

# Involving Parents in Advertising Literacy Education: A Must or a Maybe?

*Britt Adams, Esther Rozendaal, Tammy Schellens & Martin Valcke*

*This document is an abstract of an article that was submitted to an international peer-reviewed journal and forms part of the 'AdLit' (Advertising Literacy) research project. AdLit is a four-year interdisciplinary research project on advertising literacy, which is funded by VLAIO (Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship). The main goal of the AdLit project is to investigate how we can empower children and youth to cope with advertising, so that they can grow up to be critical, informed consumers who make their own conscious choices in today's new media environment.*

## **ABSTRACT**

Today's children grow up in a media environment that is permeated with new advertising formats, which are usually difficult to recognize, impeding consequently children's critical reflection on it. Therefore, this mixed-method quasi-experimental study was implemented in 16 fourth and fifth grade classes to explore how an educational intervention with home-based parental involvement empowers children to cope with this changing advertising landscape. Pre- and post-test results show that the educational intervention positively influences pupils' ad recognition; a skill in which pupils become significantly better when parents are involved. Concerning their attitudes, most children express positive feelings toward new advertising formats such as product placement and advergames after critical classroom and parent-child discussions. However, in particular, a significantly more skeptical attitude toward website banners is observed when parents participated. Data from the focus groups and observations of parent-child interactions during the homework assignment illustrate that children have the capacity to verbalize well-founded arguments to support their attitudes. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

