



The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Literacy Development in Early Education

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of parental involvement in enhancing the literacy development of children in early education. Focusing on both non-intensive and active parental support, the research examines how parents' engagement in reading activities influences children's reading and spelling progress by the end of their second and third primary school years. The study underscores the significance of home-literacy activities, positive parental attitudes toward reading, and effective home-school communication in promoting educational outcomes. By addressing socioeconomic and cultural barriers, the research highlights strategies to foster increased parental involvement, ultimately aiming to reduce educational inequalities and support children's social, emotional, and academic development.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Literacy development, Early childhood education, Home-literacy activities and Socioeconomic factors

INTRODUCTION

Given these findings, the government needs to keep supporting the reading activities of parents and reinforce the message of the importance of reading at home for their children's learning [1]. The difficulties faced by some children from deprived homes make the case for this support overwhelming. If we are to reduce inequalities in reading and wider educational achievement, it is essential that literacy activities are fostered in all homes [2]. To evaluate the effectiveness of parental support of non-intensive kind, the study aimed at mobilizing the parents to pay more attention to literacy activities and show high commitment to their children's literacy experiences [3]. The hypothesis was formulated that such support would contribute to the progress of children in reading and spelling at the end of the second and third year of primary school [1]. Research shows that parental involvement in their children's education affects how children learn to read [4-8]. Early interaction is especially important for social and academic outcomes [9]. It seems that when parents read more often with their children and have a more positive attitude toward reading, their children learn more about reading [10]. Other studies show that regular home reading (both listening to children read and shared book reading) and independent reading contribute to reading achievement and children's positive attitudes toward reading. Recent studies also find that early home-literacy activities are important predictors of children's readiness for school, their later ability to read, and their progress in reading [11]. Although existing research has several limitations, it seems that home-literacy activities do affect school outcomes. It is worth looking more closely at this conclusion [12-18].

Background and Significance

As the recognized first teachers of their children, parents normally take on this role when their children are young and emerging as students during the year before kindergarten and during the early elementary years [19]. Parental involvement, which includes taking a lead role in their children's educational development, communicating effectively with the educational gatekeepers, and participating in educational opportunities, provides challenging educational experiences, sets the stage for future learning, and creates a supportive school environment, use and develop parenting skills and are generally an example of successful adult learning and behavior for the students [20-24]. With the encouragement and support of the teachers and the educational staff in the schools, parental involvement also develops the knowledge and skills of the preschool children and prepares them for success in school. Until recently, parental involvement research has been limited mainly to the elementary grades, with few studies focusing on early childhood education [25]. A growing body of research does, however, suggest that parental involvement in the education of children in early childhood can improve family and school relationships [26]. Along

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with good home-school communication, which has been identified as a key component of successful involvement at the elementary level, parental involvement in early childhood education promotes better formal schooling learning attitudes and behavior for their children in later grades [27-34].

Theoretical Framework

Parental involvement in education occurs when parents take a primary role in the educational processes both at home and at school [27]. Research on the effectiveness of parental involvement in the education of young children suggests that policymakers should focus on programs that encourage all parents to actively participate in the education of their children in activities that promote children's school success [28]. These activities include being actively involved in schools, academic socialization, educational and emotional support in the home, participation in early childhood programs, advocacy, building a supportive home environment for education, and reinforcing the importance of education. They have found that children whose parents are academically available at home are most likely to earn high grades, complete homework, and attain high achievement outcomes [35]. Children in low-achieving schools tend to value the support their parents offer them in academic education more than the children in high-achieving schools [36]. The partnership between families and schools has gained recognition as a primary way to improve children's education [37]. Parental involvement means family participation in children's learning and activities designed to help them do well in school [38]. It is the active, ongoing participation of youth's parents that reflects a permanent concern for their children's education [39]. The impact of limited parental involvement in early years' education can produce negative results. Families with a child in early childhood and early elementary education make a difference in their child's school adjustment. Research has consistently documented parents who are involved in the child's life, both academically and emotionally, increase the success of their child and contribute to their child's success in school [40-47].

Definition of Parental Involvement

Parents or guardians have the option of becoming involved in the education of their children through a variety of activities, which can be broken down into three broad categories: 1) family involvement, 2) home-based involvement, and 3) school-based involvement [48]. These connections or involvement strategies should increase cognitive approaches, including cognitive stimulation, pro-social skills, problem-solving abilities, cognition, and academic readiness. According to [49], parent involvement includes parental beliefs, attitudes, and values about educational goals as well as about ways in which the parent can help student learning at home and at school, such as monitoring homework completion and developing positive teacher and parent communication [50]. Parental involvement can be defined as the interaction and participation of parents, as well as other family members, in activities such as volunteering, mentoring, participating in trainings, attending events, supporting their child's learning, collaborating with the program or center's staff, and engaging with the broader early childhood education community [51]. Parental involvement in early childhood education is influential in achieving children's academic achievement, social behavior, and adjustment across the early childhood period and beyond. Many studies including this timeline studies support the conclusion that higher levels of parental involvement in early childhood are associated with higher academic achievement, better social behavior, and adjustment [52-55].

Theories Supporting Parental Involvement

According to [56], educators want parents to become involved because it can contribute to the educational development of their children [57]. In a similar vein, some parents want to be involved because they feel that it contributes to their children's academic achievement and ultimately to their future success [58]. From this, it is clear that parental involvement should be a two-way relationship between parents and educators. Research on the effectiveness of parental involvement should pay equal attention to theoretical motivations and claims. For many years, researchers emitted empirically untested appeals for increased parental involvement [59]. They did this in response to the "common sense" belief that if children and families are involved in activities such as family days and readings, children's academic chances would improve. It was assumed that schools wanted parents to become involved for the reasons mentioned earlier [60-63]. Additionally, there is a social norm that parents should be actively involved in their child's education in order to be considered good parents [64-67].

Benefits of Parental Involvement

It has been proven that regardless of background, children are better able to develop the skills which will enhance their chances of academic success and their ability to enter school ready to learn if their parents are involved in their education [32, 43, 54]. There are a number of methods for increasing the parental involvement of the migrant families that are being served by the preschool program [58]. One sure method of encouraging parental involvement is when a school provides clear and accurate information concerning policies, expectations, and resources which are available to the parents, as well as information regarding how a parent can be involved, at any level, of their child's educational experience [62]. Although providing accommodations and resources can be a very powerful tool, there are a variety of boundaries which may act to prevent the involvement of migrant families in a preschool program. There are several benefits of parental involvement [63]. Parents know their children well and are likely to have a strong commitment to the migrant educational program that is attended by their children [68]. Parents also offer

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unique characteristics, cultural influence, and potential support services for teachers and program administrators. They bring diversity to the program, influence the climate and attitudes of the program, and provide fewer discipline problems through classroom and school visits [69-72].

Academic Achievement

Educational psychologists have long acknowledged the long-term and occasionally short-term impact of parent and family factors on their children's school success; in particular, the critical importance of home environments that are rich, stimulating, and supportive of early literacy and numeracy competencies [73]. Encouraging family togetherness, bolstering their ability to use naturally occurring events in ways that build children's knowledge of letters, words, and books, and providing parenting support and literacy and numeracy materials are promising ways to support children's academic learning [74]. Despite the expanded interest in the correlates of school achievement, with the exception of one study, there has been little review of these correlates [75]. Historically, most of the previous reviews of research have focused on student and family sociodemographic determinants of early school achievement and school variables that help explain differences in early school achievement [76]. The present discussion attempts to broaden our understanding of predictors of academic success rather than provide a comprehensive review [77].

Social and Emotional Development

Expert recommendations on how best to foster social and emotional development build on traditional notions of the role of a family [38, 43, 45]. There may be a lot to learn from exploring the extent, type, and quality of parent involvement in early childhood education and how such involvement varies across different families, schools, and states [67]. Along with increased material investments in child care such as lower staff-child ratios and more educated staff, having parents participate in discussions with staff in early learning settings appears to be part of a larger movement in public policy to find ways to promote children's full developmental potential in those settings [77]. According to researchers in the field of early childhood, children with engaged parents score higher on measures of social and emotional development [56]. The authors of Parenting and School Readiness believe that "parental involvement in early education" is tied to children developing appropriate social behavior [65]. In an analysis of data from the National Center for Early Development and Learning's Study of State Early Education Programs, Fuller and colleagues (2002) found that parenting practices such as modeling reading, taking trips with children to educational places such as libraries or museums, attending school events and parents meetings, and obtaining information from sources such as books, newspapers, and TV programs at home had a short-term effect of enhancing school readiness scores [66]. Additionally, Horn (1996) hypothesizes that the reasons behind such findings may be that parental involvement in early education tends to increase a child's feelings of security and self-confidence, which translate into a child's willingness to take risks and thereby learn more [78].

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Parents do not share enough information about their child's home environment with their children's teachers. During parent-teacher meetings, parents talk about their children's problems but do not give teachers enough information on living situations at home. Parents were also less familiar with their children's progress [79]. They have little knowledge of what their children are taught at a lesson, knowing only that their children have forgotten their brief instructions. In some cases, parents feel unimpressed or hesitate to help their children at home, due to their high level, jeopardizing their children's academic progress [45, 65, 43]. Sometimes parents feel a lack of empowerment and lack the confidence to believe they can educate their children, much less spend time helping them with their homework [67]. In other cases, teachers are uncertain and do not know how to answer questions and parents ask for assistance at home after hours and on weekends [67]. These misconceptions and misunderstandings can prevent parents from becoming more involved in their children's learning activities [79].

Socioeconomic Factors

The more that parents are involved in a child's life outside formal education, the more likely it is for parental involvement in the child's formal education to occur. For example, parents' participation in their child's extracurricular activities generally leads to increased parent-teacher communication [80]. The positive correlation occurs due to parents' engagement with school problems, willingness to become involved by being receptive to teachers, resolving homework issues, and participating in school governance. Active participation in a child's life leads to increased children's self-esteem and self-efficacy [81]. Socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with a wide range of factors that can influence parental involvement in a child's education. Parents of low SES backgrounds may be less educated themselves and less likely to use oral language when speaking to their children [76, 56, 33]. They are also more likely to be unable to read, which may discourage parental involvement. They may also find schools intimidating if they are not familiar with the education system [72]. Furthermore, low-income families may be more likely to have both parents working and thus be unable to monitor and support their children's educational experiences at home. It is not surprising that researchers report that parents with higher SES are more likely to be involved in their children's education [82].

Cultural Differences

The most controversial topic that has been brought into the discussion of school readiness and relationships between parents and school is the role of testing and assessment [56]. While educational policy is now focused on a model of high standards, using tests as the way to measure progress, researchers and parents have raised concerns about how much testing of very young children is normal or even appropriate to measure their educational needs [78]. In "Planning for Every Child," the Starting Points Framework describes how to use the children's communication, language, literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and personal, social, and emotional development early learning goals [66]. In contrast, Asian and Asian-American parents are more frequently seen in home-based activities working on reading, language, pencil control, and sorting skills, in contrast to attending events or meeting with teachers [77].

Finally, it is essential to consider differences across ethnic and cultural groups when examining and promoting parental involvement, particularly within today's multicultural societies. Research indicates, for example, that African-American parents are often actively involved in children's lives, visiting preschool programs and head start centers frequently. Although difficult to conclude from the findings currently available, it appears that African American mothers are especially involved [50].

Strategies for Increasing Parental Involvement

At the same time, they are low cost, although meeting major parental resistance, mainly because of timing which is considered inflexible and occasionally inconvenient [58]. The abilities of parents to actually participate in specific types of Parental Involvement programs are a second barrier [59]. It is also a type of contributing factor. Reconciling such skills where the parents' age, family educational level, socioeconomic background, and study goals shape highly distorted motivational constraints, guided by their fears of returning to school subjects with a view to the fact that many parents are not technically literate, contribute to the polarization of research results focusing on learning among parental involvements. In effect, a considerable portion of the U.S. population is unable to use computers as an educational resource [46]. The strategies advocating parental involvement in the education process of young children as the primary educator, motivator, and role model of children in the normal circles of their early childhood education include an array of parental educational programs [47]. Computer-operated programs seem to have potential in engaging parents, as computerized instructions can be adapted to diverse adults possessing distinct educational characteristics [39]. Furthermore, incorporating parents into a child's educational planning and decision-making can be expected to increase their involvement. Early childhood educators working with low-income and culturally diverse families use home visits as an interpreter of the parents' role [58]. Educational programs for parents are considered a method of strengthening relationships between parents and their preschoolers while enhancing future student academic achievement [83].

School-Based Initiatives

- Encourage support for young children and their family members. By strengthening partnerships with family members of other children in a child's classroom, perhaps for childcare supervision, families may realize that their collective group is one of support of the teacher and his or her program. Sharing resources, opportunities, and challenges strengthens families and teachers in many ways [84].
- Encourage strategic interactive activity. Encouraging family members, such as the parents of other children in a child's classroom, to participate in the classroom helps them understand what happens in school and promotes their supporting children's learning. Providing drop-in opportunities or scheduling grandparents', fathers', mothers', or siblings' days, as well as community service days, helps to engage many family members in the classroom [85].
- Support teacher-family communication [75]. Making personal calls and sending good-news notes lets parents know that teachers are interested in and responsive to their children and that they see children as individuals. Teachers also may host or help to organize a family orientation or other structured events in which they describe the curriculum and invite families to participate [86]. Having regular conferences and home visits enables teachers to talk with family members about their children's development in the classroom and at home, to exchange information about expectations, and to strengthen goal setting and lesson planning to reflect each child's strengths, interests, and needs. Communicating in the languages spoken at home enhances the communication by being more inclusive of all families. Providing family members with home activities extending classroom learning enables families and communities to support children's learning in the home environment [87].

The National Center for Early Development and Learning identified several school-based initiatives that promote positive relationships between children's teachers and families. Here are a few of them:

Community Partnerships

These communities frequently struggle against different problems such as the lack of physical facilities, multiple administrative levels, a lack of coordination, and the presence of different cultural minority groups, which have their own language and particular conditions that need to be taken into account [88]. Success in solving school difficulties gets easier when there is a close relationship between the educational world and the world in which future students live [68]. Our analysis highlights that there are several different types of resources in needy communities that could

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be used to properly develop the educational process [59]. These gaps highlight the importance of having ECE researchers study and design reforms that improve ECE instruction instead of just reporting on it [76]. This study aims to offer knowledge to address some of these gaps by exploring mothers' time-use analysis in the province of Córdoba [89].

A collaborative definition of parental involvement encompasses more than parents' visits to the school [81]. There are several ways that parents can be involved in the educational process [70]. They can participate in classroom activities, perform adult roles in the school, participate in school governance, help in planning and decision making about school programs, share in home-based activities and parent education, serve as a communication link, and participate in community activities [85]. However, parental involvement in ECE settings is also limited by various barriers, including distance, lack of time, prolonged teacher training, and nonflexible service items [76]. Therefore, these factors need to be taken into account in discussions about the level of parental involvement [88].

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study affirm the crucial role of parental involvement in early childhood literacy development. By actively engaging in reading activities and fostering a positive attitude toward education, parents can significantly influence their children's reading and spelling achievements. This involvement is particularly vital for children from deprived homes, as it helps mitigate educational inequalities. Effective home-school communication and strategic initiatives that address socioeconomic and cultural barriers are essential in promoting parental engagement. Policymakers and educators must continue to support and encourage parental involvement to ensure all children have the opportunity to succeed academically and socially, laying a strong foundation for their future educational endeavors.

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