

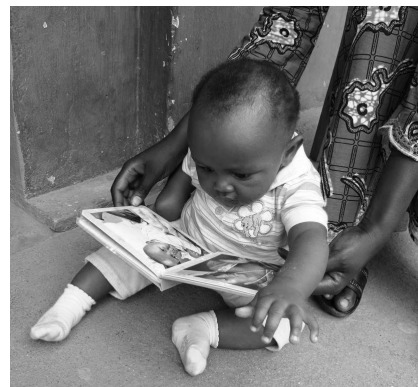
# PUBLIC AWARENESS OF EMERGENT AND EARLY LITERACY IN RWANDA

A STUDY PRODUCED BY SAVE THE CHILDREN  
RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY CET RWANDA

This document is an executive summary of findings from a baseline survey conducted by Save the Children in Rwanda. The purpose of the survey was to establish the level of awareness in the public about emergent and early literacy.

## METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE

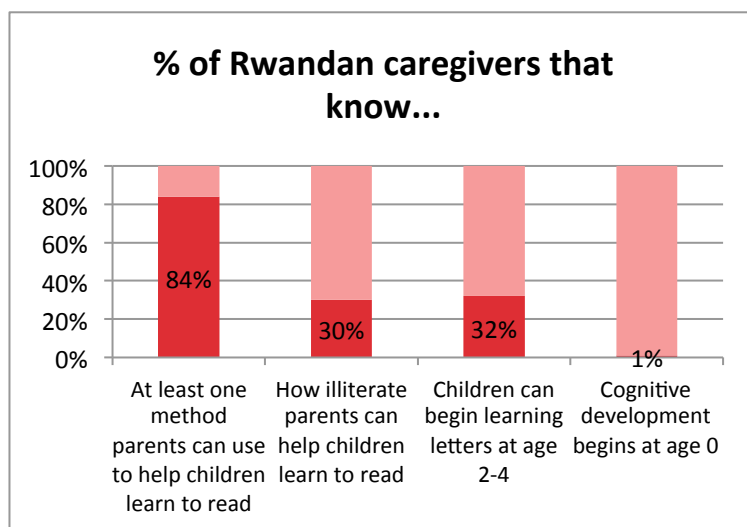
The study was a KAP Survey, therefore the findings, analysis, conclusion and recommendations focus on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices by parents in respect to emergent and early literacy. The survey was administered to 516 respondents from 6 different cells in Rwanda's 5 provinces. The overall sample was 15.3% urban and 84.7% rural. The independent variables used were the education of the mother; the education of the father; the literacy of the mother; the literacy of the father; the socio-economic status of the parents.



## KEY FINDINGS: KNOWLEDGE

 **There is a generally low level of public knowledge about children's cognitive development.**

- ✓ Only 1% of respondents correctly answered that a child's intelligence begins to develop at age 0;
- ✓ Only 32% of the respondents knew that children can begin learning letters from the age of 2-4 years;
- ✓ Respondents were fairly knowledgeable about methods that parents could use to help children learn to read;
- ✓ Yet only 30% of respondents knew specific ways that illiterate parents could help their children learn how to read.

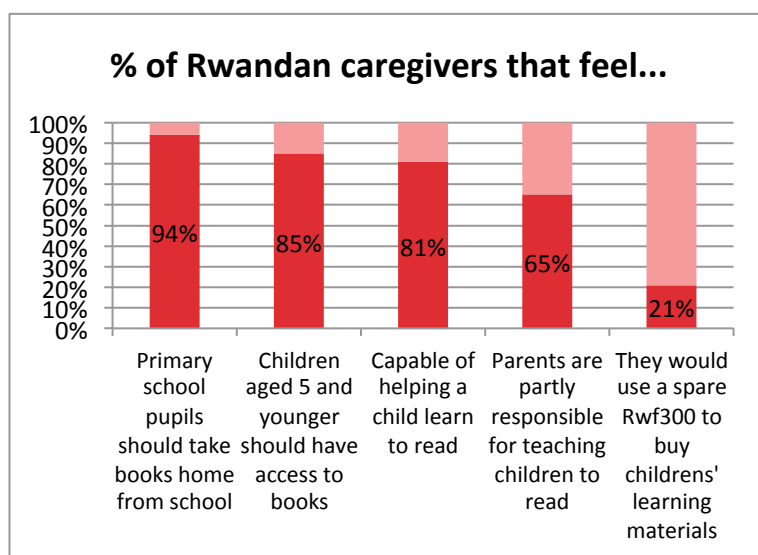


## FINDINGS: ATTITUDES

### **There are mixed attitudes regarding the promotion of emergent and early literacy**

✓ Respondents were strongly supportive of allowing children aged 5 and younger to access books and allowing primary school pupils to take books home from school. However, only 21% of respondents mentioned that they would use a spare Rwf300 to buy literacy-related learning materials for their children, rather than something else such as sweets.

✓ Regarding parents helping their children to learn to read, 65% of respondents believed that at least one parent held this responsibility, with mothers being mentioned more often than fathers. 81% of respondents also said that they felt very capable or somewhat capable of helping a child learn to read. In context, however, an even greater number (88%) agreed that teachers hold this responsibility.

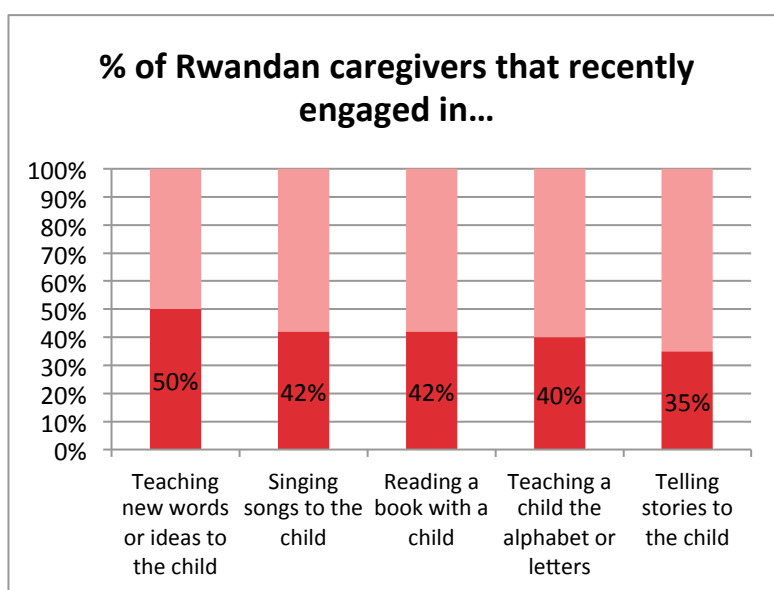


## FINDINGS: PRACTICE

### **Households with higher socio-economic status were more likely to engage in literacy-promotion activities.**


✓ The most common examples of literacy promotion activities were “showing or teaching the child something new” and singing to a child. Slightly fewer households reported explicitly promoting literacy by reading a book with a child or helping a child learn the alphabet/letters.

✓ Mothers were more involved in such literacy-promoting activities than any other member of the household, averaging 47% engagement across all of the activities, compared to fathers' average of only 29%.



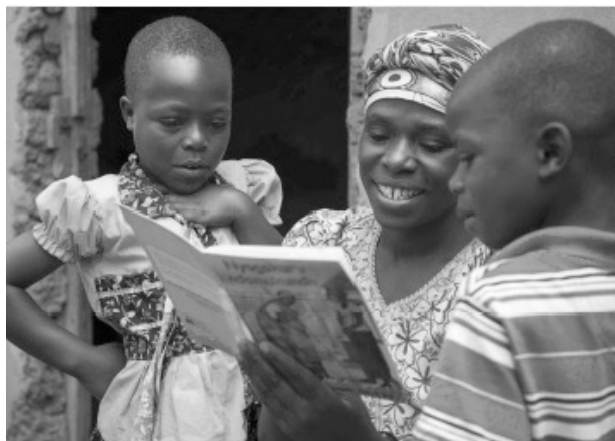
✓ Regardless, the literacy and education level of both mothers and fathers had a positive impact on household literacy practices. Households with higher socio-economic status were also more likely to engage in literacy-promotion activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

 **There is clearly a need for media campaigns and policy approaches to increasing public awareness on emergent and early literacy**

Based on the findings from this study, these efforts should focus on the following issues.

- ✓ Children's cognitive development, from their earliest days through to the development of specific pre-literacy skills.
- ✓ Methods by which all parents, literate and illiterate, can help their children learn to read. The importance of developing a print-rich environment should be especially emphasized, alongside encouragement to engage in more familiar methods.
- ✓ The importance of establishing a regular practice of reading books or other available materials to children every day. Parents should be encouraged to read books aloud to children as well as allow children to explore books independently even before they can read.
- ✓ Explicit discussion of how parents could use limited means—even as little as Rwf300 or less—to promote their children's emergent and early literacy. This could involve purchasing a low-cost book or alternatively buying materials to make a homemade book.
- ✓ The reasons why parents, and not just teachers, have an important duty to help their children learn to read. It is critical for parents to understand the powerful impact they can have on their child's emergent and early literacy skill development.



These public campaigns can happen in a variety of different ways but should target mothers and fathers from all income groups but particularly the poorest, illiterate parents. It should also involve more educated community and school leaders who may work with such groups and be able to positively influence their knowledge, attitudes and practices towards emergent and early literacy.