

Preface

Families play a central role in children's learning and development. Family involvement and parenting from an early age have been acknowledged to be vital for children's development—a statement that resonates through years of international research and literature. In recent years though, there is a prevalence of research that suggests that parents' engagement in their children's learning varies due to factors such as parents facing multiple disadvantages. Leading this debate, Melhuish et al. (2008), for example, suggest that parents generally engage in their children's development and learning if they have the opportunities and resources to do so. Through this book, we propose that families' engagement in their children's learning is complex than having opportunities and resources. In preparing their children for transition to school, parents have their own views about their child's transition to school and who is responsible for this process (Anders et al. 2012). Hence, creating an awareness of a variety of knowledge and actions for engaging children with early mathematical learning within informal and formal settings is a key focus of this book. A key assumption underpinning this book is that educators and early years professionals can support and partner families in their efforts to engage in their children's learning.

This book is an initial effort to conceptualize a set of research-based suggestions for parents and educators to support children's early mathematical learning. This book is a corner stone of our Australian Research Council Linkage Project *Numeracy@Home* that aims at understanding key variables in families' role in early mathematical learning and how families and early years educators and professionals can be supported in this role and assist children's transition to formal learning at school. The conceptualization of this book started with a symposium of researchers and early years professionals that presented an array of thematic issues that are evident in this book. The organization of this book is discussed in the introductory chapter.

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Lastly, we would like to acknowledge all the families and educators who have been part of this book's central tenet, research, and evidence. Without them, there would be no book titled *Engaging Families as Children's First Mathematics Educators: An International Perspective*. We are confident that this book presents vital issues to consider and inspiring ideas and approaches for supporting families as their children's first and most important mathematics educators.

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Educators

International Perspectives

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