

## **Mothers read and mediate books to their children: Arab families attest to the contribution of mediation to young children's literacy**

*Safieh Hassuna Arafat*

The book foregrounds the activity of parents reading a book to their child in Arab society as well as the contribution of this activity to their child's literacy development. Although a great deal of research has been conducted on the topic in the Western world, it has been investigated only to a small extent among Arabic-speaking families. The book is based on comprehensive research that evaluated the literacy acquisition processes that occur in Arab families and their significance for the development of literacy in the Arabic language with its complex and unique nature. The aspects that were evaluated include the socio-economic characteristics of the child's family and the literacy environment in which he/she is growing up, an in-depth analysis of the manner in which mothers read books to their kindergarten-age children – a popular everyday activity in the Western world, and an examination of the contribution of the diverse variables to the child's level of literacy in kindergarten and at the beginning of elementary school. The book offers a broad picture of the literacy acquisition processes that occur in the Arab child's family and help him bridge the gap between the spoken and the written language. This type of bridging may well reinforce the child's starting-point on his/her path to literacy.

**Dr. Safieh Hassunah Arafat** holds a Ph.D. in education from Bar-Ilan University, with a specialization in early-childhood literacy and language acquisition in Arabic-speaking children. She earned her M.A. degree in Curricula and Evaluation in Education from Tel Aviv University and her B.A. degree from Bar-Ilan University. Dr. Hassunah Arafat serves as a coordinator for new teachers and lectures in the fields of Early Childhood and Elementary Education at the Arab Academic Institute of Education at Beit Berl College. In addition, she serves as a language instructor at kindergartens. Dr. Hassuna Arafat is active in the management of the Association for Early Childhood and seeks to promote early-childhood literacy in Arab society.