20 minutes daily.*

As the answers revealed, teachers' spending 5 to 20 minutes on reading at school per day is considered to be quite insufficient for children to acquire a reading culture. On the other hand, it was observed that the teachers did not organize regular and continuous reading hours during the 12-week observation period. Although one of the teachers tried to read books regularly, the books chosen did not reflect sufficient quality and appropriate features for children. Also, those books were age-appropriate for preschool children, which could cause them to be distant from listening to a book and could make teachers overwhelmed due to very long texts.

**Question 4:** Could you briefly explain how you carry out reading process?

*AÖ: I dramatize the story I read as much as possible. In between, I ask short questions to the children.*

*BÖ: Before reading, I prepare my students with an activity such as a preparatory rhyme, a finger game, or a short poem, and read it by making animations with sounds appropriate to the characters in the story.*

As in the answers, the teachers reflect sufficient knowledge to make the reading process effective and creative.

**Question 5:** Is there a library that children can use in the classroom?

AÖ: Yes.

BÖ: Yes.

Accordingly, it was seen that although there was a book corner spared in the classroom, modern and quality children's books were not included in that corner. The number of the books was insufficient, as well.

**Question 6:** Could you write the titles and authors of the books you read to your students in the classroom?

*AÖ: There are books of Kök and Erdem publications. In addition, we predominantly read books that are relevant to special days and weeks.*

*BÖ: Kök, Erdem, and Pusula publications on the basis of the subject to special days and weeks.*

According to the answers, the teachers did not know the titles and authors of the books. It could be interpreted that teachers' lacking knowledge about the titles and authors of the books is a limitation for building a reading culture and habit in their students.

#### ***Findings regarding Mid-intervention Interview Questions Answered by Parents***

In this section, findings regarding the mid-intervention interview questions answered by the parents are discussed as a result of the 60-to-90-minute seminars given to the parents and teachers on a weekly basis during the first phase of the study.

**Table 17. What comes to your mind about children's literature?**

	f	%
Improving imagination	7	43,75
Age-appropriate	6	37,5
Including visuals and pictures	5	31,25
Appropriate to developmental areas	4	25
Free thinking / increasing curiosity	4	25
Artistic value	3	18,75
Facilitating the love of reading	3	18,75
Interests	3	18,75
Not giving advise / not dictating	3	18,75
Strengthening perceptions	2	12,5
Being short, clear, and precise	2	12,5
Communicating with characters	1	6,25
Author rapport with children	1	6,25
Having fun	1	6,25
Cover design	1	6,25

According to Table 17, for the question “Can you briefly explain what comes to your mind about children’s literature?” 9 out of 16 parents, with the highest rate (43,75%), stated that children’s literature improves imagination. The parents seeing the imagination feature as the most important element of children’s literature could be an indicator about the achievement of the seminars given to the parents. Another important finding is that 6 parents, with the second highest rate (37.5%), stated that books, as one of the most important elements of children’s literature, should be “age-appropriate.” This is because the definition and importance of children’s literature was frequently mentioned in our 6-week seminars. In the seminars, 0-14 ages were presented as “preschool, primary, and secondary school periods” in the process of building and acquiring a reading culture among children. And, the importance of making children meet books that are suitable for their age was also emphasized. Other responses frequently given by the parents regarding this question were as follows: “including visuals and pictures, being appropriate for developmental areas, free thinking and increasing curiosity, artistic value, facilitating reading, interests, not giving advice or not dictating.” As seen in the answers, external-internal features and pedagogical aspects as basic features of children’s literature were correctly understood by the parents. The parents’ responses in this part indicated the effectiveness of the seminars.

*VA7: Children’s literature consists of short, clear and plain writings, not by giving advice, but by imagining the child's interests and topics rather than ours as parents. It is the literature that take them into an imaginative world without boring them. / VA8: I learned that reading books is very nice and fun. I learned the ways to help the child love the book. / VB8: Helping emotions and thoughts, having artistic value, the author’s rapport with children, including pictures that take children to an imaginative world, communicating with and interpreting heroes. / VB7: Helping the child love books and reading. To help children get familiar with artistic books prepared in line with their age, interests and development.*

Before the intervention, 14 parents had stated no or very limited knowledge about children’s literature. In this regard, the responses from all of the parents who attended the six-week seminars revealed how necessary and crucial the seminars were for them.

**Table 18. Why is acquiring a reading culture is important to parents?**

	f	%
Developing thinking skills	7	43,75
Improving imagination	5	31,25
For cognitive development	4	25
Developing the habit of reading	3	18,75
Enjoying reading and literature	3	18,75
Personal development	3	18,75
Choosing a quality book	3	18,75
For self-expression	2	12,5

According to Table 18, 7 out of 16 parents, with the highest rate (43,75%), mentioned developing of thinking skills as the reasons for acquiring a reading culture. The most basic function of acquiring a reading culture is to raise individuals who can think and question. In this context, parents’ adequate description of this concept reveals that the seminars achieved the goal of this study. On the other hand, 31.25% (5 parents) perceived improving imagination and 25% (4 parents) perceived cognitive development as one of the most important elements in the process of acquiring a reading culture.”

*VA1: If a child likes books, he can think freely, move and speak. He can find a place in the society as an individual. / VA4:It is important for thinking and brain development throughout his life. / VA6: For the mental development of the child, and to increase his knowledge and imagination.*

Other answers frequently given by the parents were as follows: “developing the habit of reading, enjoying literature and reading, personal development, choosing a quality book, and self-expression.” As seen in the answers, the parents learned and expressed the steps of acquiring a reading culture and the factors affecting this process.

**Table 19. Features parents consider when buying books for their children**

	f	%
Content	14	87,5
Being age-appropriate	13	81,25
Cover design	12	75
Author	3	18,75
Improving thinking skills	1	6,25

According to Table 19, 14 of the 16 parents, with the highest rate (87.5%), stated that they pay attention to the content when buying books for their children. In the first interview, 8 out of 16 parents had stated that they pay attention to the external design of the book. It is a positive development that the parents prioritize the content of the book, which reflects the quality, rather than the external design. At the same time, choosing books that increase imagination, curiosity and desire to read is important for children to acquire a reading culture. While they prioritize books that are understandable in terms of language and style, they reject books with imperative sentences, which is a crucial gain resulting from the seminars on choosing a quality book. 3 parents (81.25%) stated that they pay attention to whether it is age-appropriate for the child or not. In the preschool period, the responsibility for buying books for the children belongs to parents. For this reason, the parents’ prioritizing a book’s being age-appropriate for the child is an indication that the seminars achieved the goal. In other words, they became aware of the needs of children for different books of different quality at different ages. 12 parents (75%) stated that they pay attention to the external design of the book. When choosing books, it is important that parents gained sensitivity about the external feature of a book, as one of the basic principles of children’s literature. The percentage and quality of linguistic and visual texts are very important, as well, especially in the preschool period, in terms of developing the love of books in children. As a general point, it is an important finding that the parents learned the basic principles of children’s literature and tended to choose books according to external-internal features and age level.

*VA1: I will now pay attention to the fact that it is portable, visual, easy on the eye, thought-provoking, and suitable for the age of the child as well as it has large font size. / VA2: I pay attention to the author and the pictures. The books that I want my child to listen to me without getting tired. Being appropriate for their age, being short and clear. / QB6: I pay attention to the books that make the content of the book thought-provoking and happy.*

Accordingly, the parents learned to take the development of their children into account when buying books for their children and gained knowledge about famous writers of children’s literature. The most basic feature of a preschool child is the desire to know and get familiar with the life through games. As seen in the answers, some positive feedback was provided on this issue during the seminars.

***Findings regarding Mid-intervention Interview Questions Directed to Teachers***

In this section, findings regarding the mid-intervention interview questions directed to teachers are discussed as a result of the 60-to-90-minute seminars given to the parents and teachers every week during the first phase of the study.

**Question 7:** Could you briefly explain what you think about children’s literature?

*AÖ: I can define children’s literature as (artistic) books suitable for the child’s age, interests and imagination.*

*BÖ: Children’s literature supports children’s perceptions, receptive and expressive features, and mental development as well as it prepares them for life.*

Teachers stated that children’s literature should have some basic features such as “improving imagination, reflecting an artistic value, being suitable for age, interest and developmental areas of the child.” It is seen that the teachers who could not define children’s literature in the pre-intervention interviews later expressed important keywords related to children’s literature during mid-intervention interviews conducted after the seminars. Although the teachers gave different answers, the seminars were successful as the teachers tended to emphasize the basic and influential points of children’s literature.

**Question 8:** Why do you think the process of acquiring a reading culture is important?

*AÖ: The process of acquiring a reading culture is important because it contains elements that will affect the whole life of the child, such as academic success, imagination, thinking, fluent speaking, and so on.*

*BÖ: Life begins with reading. I think we learn everything about life from books. Thinking, interpreting, keeping in mind, and so on. All of such features increase as we read.*

As reflected in the answers, both teachers stated that reading culture is a process that affects and shapes the life. While explaining the importance of the process of acquiring a reading culture, the teachers emphasized its feature of “developing thinking skills.”

**Question 9:** What did you start to pay attention to when buying books for your students?

*AÖ: Author, publisher, picture, content, age, child interest, etc.*

*BÖ: Books that are thought-provoking and interpretative; whose language does not tire the child; and whose pictures are lively and open to interpretation.*

Accordingly, after the seminars the teachers started to pay attention to the basic principles of children’s literature such as external-internal features and age level when buying books for children. As for the external feature of the book, both teachers emphasized the importance of choosing books by checking the pictures. The pre-intervention interviews showed that the teachers had not had detailed information about how to choose a book. With the help of the seminars, the teachers adopted an accurate and effective attitude.

### ***Findings regarding Post-intervention Interviews with Children***

In this section, the findings regarding the post-intervention interview questions directed to the children at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> week is presented.

**Table 20. What does a book mean to you?**

	f	%
A very good/enjoyable thing	5	31,25
Something helping us learn and get knowledge	4	25
Something making reading easy	3	18,75
Family	3	18,75
Pictures	3	18,75
Something improving our imagination	3	18,75
Characters	1	6,25
Red Elephant	1	6,25
Something necessary	1	6,25
My friends	1	6,25
Stories/tales	1	6,25



As in Table 20, for the question “What does a book mean to you?” 5 out of 16 children with the highest rate (31,25%) answered “a very good/enjoyable thing,” 4 children (25%) answered “something helping us learn and get knowledge,” and 3 children (18,75%) answered “something making reading easy, family, pictures, something improving imagination.”

In the pre-intervention interviews, 5 out of 16 children stated that reading gives information; however, after the intervention, 5 out of 16 children answered “something very beautiful and entertaining,” which is an important indicator that the children reached a positive feeling about reading at 4 to 6 ages. On the other hand, the children had given more informative and familiar answers such as “painting, fairy tales-fairies, writing” before the intervention. However, at the end of the intervention, the children started to talk about the artistic dimension of reading such as improving imagination, making reading easy, or a necessary thing, all of which reflected the positive results of the intervention.

**Table 21. Do you like books?**

	f	%
Yes	16	100
No	-	-

As in Table 21, all of the children answered “yes” to the question “Do you like books?” which is the same finding as the one in pre-intervention stage.

*ÖA5: Yes, because it improves my imagination and does great things. / ÖA8: Yes, to be able to read... I am very happy when I read. / ÖB4: Yes, because the pictures are beautiful and the story is beautiful. / ÖB8: Yes, because I love it very much, there are pictures in them, I read it happily.*

To the question “Would you describe a book that you remember?” the majority of the children gave answers related the books read to them during the six-week intervention. Most of the children remembered and described the book “Red Elephant” although it was read in the first week. The books titled “Colorful Movements Series” and “Birthday Gift” were also among the other books remembered frequently.

*ÖA5: Red Elephant. The Red Elephant played hide and seek one night but could not find him. The Red Elephant knocked on the door. It sounded like a thump. / ÖB4: There was a crow, but I liked the book called Birthday Gift the most. / ÖB1: There was the book. The elephant was lost, the child was looking for him, the elephant's feet were muddy, he went into the forest. Then the elephant went into the painting.*

Before the intervention, most of the children had given examples of books that lack quality and modernity by talking mostly about general content of the book and not by remembering the titles of the books. After the intervention, they started to give information about on the titles, characters and content of the books, which is a significant contribution of the study.

**Table 22. Who do you read with mostly at home?**

	f	%
Mother	11	68,75
Father	7	43,75
Big brother	1	6,25
No one	1	6,25
Siblings	1	6,25

As in Table 22, for the question “Who do you read with mostly at home?” 11 out of 16 children, with the highest rate (68,75%), answered “mother.” The fact that 7 children, with the second highest rate (43.75%), answered “father” shows that fathers are also involved in the reading process.

The fact that two children read with siblings indicated that children also perform reading with their siblings. In pre-intervention interviews, 9 out of 16 children had given the answer “mother” and 7 children as “father”. In the post-intervention interviews, the percentage of mothers increased and the percentage of fathers remained the same in responses to this question.

**Table 23. Who do you enjoy reading with mostly?**

	f	%
Mother	10	62,5
Father	6	37,5
No one	1	6,25
Sister/brother	1	6,25

As in Table 23, for the question “Who do you enjoy reading with mostly?” 10 out of 16 children, with the highest rate, 62,5%, answered “mother.” With the second highest rate, 6 (37.5%) of them gave the answer “father.” This finding once again revealed the importance of raising awareness among parents about building a reading culture.

**Table 24. Do you have a library at home?**

	f	%
Yes	15	93,75
No	1	6,25

As in Table 24, for the question “Do you have a library at home?” 15 children (93,75%) answered “yes” while only 1 children (6,25%) answered “no.” The presence of a library in most of the children’s houses is an important finding considering their access to books and interaction with books. On the other hand, it is also an important issue whether the library is easily accessible for the child or whether the books reflect sufficient quality. On the other hand, while this number was 10 before the intervention, it increased to 15 after the intervention, which indicates that the seminars given to the parents on reading culture made a positive contribution and the parents became more about of reading and created a library or a special book corner for their children at home

*ÖA1: There is, there is a shelf / ÖA3: There is. In the form of a ladder. Actually, it is a ladder, but we use it as a bookcase by the window. / ÖB6: Yes, mine and my brother's books are put. They also put them into mine. / ÖB8: Yes, but my brother's clothes are also put.*

**Table 25. Did you like the six-week reading intervention?**

	f	%
Yes	15	93,75
No	1	6,25

*ÖA2: Yes, it was fun and informative. / ÖA4: I sometimes dreamed it when I read a book. Yes, because it gives very good information. / ÖB1: Yes, I liked it. Good, beautiful, sweet. Because it contains good information. / ÖB8: It added very good things. I liked the characters. There were puppets.*

As Table 25, for the question “Did you like the six-week reading intervention?” 15 out of 16 children with the highest rate (93.75%) answered “Yes.” As understood from the answers, the children started to give feedback on the basic elements of children’s literature such as being fun, facilitating imagination, and arousing curiosity in addition to providing information.

#### ***Findings regarding Post-intervention Interview Questions Answered by Parents***

This section presents the findings regarding the post-intervention interview questions directed to the parents in the last week of the study.

**Table 26. Do you have any knowledge about children’s literature?**

	f	%
Yes	12	75
No	2	12,5
Partially	2	12,5

As Table 26 indicates, for the question “Do you have any knowledge about children’s literature?” 12 parents, with the highest rate (75%) answered “Yes.” In the interviews held in the first week of the study, 14 out of 16 parents had answered “No.” In the last week, a great majority of the parents, that is 12 out of 16, stated that they have knowledge about children’s literature, which is important for achieving the goal of the intervention. It is revealed that children’s literature should be known well to be able to introduce the book to the child and instill the love of books in the child.

*VA1: From the moment my child is born, it is the creation of feelings and thoughts that enrich their age, developmental characteristics and areas of interest in a linguistic and visual way. // VB7: There should be artistic expressions, not a dictating tone. The child should be able to perceive the message. / VB8: There is. Children’s literature is written to encourage children to love the book and to instill a reading culture in them to develop their critical thinking.*

As seen in the answers, the parents who gave examples of books that are not suitable for children to listen and understand in the first interview stated the points they attached importance to by expressing “being appropriate for the child’s age and developmental characteristics and interests, improving imagination, being artistic, developing curiosity, not being directly instructive.” This shows a positive change among parents in relation to children’s literature and reading culture.

**Table 27. Do you have any knowledge about reading culture?**

	f	%
Yes	15	93,75
No	1	6,25

*VA3: Pictures inside and being the right book. / VA8: I think it helps us improve our knowledge, skills and personality. / QB4: Yes, my children want me to read stories every night before they go to bed, and I try to buy age-appropriate books. / VB7: Yes, reading culture is a long process. It is better to settle it in childhood.*

According to Table 27, for the question “Do you have any knowledge about reading culture?” 15 out of 16 parents, with the highest rate (93.75%) answered “Yes.” Thus, it was seen that the parents gained knowledge about reading culture through the seminars. Although the majority of parents do not fully explain the concept of reading culture from a theoretical perspective, the answers they gave reflected some important feedback highlighting the necessary points in building a reading culture.

**Table 28. What do you pay attention to when buying books?**

	f	%
Cover design	9	56,25
Child’s age	4	25
Internal design	3	18,75
Child’s interest	3	18,75
Easy to understand (for the child)	1	6,25
Teaching lessons	1	6,25
Improving imagination	1	6,25
Author	1	6,25
Explanatory information on the back cover of the book	1	6,25

According to Table 28, for the question “What do you pay attention to when buying books?” 9 out of 16 parents (56.25%) answered “cover design” and 4 parents (25%) answered “age-appropriate.”

*VA7: Her interests and skills, not boring for reading or listening. / VA8: The books that they can understand and learn from. / VB4: Being age-appropriate, its print quality, its pictures. / VB7: The author of the book, its outer cover, the explanatory information on the back page, etc. / VB8: I choose according to his age and the pictures. Usually, he likes and buys it.*

As seen in the answers, the parents became more selective when buying books for their children in terms of the basic principles of children’s literature.

**Table 29. Is there a change about the time you spend reading to your child at home?**

	<i>f</i>	%
Yes, daily 5-20 min	10	62,5
Yes, daily 20-40 min.	3	18,75
No	3	18,75

As in Table 29, for the question “Is there a change about the time you spend reading to your child at home?” 10 out of 16 parents, with the highest rate (62,5%), stated that they spent 5 to 20 minutes on a daily basis. 3 parents (18,75%) stated that they allocate 20-40 minutes to reading per day. And only 3 parents did not spare any time for reading books.

**Table 30. Who reads to the child mostly at home?**

	<i>f</i>	%
Mother	14	87,5
Father	2	12,5
Sister	1	6,25
No one	-	-

As in Table 30, for the question “Who reads to the child mostly at home?” 14 out of 16 (87,5%), answered “mother.” 2 parents (2,5%) answered as “father.” This finding shows that the person who reads books to children at home are mostly mothers.

**Table 31. When do you usually read to your child at home?**

	<i>f</i>	%
At Night/Before Sleep	8	50
Never	3	18,75
In the evening	1	6,25
After school	1	6,25
At the weekend	1	6,25
I'm planning to buy books from now on	1	6,25

According to Table 31, for the question “When do you usually read to your child at home?” 8 out of 16 parents (50%) answered “before sleeping.” 3 parents (18,75%) answered “never.” The parents had preferred to read to their children before sleeping in the pre-intervention stage, and similarly they still find time period more efficient. The other answers included “in the evening, after school, at the weekend.” The fact that 1 parent is thinking of buying a book from now on shows that the seminars given to the parents had a positive effect on the parents and that the purpose of the project were fulfilled.

**Table 32. Title of the last book read to the child**

	f	%
Can specify a title	14	87,5
Cannot specify a title	2	12,5

According to Table 32, for the question “What is the title of the last book you read to your child?” while 14 out of 16 parents, with the highest rate, 87,5%, were able to specify a title, only 2 parents couldn’t specify a book title. This is a significant improvement caused by this study.

*VA1: Sleepwalker Elephant./ VA7: The Fox and the Lamb./ VB4: Are you sleeping? / VB7: Colorful Worlds Array.*

It is noteworthy that the general features of the book, such as the author, illustrator, or the publishing house were ignored. However, it is important that a few parents attending the seminars regularly mentioned the authors of the books.

**Last Question:** What were the contributions of the seminars given to you and the activities we did with your children?

*VA1: I learned that the content of every book is not suitable for my child, that I should not read every author's book to my child, the size, and that visuality and content of the texts are very important. VA4: My child already loved listening to stories, however now he became more enthusiastic and curious. / VA2: My child gained the love of books; he wants me to read books to him. His interest in books increased. Every time we read; he wonders about the ending. He always wants to buy and choose a book. / QB4: I understood the importance of reading much more. My child's development and his school life in the future. His vocabulary is developing, he started to speak more properly. First of all, he wants me to read books to him.*

As reflected in the answers, as a result of the seminars and reading activities, a positive was observed in relation to how they could benefit from the children’s literature in the process of building a reading culture. It is seen that the parents gained awareness about how to choose a book that is suitable for a child’s interest, its external-internal features and pedagogical aspects, whether it increases curiosity, vocabulary, academic achievement, and so on.

#### ***Findings regarding Post-intervention Interview Questions Directed to Teachers***

**Question 10:** Do you have any knowledge about children’s literature?

*AÖ: We can say books appropriate for age, feelings and thoughts of children.*

*BÖ: They are informative works that help children’s feelings, thoughts, and imaginations improve.*

The teachers’ answers reflected that the concept of children’s literature was understood well with the help of the seminars given to parents and teachers. Before the intervention, both teachers stated that children’s literature consists of children’s classics. However, after the intervention, the teachers replied that children’s literature should consist of the books that develop children’s imagination and thinking skills and that are appropriate for their age level. Preschool teachers’ awareness of children’s literature is such a positive point that they could effectively guide children from an early age in acquiring a reading culture.

**Question 11:** Do you have any knowledge about the reading culture?

*AÖ: The culture of reading is choosing a book at a young age in line with your interests and desires and taking time to read.*

*BÖ: Reading culture can be a strong habit if established on solid foundations and gained in the family.*

As in the answers, the teachers gave important information about the foundations of the reading culture by describing it as an indispensable thing that the child should acquire at an early age and choose books accordingly. The fact that the teachers who had no knowledge in the first interview developed an understanding of the essence and meaning of the reading culture is also a very important result of the study.

**Question 12:** What do you pay attention to when recommending or buying books to your students?

*AÖ: I pay attention to its suitability for age level, its author, its print quality and its language.*

*BÖ: I try to choose books that are suitable for children's age, developmental expectations and needs, as well as that encourage creative thinking.*

As in the answers, seeing "children's age and developmental characteristics" as the most important element of book selection process indicates the effectiveness of the seminars. On the other hand, the answers about the expectations and needs of the children and promoting creative thinking are the fundamental steps in establishing a bridge between children and books and creating the love of books. Other elements such as "its external-internal features, print quality, language," also provide important feedback on raising an awareness among the teachers through the seminars.

**Question 13:** After the intervention, is there a change about the time you spend reading books to your students at school?

*AÖ: No, Daily 5-20 min.*

*BÖ: No, Daily 5-20 min.*

As in the answers, despite the seminars given during the intervention, the teachers' spending 5 to 20 minutes on reading in the classroom is insufficient for children to develop positive attitudes towards reading and to acquire a reading culture.

**Question 14:** Could you briefly explain how you carry out reading process?

*AÖ: By adjusting my tone of voice to the characters in the book, sharing pictures with children and asking them questions.*

*BÖ: Before starting the story, I definitely prepare a pre-story activity such as a tongue twister, poem, or finger game. After I talk about the topic and feel they are ready, I move on to the story.*

As in the answers, the teachers had sufficient information about how to carry out the reading process just as they did before the intervention.

**Question 15:** Has there been any changes qualitatively or quantitatively in the books you read in class after the intervention?

*AÖ: There has definitely been. Now I pay much more attention to the books we buy. I give much more time to children to interpret the books.*

*BÖ: I try my best to choose stories that teach less, do not judge, make children think and increase their imagination.*

As seen in the answers, there appeared positive changes in teachers' selection of children's books in general and for in-class purposes. For both teachers, it is important for children to be careful to interpret the books and to gain thinking skills starting from the early period. On the other hand, the teachers expressed that children's books should stimulate imagination, not by judging or giving advice. The teachers seemed to put this understanding into practice in their classroom, which is an indicator of the achievement of the study.

**Question 16:** What were the contributions of the seminars given to you and the activities done with your students?

*AÖ: As I mentioned above, I specifically pay attention to the author and illustrator when buying books. As I read the book, I take the children more into the book.*

*BÖ: I am more careful when choosing a story for the classroom. Even the content of the questions asked by the children has changed. They started to give more logical answers.*

As reflected in the answers, there appeared positive changes in teachers as a result of the seminars given to them as well as of the reading done with children in both classes. During the seminars and reading activities, it was frequently emphasized that "the author and illustrator of a book should be known by teachers and parents and be expressed with emphasis to children." The fact that the teachers appreciated this information is also very important for the project to achieve its goal. In other words, teacher awareness is important to create the love of reading and build a reading culture among preschoolers.

## DISCUSSION

This study was carried out to create a reading culture among preschoolers, teachers and parents, who are the main stakeholders in the preschool period. This section discusses the results of the interview questions answered by the children, parents and teachers during the intervention that lasted for 12 weeks. Besides, mid-intervention interview questions answered by the parents and teachers at the end of the six-week seminar are also presented.

### *Discussion of Pre-intervention and Post-intervention Interviews with Children*

It is known that children first meet books before starting school either at home or through people around them (Altun, 2013; Demircan, 2012). In this study, 68.75% of the children stated that they first met a book "at home." For this reason, parents should be conscious about this issue and create positive home environments that would allow their children to get to know books.

68.75% of the children did not remember the title of the book they read and gave general information about the content and pictures. The title and author of a book is the first stimuli for the child to establish a connection with the book (İnce Samur, 2014; Sever, 2010; Turgut Bayram, 2009). For this reason, the importance of knowing its title, its author and the illustrator was emphasized in the seminars given to the teachers and parents and during reading activities done with children. All of the children (100%) gave short answers while explaining the book they remember. However, the titles of the books they gave were not among the quality works of contemporary children's literature.

31.25% of the children associated "books" with "reading" in the pre-intervention interviews. Other answers were "happiness, letters, fairy tales, fairies, pictures, animals." As understood from the answers, they are mostly related to the reading aspect of books and the content. In the post-intervention interviews some at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup>, 31.25% of the children described books as "very

nice and entertaining things” indicated the fun side of reading. Besides, they started to make inferences about the intellectual and artistic dimensions of reading (Dilidüzgün, 2018; Lukens, 1999) in particular with the answers stating that books improve their imagination. In this regard, it is effective to carry out reading activities with books prepared for children with an artist sensitivity and practices that could turn reading into an enjoyable activity. All (100%) of the children said that they liked books.

In the pre-intervention interviews, 56.25% of the children reported they read books with their mothers. The number of children who read books with father (43.25%) was also close to that. On the other hand, the post-intervention interviews showed that 68.75% of the children reported reading books with their mothers, which means the percentage of reading books with the mothers increased while the percentage of reading with fathers remained the same (43.75%). Those ratings could imply that first mothers and then fathers have an active role in reading at home.

In the pre-intervention, half of the children stated that they enjoyed reading books with their mothers (50%) and then with their fathers (37.5%). This point reveals the importance of raising the awareness of parents about reading culture (Aydoğan & Çat, 2012; Cengiz, 2013; Çakmak & Yılmaz, 2009; Şahin, E. Y; Çelik, G. and Çelik, B., 2012; Unutkan, 2006; Yağcı, 2007). In the post-intervention interviews, 62.5% reported enjoying reading books with their mothers and 37.5% with their fathers. Accordingly, the percentage of enjoying reading books with mothers increased after the intervention, while the percentage of enjoying reading books with fathers remained the same. This point also reveals that mothers take a more active role in reading books and so they should be taken into consideration while giving education about building a reading culture.

62.5% of the children stated they had a library at home in the pre-intervention interviews. Having a library at home is an important factor for children’s access to and interaction with books as well as the love of reading (Kakırman Yıldız, 2017; Karabay, Ası, & Atan, 2016; Kıldan, 2007; Parlakyıldız & Yıldızbaş, 2004; Sangkaeo, 1999). As a result of the intervention, the percentage of those having a library at home increased to 93.75% at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> week. This change could mean that the seminars given to the parents for 6 weeks encouraged the parents to create a library or a special book corner for their children.

A great majority of the children (93.75) stated that they liked the 6-week reading activities, because at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> week, they started to give feedback on basic elements of children’s literature such as “being fun, stimulating imagination, creating curiosity, paying attention to the title, author or even the illustrator” besides giving information about the book. The children having no knowledge or prediction about the title, author, or illustrator of a book before the intervention, started to ask questions like “What is the title of this book? Who wrote it? Who is the illustrator?” and make comments like “Perhaps one day I will write a book or draw pictures of it”, which is a significant achievement of this study.

#### ***Overall Evaluation of Pre-, Mid-, and Post-intervention Interviews with Parents***

43.25% of the parents stated that they start to read books to their children between the ages of 4 to 6, which shows that a significant age period (0-2) is usually skipped and children meet books in preschools. This finding shows that most parents are not well aware of the ties between children and books, the process of getting to know books, and the right time for children to meet the book. The study by Ersoy and Bayraktar (2015) claimed that the mothers who received undergraduate and graduate education were more conscious about introducing books to their children at the age of 1.

87.5% of the parents reported no knowledge of children’s literature pre-intervention interviews, which is a striking finding showing the significance of this study. The percentage of the parents introducing books to their children at 0-2 ages (31.25%) and the parents never introducing books to their children at 2-4 ages(0%) also confirmed this finding. Even the parents who stated that



they had little knowledge gave no examples of quality works from children's literature. They mentioned books that were not suitable for children and far from bringing artistic and aesthetic values.

As for children's literature, 43.75 of the parents described it as "improving imagination" in the mid-intervention interviews. Secondly, 37.5% of the parents gave answers related to the "age-appropriate" feature of books. And other answers were about "including visuals or pictures, being appropriate for developmental areas, encouraging free thinking, increasing curiosity, having artistic values." However, in the pre-intervention interviews, almost all of the parents (87.5%) reported no or very limited knowledge about children's literature. As a result of the six-week seminars given to the parents, they achieved important outcomes about children's literature. As seen from their responses, the internal-external features and pedagogical aspects of children's literature were correctly understood by the parents. The change in the parents reveals how important and necessary this study is.

75% of the parents reported having information about the definition of children's literature at the end of the intervention. Considering that 87.5% of them did not have any knowledge about children's literature in the pre-intervention period, such a positive change in their knowledge shows that the seminars were effective. A lot of publishers do not provide information about the target age group of books, which makes it difficult for parents and even teachers to choose a book. On the outer cover, giving the lower age limit of the target group would provide a useful guidance. While the parents had some knowledge about and paid attention to the external-internal features of books when buying books for their children, they did not have sufficient information about the pedagogical aspects of books. During the pre-intervention interviews, 50% of the parents claimed to pay attention to the external features (Biçici, 2006) when buying a book for their children. The external feature is very important, but giving priority to the external features but leaving the content in the second place is an inadequate approach. Additionally, another important finding is that 43.75% pay attention to the age level when choosing a book for their children.

In the mid-intervention interviews, 87.5% of the parents claimed to pay attention to the content features when buying books for their children. Secondly, 81.25% of the parents claimed to choose age-appropriate books. It is an expected and positive attitude of parents to get to know their children well and introduce better books to them. Similarly, choosing books that increase imagination, curiosity and desire to read is important for children to acquire reading culture. Their prioritizing the books that are easy to understand and fluent in language but not the ones with imperative sentences is an important outcome of the seminars given to the parents. In the post-intervention interviews, 56.25% of the parents paying attention to the external features when buying books for their children and 25% claimed to pay attention to the age limit.

In the pre-intervention interviews, 50% of the parents spent 5-20 minutes a day on reading to their children and 4 out of 16 parents (25%) never spent any time. However, at this point, how the reading takes place and the quality of reading is a more important issue. After the intervention, 62.5% of the parents started to spend 5-20 minutes daily on reading books to their children. The fact that this percentage, which was 50% before the intervention, increased to 62.5% could imply that the study had a positive effect on the parents. On the other hand, the percentage of the parents spending no time on reading books to their children decreased from 25% to 18.75% as a result of the intervention, which helped the parents become more willing and conscious to spend more time on reading books to their children.

In the pre-intervention interviews, 81.25% of the parents indicated "mothers" as the person reading mostly to children at home, which was the same in the children's answers. Similarly, in the post-intervention interviews, 87.5% of the parents indicated "mothers" as the person who reads mostly to children at home and 12.5% of them indicated "fathers." Based on these findings, while the percentage of mothers increased, the percentage of fathers decreased. The increase in the mothers' rate a positive outcome of the seminars.

75% before the intervention and 50% after the intervention reported reading books to their children “at night or before sleep.” It could mean that the parents mostly prefer to read books to their children before sleep and find this time period more efficient. The fact that one parent was planning to buy books from now on indicated the effectiveness of the seminars given to the parents.

While 56.25% of the parents could not specify the title of the last book they read to before the intervention, 87.5% were able to specify the title of the book after the intervention. However, the book titles given as examples did not belong to quality works of contemporary children’s literature. Furthermore, they seemed to ignore the features that allow the book to be perceived as a whole, such as its author, illustrator, and publisher, which are important elements for acquiring a reading culture.

After the intervention, most of the parents were able to specify the title of the last book they read to their children. However, before the intervention, more than half of the parents could not specify the title of the book. Knowing and remembering the title of the book was an important achievement for this project. It is an important finding that a few parents who attended the seminars regularly could name the author of the book.

Before the intervention, 56.25% of the parents stated that they did not have a library at home. However, it is understood from the answers that not a suitable environment for a library existed at home. When acquiring a reading culture, it is highly important for the child to have a library of his own, meet books at home in the preschool period, and access books any time. As in the answers, the majority of children did not have a library of their own or the ones having a library did not have quality books.

Before the intervention, 43.75% of the parents indicated “improvement of thinking skills” as the importance acquiring a reading culture, which is another achievement of the seminars. Additionally, answers like “increasing imagination” and “cognitive development” were also other clues that the whole process was understood well. Similarly, the parents, who expressed only “informative” side of reading before the intervention, started to address the literary and artistic dimensions of reading in improving thinking skills, which also revealed the significance of this study.

According to the parents’ responses, there has been a positive change regarding how they should benefit from the quality works of children’s literature in the process of acquiring a reading culture as a result of the seminars. It is seen that parents gained awareness on issues such as “how to choose a book for children.”

### ***Overall Evaluation of Pre-, Mid-, and Post-intervention Interviews with Teachers***

In the pre-intervention interviews, the teachers did not know the definition of the concept of children’s literature but thought that children’s literature consists of children’s classics. Such insufficient knowledge about children’s literature indicated that the teachers could fail in guiding their students when building a reading culture. However, in the mid- and post-intervention interviews, the teachers stated that children’s literature products should have basic features such as “improving imagination, including artistic values, being suitable for age, interest and developmental areas of children.” It is seen that the teachers who could not define children’s literature before the intervention expressed important keywords related to children’s literature after the intervention. This is an important indicator that preschool teachers’ increased awareness would be a positive step to provide an effective guidance to children at an early age when acquiring a reading culture.

In the pre-intervention interviews, the teachers did not have detailed information about external-internal features and pedagogical aspects when choosing a book and they could not express the basic elements such as age level and developmental characteristics of children. On the other hand, they had general information about features such as pictures, short descriptions, child expectations of a preschool book.

However, in the mid- and post-intervention interviews, the teachers stated that they pay attention to the basic principles of children's literature when buying books for their students. Both teachers emphasized the importance of choosing books according to the external features, particularly the "pictures." Besides, prioritizing features such as "being appropriate for age level, development of children, their expectations and needs; encouraging them to think creatively; its print quality, and having a clear language" indicated that the teachers became more conscious about the external-internal features of books through the seminars.

In addition, the teachers who did not know the authors of the books before the seminars started to pay attention to the authors when choosing books after the seminars. In short, the teachers' awareness is the fundamental steps in establishing a bridge between children and books and creating the love of books.

Before the intervention, the teachers' spending 5 to 20 minutes on reading at school per day was considered to be quite insufficient for children to acquire a reading culture. After the intervention, despite the six-week seminars given to the teachers, teachers' spending 5 to 20 minutes on reading per day in the classroom was still insufficient for children to develop a positive attitude towards reading. It is essential to work more on this issue to raise awareness among teachers.

It was seen that the teachers had sufficient information about how to carry out the reading process in both pre-intervention and post-intervention interviews. It was also seen that although there was a book corner spared in the classroom, modern and quality children's books were not included in that corner. The number of the books was insufficient, as well.

The teachers did not know the titles and authors of the books in the pre-intervention interviews. This was considered as a drawback when creating a reading culture. However, in the mid-intervention interviews, they stated that the reading culture is an important process that affects and shapes the whole life. While explaining the importance of acquiring a reading culture, the teachers emphasized particularly its feature of "improving thinking skills."

After the seminars, the teachers claimed to have knowledge about the process of acquiring a reading culture. As deduced from the answers, there have been positive changes in teachers, in terms of both when choosing a book and reading a book in the classroom. Both teachers reflected sensitivity towards children's interpretation of books and the thinking skills starting from the early years, which is a significant effect of this study.

On the other hand, the teachers expressed that children's books should stimulate imagination, not by judging or giving advice. The teachers seemed to put this understanding into practice in their classroom, which is also another indicator of the achievement of the study. As deduced from the responses, there have been positive changes in teachers with the help of the seminars given to them and reading activities done with children in both classrooms within the scope of the study. In the seminars and reading activities, the idea that "the author and illustrator of a book should be known well by teachers and parents" was frequently emphasized and repeated. Seeing this message's being understood is a very important indicator of the achievement of the study. In other words, teacher awareness is essential to create the love of reading and build a reading culture among preschoolers.

### ***Overall Evaluation of the Observation Forms***

Before the intervention, a great majority of the children claimed to like reading books. However, children in Section A, where books are read regularly, were more interested and ready than the children in Section B. Furthermore, the children who regularly read books at home were able to give more details about the plot and characters in the books. In this context, the quality of the reading environment at home is as significant as the one the school. On the other hand, the books that teachers read at school were very long, ordinary, and short of artistic sensitivity. For this reason, both the

teachers and the children got bored after a while, became distracted and did not enjoy the act of reading well.

In the reading activities carried out during the second phase of the study, it was observed that the children enjoyed the act of reading with quality books of children's literature and listened carefully. In summary, it is predicted that building a creative "reading environment" with the quality works of children's literature will enable children aged 4 to 6 to gain the love of reading better.

### ***Overall Evaluation of Participant Diaries***

Participant diaries were distributed to the parents to be filled in at home. When the diaries of the first week were evaluated, it was seen that most of the parents were interested in reading culture but did not have enough consciousness. Parents cared about their children's reading, but they did not know that their children's age levels, interests and needs are the most determining factors regarding this issue. As a result of this situation, parents were unable to select quality books. It is a natural consequence that the child who cannot meet quality books show little interest for a short period of time and cannot continue the act of reading or listening. In the process of acquiring a reading culture, it is necessary that teachers at school and parents at home create integrity and cooperation to guide this process.

When the diaries were evaluated after the intervention, it was seen that most of the children remembered the book read to them at school. However, even though they tell when their parents ask at home, they did not want to talk about the book again. One of the reasons for this situation could be the lack of school-family cooperation. At this point, teachers have important responsibilities. Teachers should ensure that parents provide the book to be read each week at the beginning of the semester and create a reading program to reinforce reading at home. Thus, an awareness could be created in relation to the title, author, illustrator, and content of books and a connection with books as well as the love of books could be ensured.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study was carried out create a theoretical and practical process about building a reading culture among preschoolers, teachers, and parents and to track the changes in them. The findings revealed that the children had intended awareness, desire and tendency towards the author, title, and illustrator of books and reading. This judgment was reached with the support of teachers and parents' views. At the same time, it was seen that when an effective reading environment is created with quality books, the parents also enjoy reading books and connect with books. On the other hand, the teachers and parents gave feedback that could be useful to their students or children and even themselves in the process of acquiring a reading culture with the quality works of children's literature.

The knowledge that the teachers and parents should support the quality books through effective reading processes was provided during the intervention and demonstrated through sample activities. However, it is known that experience is gained as long as knowledge is put into practice. For this reason, it is important that adults should not compromise on doing research with this awareness and making regular and continuous reading activities with children. In this context, similar studies should become widespread and systematic interventions should be arranged to build a reading culture.

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