

Role of the home in learner achievement

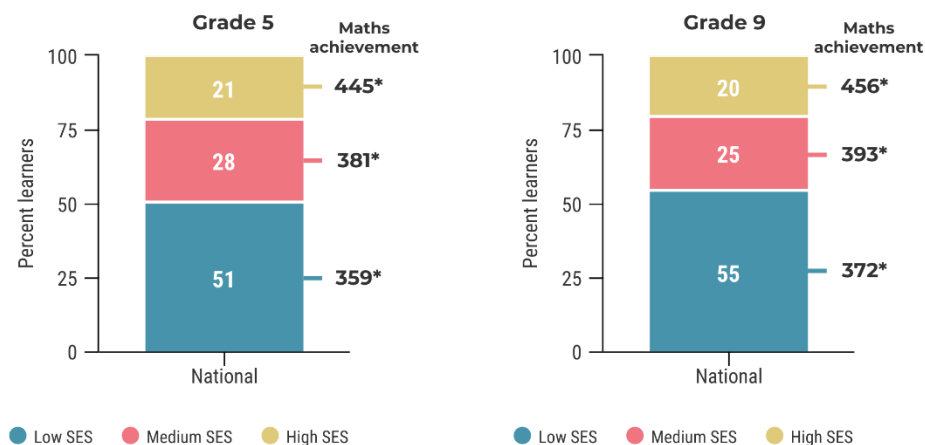
In the context of high income inequality in South Africa, personal conditions such as where one lives and learns influence educational outcomes. The socioeconomic status (SES) of the home and the activities conducted in the home are key determinants of educational achievement. Furthermore, the early learning environment and experiences of children are associated with their cognitive development and school readiness.

In this newsletter we explore the role of the home in learners' mathematics achievement in the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

Home socioeconomic status

In South Africa, the majority of households are categorised as low SES, with only around one fifth being high SES and one quarter having medium SES.

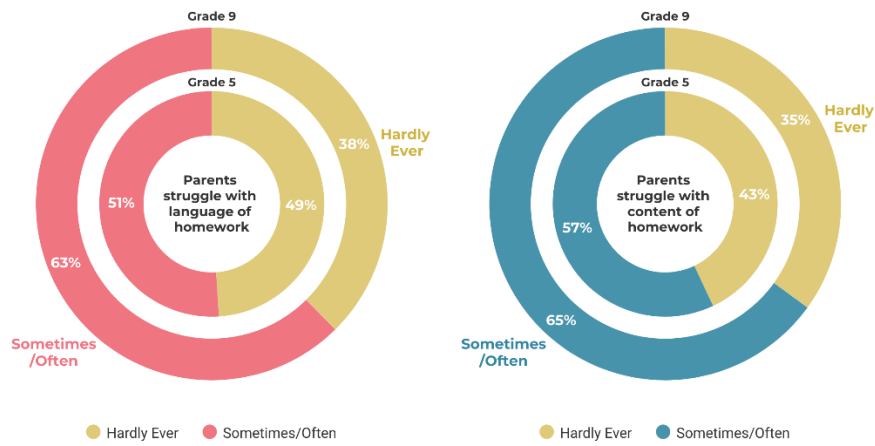
We examined the relationship between learners' SES (measured by the number of home assets) and their mathematics achievement. The results showed that the availability of home assets was positively related to learners' mathematics achievement in both grades: achievement was highest for learners from homes with the most assets and lowest for those learners from homes with the least assets (over half of the learners).



Home support for learning

Most parents, in both low and high resourced contexts, provided support to their children in completing their homework. However, the ability of parents to help with homework can be limited by several factors.

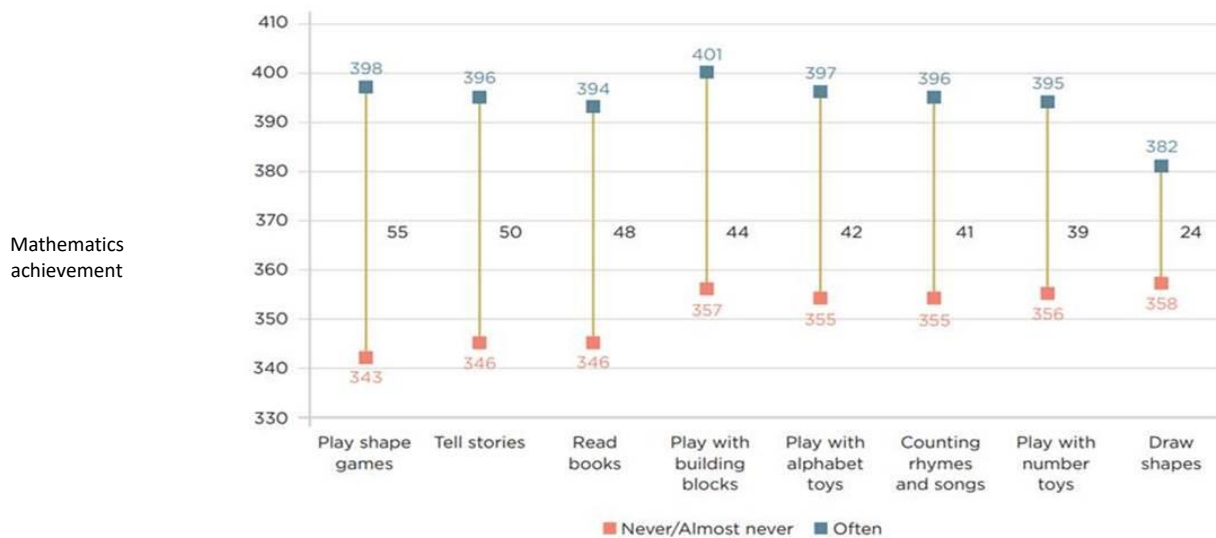
Around half of Grade 5 learners and two thirds of Grade 9 learners reported that their parents *at least sometimes* struggled with the language or content of their homework. Learners who reported their parents *hardly ever* struggled with the homework achieved significantly higher mathematics scores than learners whose parents frequently or sometimes struggled.



Early learning activities

Research documents the importance of early childhood learning activities in laying the groundwork for subsequent academic achievement. These educational activities help promote early cognitive, linguistic and motor skills, and contribute to children's levels of school readiness. In addition to home resources and the activities parents do with their children, the cognitive stimulation they provide through engaging in early educational activities is an important characteristic of the home environment.

Engaging in each of the early educational activities in the figure below was positively associated with higher mathematics achievement in Grade 5, and those who engaged in the activities more frequently performed better.



Interested in using TIMSS South Africa data for research?

If you are interested in working with us on publications based on the TIMSS data, please [contact us](#).

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please [unsubscribe](#).