

MEDIA RELEASE

Early years numeracy supports transition and later maths achievement

20 July 2016: Children’s numeracy knowledge when they enter school provides a foundation for their school maths achievement and strongly predicts their maths competence later in school, according to a report released today by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

The report, *Counting on it: Early numeracy development and the preschool child* by ACER Research Fellow Dr Kate Reid, reveals the critical importance of effective support for early childhood educators – highlighting the importance of children’s numeracy development in the early childhood years in childcare, kindergarten and the first years of schooling.

“Since early childhood numeracy development is so important for later school achievement, we must find ways to help early childhood educators provide the best possible foundation for school,” Dr Reid said.

Dr Reid said children’s mathematical development has an impact on their transition from preschool to the early years of primary school.

According to Dr Reid, counting skills and understanding of quantities and the relationships between them in the year before starting primary school predict children’s mathematics achievement and teacher ratings of competence in mathematics one year later.

“Children’s informal number sense when they enter school also provides a foundation for their school mathematics achievement and strongly predicts their mathematics competence later in school,” Dr Reid said.

According to the ACER report, early numeracy knowledge may initially be fragile and incomplete, but it can be fostered through interactions with parents and preschool caregivers to provide a solid foundation on which school mathematics teaching can build.

“Understanding more about preschoolers’ early numeracy development is important in informing educational practices, understanding the variation in early numeracy skills among preschoolers, fostering early numeracy among children whose skills are less developed, and understanding why some children with well-developed early numeracy have difficulties learning mathematics at school,” Dr Reid said.

The report, *Counting on it: Early numeracy development and the preschool child* by Dr Kate Reid, is the second in the ACER series, *Changing Minds: Discussion in neuroscience, psychology and education*. It is available at http://research.acer.edu.au/learning_processes/19

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