

# Sex and gender differences in children's motivation to read

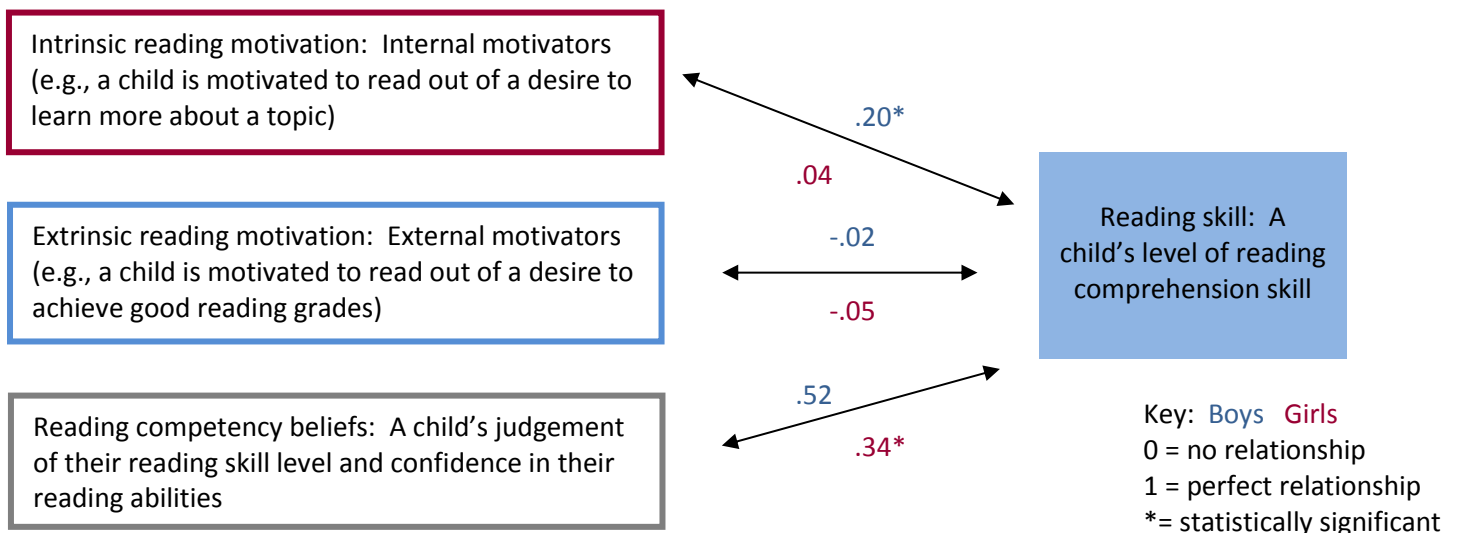
## A summary for teachers

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**Background:** Research has shown that, on average, boys are less motivated to read compared to girls. The gender difference between boys and girls in levels of reading skill and confidence in reading abilities is narrower. Based on past research, there is also good reason to examine whether boys' motivation to read and confidence in their reading skills are more closely related to their level of reading skill. The present study examined this.

**Aim:** To examine how closely boys' and girls' motivation to read and reading competency beliefs relate to their level of reading skill, and to examine whether this relationship is stronger among boys.

**Participants:** 492 children (49% male) aged 7 – 11 took part in the project. All completed an assessment of reading skill and a questionnaire asking them about their motivation to read (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) and confidence in their reading skills (competency beliefs).

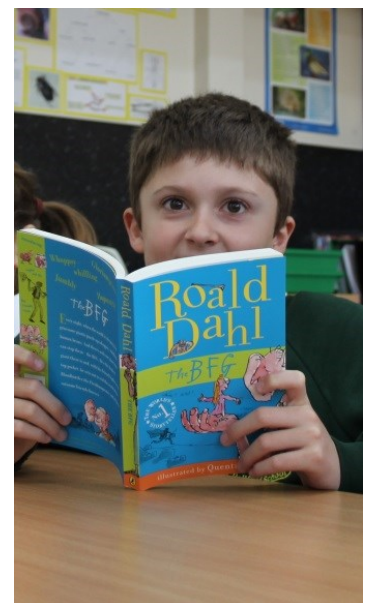


**Results:** Boys' intrinsic reading motivation and reading competency beliefs were more closely associated with their levels of reading skill compared to girls. No differences were found in extrinsic reading motivation.

### Discussion and implications for education:

Boys, to a greater extent than girls, may need to be good at reading in order to be motivated to read and have confidence in their reading abilities. Therefore, poor reading boys may be more likely, or quicker, to become disengaged or demotivated with reading, compared to poor reading girls. In addition, boys' reading motivation and competency beliefs may have a greater influence on the effort they put into reading, thereby having a stronger influence on their reading assessment scores.

School based interventions or supports aimed at increasing motivation to read and confidence in reading abilities may have a stronger influence on the reading skills of boys than girls.



**Academic paper:** Logan, S., & Medford, E. (2011). Gender differences in the strength of the association between motivation, competency beliefs and reading skill. *Educational Research*, 53, 85-92.