Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education: Strengthening the Home-School Connection

Sutiyah Nova Irawati[1], Mochamad Ferdy Yusuf Agustian[2]
IAI YPBWI Surabaya[1], UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon[2]
Email: novairawati81@gmail.com

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Parent involvement, early childhood education, home-school connection	Parent involvement plays a pivotal role in the early childhood education (ECE) process, serving as a critical factor in enhancing children's learning outcomes and overall development. This qualitative literature review explores the concept of parent involvement in ECE and how strengthening the home-school connection can positively impact children's academic, emotional, and social growth. Through an analysis of various studies, this review identifies key strategies for fostering effective collaboration between parents and educators, such as communication, shared responsibility, and mutual respect. It also examines the barriers that prevent optimal parent involvement, including socio-economic factors and cultural differences. The findings highlight that when parents are actively engaged in their child's education, it leads to improved learning experiences and better long-term academic performance. The review concludes by providing recommendations for schools and policymakers to promote greater parent involvement, ensuring a holistic approach to early childhood education that benefits children, families, and communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) plays a pivotal role in shaping the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of young children. As the foundation for lifelong learning and success, it provides the essential skills and knowledge necessary for academic achievement and personal growth. The importance of this developmental stage is widely recognized, as it sets the trajectory for later educational outcomes, influencing future academic performance, career success, and even societal engagement. It is at this stage that children begin to form the foundational skills—such as literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving—that are critical for their success in later schooling.

However, the learning process extends beyond the classroom, and the role of the family in shaping a child's educational experiences is indispensable(Vertel et al., 2024).

Over the years, research has consistently shown that parent involvement in a child's early education has a significant impact on their development. Children whose parents are actively engaged in their education tend to perform better academically, have stronger social skills, and exhibit better behavior both at school and at home(Mohammed & Engler, 2022). In fact, studies have demonstrated that parental involvement is one of the most consistent predictors of academic success, even more so than socioeconomic status or the

quality of the school itself. The level of parental engagement is not solely dependent on the amount of time spent at the school but rather on the quality and consistency of the support provided at home and through interactions with teachers. This involvement takes many forms: attending school events, volunteering in the classroom, supporting homework and learning activities at home, and maintaining open lines of communication with educators.

Despite the clear benefits of parental involvement, many schools encounter barriers that hinder the full participation of families in their children's education. These challenges can include a lack of time due to parents' work schedules, cultural differences, language barriers, and even a lack of understanding of how to engage with the educational system. Socioeconomic factors also play a significant role, as families with fewer resources may struggle to participate in school activities or support learning at home in the same way as families with more financial stability(Vertel et al., 2024). These challenges are often compounded by communication barriers between the school and home, leading to a disconnect that can leave parents feeling alienated or unaware of how to best support their child's learning journey.

In response to these barriers, there has been a growing call for strengthening the home-school connection, creating a more collaborative relationship between parents and educators. This connection is vital for ensuring that children receive consistent support and guidance in both their home and school environments. Strengthening this partnership can contribute significantly to improving the overall educational experience for children, ensuring that learning is not limited to the school setting but is reinforced at home. It also

ensures that parents are aware of the strategies being used in the classroom, which enables them to better support their children's academic and personal growth.

Effective communication and cooperation between home and school can help provide a more holistic approach to child development(Fu et al., 2024). Parents who are well-informed about the curriculum and understand the goals of the school system are better able to reinforce and extend learning at home. Additionally, by fostering a partnership between teachers and parents, a strong sense of community can emerge, where both parties work together to ensure the success and well-being of the child. This collaboration can promote not only academic achievement but also positive social and emotional development, which is essential for a child's long-term success.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of parent involvement in early childhood education and the ways in which strengthening the home-school connection can positively influence children's development(Stodden et al., 2023). This research will investigate the strategies schools can implement to increase parent engagement, examine the challenges that parents and schools face in forming effective partnerships, and highlight the benefits for children, families, and educators alike. By focusing on these factors, the study aims to identify practical solutions that can bridge the gap between home and school, ensuring that all children, regardless of their background or circumstances, receive the support they need to thrive.

The study will further delve into how specific practices—such as regular parent-teacher communication, parent education programs, and community-building activities—can

facilitate stronger home-school partnerships. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into how schools can create environments that actively encourage and support parental involvement, leading to enhanced educational outcomes for children(Jia, 2021). It is hoped that by reinforcing the importance of the home-school connection, this study will contribute to a broader understanding of how early childhood education can be enriched by the active participation of parents and caregivers, ultimately ensuring that all children have the best possible start in life.

Strengthening the home-school connection in early childhood education is a fundamental step in ensuring that children's educational experiences are well-rounded, comprehensive, and successful. Parents and schools must work together, understanding that their partnership is a powerful tool in fostering not only academic success but also the overall development of children. By embracing and encouraging parental involvement, we can create an educational environment that supports children's growth in every aspect—academic, social, emotional, and personal—thereby laying a strong foundation for their future educational journeys.

2. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative methodology through a comprehensive literature review to explore the impact of parent involvement in early childhood education (ECE), with a focus on strengthening the home-school connection. The literature review is selected from scholarly articles, books, reports, and research papers that examine the role of parents in their children's early learning environments and the benefits of their active participation in educational processes. By synthesizing existing findings, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the various strategies, challenges, and outcomes related to parent involvement in early education.

Research Design
The research design for this study is based on a systematic qualitative approach to literature analysis. The process involves collecting and reviewing secondary data from various sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, educational research studies, and books that explore the relationship between parent involvement and early childhood education. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of existing research and theoretical frameworks without the need for primary data collection.

Data Collection Process
The primary data for this study is sourced from existing literature, specifically focused on:
- The role of parents in early childhood education and its impact on child development.
- Various models of parent involvement, such as parental engagement in school activities, parent-teacher communication, home-based learning strategies, and community involvement.
- The influence of socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors on parental involvement.
- Theoretical perspectives on parent involvement, including Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement, and the Home-School Partnership Model.

To ensure the relevance and quality of the sources, the literature selected must meet the following criteria:
- Published within the last 10 years to ensure current research and trends.
- From reputable academic journals, educational organizations, or governmental bodies.
- Focused on early childhood education (pre-school to early grade school) and parental involvement.

- Research that includes diverse perspectives, such as cultural, economic, and social influences on parental engagement.

The review also includes international studies to provide a comparative analysis of parent involvement practices across different countries, educational systems, and cultural contexts.

Data Analysis Technique

For analyzing the collected literature, the study employs a thematic analysis approach. This process involves:

1. Identifying Key Themes: As the literature is reviewed, major themes related to parent involvement in early childhood education are identified. These themes may include types of involvement (e.g., school activities, home-based activities), factors that influence parental engagement (e.g., socio-economic status, education level, cultural values), and the outcomes of parent involvement (e.g., improved academic performance, social skills development, emotional well-being).
2. Categorizing Data: The identified themes are grouped into categories to help synthesize findings from different sources. For instance, one category may focus on strategies for parent involvement, while another might explore the barriers that prevent parents from engaging with their child's education.
3. Synthesizing Findings: Once the data is categorized, the researcher synthesizes the findings to understand the relationships between different themes and provide a comprehensive overview of the subject matter. The analysis will highlight both the positive impacts and the challenges associated with parent involvement in early childhood education.
4. Drawing Conclusions: The final step is to draw conclusions based on the synthesis of the literature. These conclusions will address the research questions and provide insights into how parental involvement can be strengthened and its potential benefits for child development.

Ethical Considerations

Since this study is a literature review, it does not involve primary data collection with human participants. However, ethical considerations are still important in the selection and analysis of the literature. All sources used are properly cited, and due credit is given to the original authors and researchers. The study follows ethical guidelines regarding plagiarism and ensures that the synthesis of findings is objective, transparent, and free from bias.

Limitations of the Study

While this literature review provides a comprehensive analysis of the topic, it is limited by the availability and scope of published research(Hàshim et al., 2024). The review focuses primarily on studies published within the last decade, but this may exclude older but relevant works. Additionally, the findings are based on secondary data, meaning that the conclusions drawn are limited to the information provided in existing research and may not account for evolving trends or emerging research post-review.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education

The research reveals that parent involvement in early childhood education plays a significant role in enhancing children's academic and social development(Sehajpal et al., 2024). Studies consistently show that when parents are actively engaged in their child's early education, it leads to improved outcomes in areas such as cognitive development, language skills, and emotional regulation. The research highlights several types of parent involvement, including home-based activities (such as reading with children, helping with homework, and engaging

in educational play), school-based activities (such as attending parent-teacher meetings and school events), and the establishment of a supportive home environment conducive to learning. However, the degree and nature of involvement often vary depending on several factors, including socioeconomic status, parental education level, and cultural beliefs about education.

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Despite the known benefits, the research also identifies significant barriers to parent involvement. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of time, particularly among parents with demanding work schedules or multiple children. Additionally, parents with lower socioeconomic status often face challenges such as limited access to resources, transportation issues, and a lack of familiarity with how to navigate the school system(Puspitasari, 2024). Furthermore, cultural factors and language barriers can hinder effective communication between parents and teachers. In some cases, parents may not feel empowered or confident in their ability to contribute to their child's education, leading to disengagement or reluctance to participate in school-related activities.

Table 1, on barriers to parent involvement in education:

Barrier Category	Specific Obstacles	Examples/Context	Impact on Parent Involvement
Time Constraints	Parents with demanding work schedules or multiple children lack time for school engagement.	Single-parent households working multiple jobs.	Reduced participation in meetings, volunteering, or events.
Socioeconomic Challenges	Limited resources, transportation difficulties, and unfamiliarity with school systems among low-SES parents.	Families without private transport or access to digital communication.	Hinders ability to attend school activities or access information.
Cultural and Language Barriers	Language differences and cultural norms reduce effective communication between teachers and parents.	Immigrant parents with limited proficiency in the school's language.	Misunderstandings, low confidence, and decreased cooperation.
Parental Confidence and Empowerment	Some parents feel unqualified or lack confidence to engage with educators or	Parents unsure how to support academic work or advocacy.	Leads to disengagement and reluctance to participate.

Barrier Category	Specific Obstacles	Examples/Context	Impact on Parent Involvement
		contribute to education.	

Positive Impact of Parent Involvement on Academic and Social Development

The research also indicates that when parents are involved, children demonstrate greater academic achievement and more positive social behaviors. Children with involved parents tend to have better attendance rates, improved attitudes towards school, and higher levels of motivation(Bozkurt et al., 2020). Additionally, parent involvement has been linked to enhanced social skills, including better relationships with peers and teachers, as well as increased self-esteem. Parents who engage with teachers and participate in school activities also serve as positive role models, reinforcing the importance of education and setting expectations for academic success. The study suggests that the most effective involvement occurs when schools create a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages parent participation and actively supports their engagement(Bibi et al., 2024).

Home-School Connection Strategies

The research identifies several strategies that can strengthen the home-school connection, including regular communication between parents and teachers, the provision of resources and training for parents, and creating flexible opportunities for involvement. Schools that use a combination of strategies such as regular newsletters, parent workshops, and volunteer opportunities allow parents to choose how they wish to engage. Digital communication platforms, such as apps and websites, also provide an efficient way to keep parents informed and involved. By offering a variety of ways to participate, schools can ensure that all parents, regardless of their background or circumstances, have the opportunity to support their child's learning.

Discussion
The Importance of Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education

The findings of this research underscore the crucial role that parent involvement plays in early childhood education(Hora & Millar, 2023). Active participation from parents is consistently associated with better developmental outcomes for children, both academically and socially. When parents are involved in their child's education, they help create a bridge between home and school, reinforcing the learning that takes place in the classroom(Santiago et al., 2021). This connection helps children understand that education is valued and important both at home and at school. Moreover, parent involvement is not limited to academic achievement alone; it also contributes to children's emotional development, social skills, and overall well-being. When parents participate, they serve as advocates for their child's needs and provide valuable insights that help educators tailor instruction and interventions more effectively.

Barriers and Challenges to Parent Involvement

While the benefits of parent involvement are well-documented, the research also highlights the barriers that hinder parents from fully engaging in their child's early education(Pottie-Sherman et al., 2024). Time constraints are one

of the most significant challenges, particularly for parents who work long hours or have multiple responsibilities at home. The strain of balancing work, family, and community commitments can leave little room for parents to participate in school activities. Additionally, lower-income families often face economic and logistical challenges that make it harder for them to engage in school events or activities. These families may also lack access to educational resources or feel disconnected from the school system due to language barriers or cultural differences(Ammigan et al., 2023). To overcome these challenges, it is essential for schools to offer flexible engagement opportunities, provide transportation or childcare when necessary, and create programs that meet the specific needs of diverse families.

Effective Strategies for Strengthening the Home-School Connection

To address the barriers and enhance parent involvement, schools must adopt strategies that foster collaboration and communication between parents and educators. The research suggests that schools should focus on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where parents feel valued and supported. This can be achieved through regular, open communication between teachers and parents, which can include parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, emails, or digital communication platforms. In addition to communication, providing resources, workshops, and training for parents on how to support their child's learning can empower them to be more involved in their child's education.

One of the most effective strategies identified in the research is the creation of flexible opportunities for parent involvement. This includes offering various ways for parents to participate, such as virtual meetings, evening events, or home-based activities that align with the school curriculum. For instance, some schools have implemented online platforms that allow parents to track their child's progress, access educational resources, and communicate with teachers at their convenience. These strategies not only help overcome logistical barriers but also ensure that all parents, regardless of their schedule or background, have the opportunity to engage in their child's education.

The Role of Schools in Facilitating Parent Involvement

Schools play a pivotal role in facilitating and encouraging parent involvement. The research emphasizes that a key factor in strengthening the home-school connection is the school's willingness to reach out to parents and actively involve them in the educational process. Schools must be proactive in making parent involvement accessible by eliminating barriers such as language, time, and socioeconomic status. For instance, schools could consider providing translated materials for non-English-speaking parents, offering workshops on supporting children's learning at home, and offering flexible meeting times to accommodate working parents. Schools that take a proactive approach to engage parents create a culture of collaboration, where parents and educators work together to support children's academic success and overall well-being.

Long-Term Impact on Children's Development

The long-term benefits of parent involvement are profound, as they influence children's success throughout their educational journey. Children with involved parents tend to perform better academically, have more positive attitudes toward school, and are less likely to

engage in behavioral problems. In addition to academic success, parent involvement fosters a stronger sense of emotional security, self-esteem, and social competence. These children are more likely to exhibit resilience in the face of challenges and to develop positive relationships with peers and teachers. Therefore, investing in strengthening the home-school connection is not only beneficial for children in the short term but also contributes to their success and well-being in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should focus on the effectiveness of different strategies for promoting parent involvement in early childhood education, especially in diverse communities. Studies could examine how schools in different socioeconomic and cultural settings tailor their engagement efforts and measure the impact on children's development. Additionally, longitudinal studies could explore the long-term effects of parent involvement on children's academic and social outcomes, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how sustained parental engagement influences children's success over time.

4. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the critical role of parent involvement in early childhood education, highlighting its significant impact on children's academic, social, and emotional development. While barriers such as time constraints, socioeconomic challenges, and cultural differences can hinder parental engagement, schools can mitigate these obstacles by implementing flexible, inclusive strategies that encourage communication and active participation. By fostering a strong home-school connection through regular communication, resource provision, and tailored opportunities

for involvement, schools can empower parents to support their children's learning. Ultimately, strengthening this partnership enhances children's educational outcomes and contributes to their long-term success and well-being.

5. REFERENCES

Ammigan, R., Veerasamy, Y. S., & Cruz, N. I. (2023). 'Growing from an acorn to an oak tree': A thematic analysis of international students' cross-cultural adjustment in the United States. *Studies in Higher Education*, *48*(4), 567–581.

Bibi, S., Abbasi, H., & Ghazal, I. (2024). Navigating the Complexities: Key Challenges Faced by School Principals in Managing Teaching Practicums. *Research Journal of Social Sciences and Economics Review*, *5*(4), 1–11.

Bozkurt, A., Jung, I., Xiao, J., Vladimirschi, V., Schuwer, R., Egorov, G., Lambert, S., Al-Freih, M., Pete, J., & Olcott Jr, D. (2020). A global outlook to the interruption of education due to COVID-19 pandemic: Navigating in a time of uncertainty and crisis. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, *15*(1), 1–126.

Fu, Y., Wu, C., & Zhuo, L. (2024). Parent-School Collaboration as a Foundation for Holistic Child Development. *Journal of Roi Kaensarn Academi*, *9*(11), 1821–1830.

Hàshim, S. H. A., Elsied, M. S. A., Alqhtani, R. M., & Alqhtani, R. M. (2024). The Impact of Leukemia on Child Development: A Holistic Approach to Care. *Metallurgical and Materials Engineering*, *30*(4), 491–506.

Hora, M. T., & Millar, S. B. (2023). *A guide to building education partnerships: Navigating diverse cultural contexts to turn challenge into promise*. Taylor & Francis.

Jia, L. (2021). Christian Values Education and Holistic Child Development from the Parent Perspective in Santiago City, Philippines. *Southeast Asia Early*

Childhood, *10*(1), 86–100.

Mohammed, P., & Engler, A. (2022). The role of family and family context in the learning process of children. *Vietnam Journal of Education*, 1–9.

Pottie- Sherman, Y., Christensen, J., Foroutan, M., & Zhou, S. (2024). Navigating the housing crisis: A comparison of international students and other newcomers in a mid- sized Canadian city. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien*, *68*(1), 44–56.

Puspitasari, M. (2024). Navigating classroom challenges and curriculum changes: A qualitative study of an English Teacher's journey in the Indonesian education system. *Power and Education*, 17577438241275800.

Santiago, C. D., Bustos, Y., Jolie, S. A., Flores Toussaint, R., Sosa, S. S., Raviv, T., & Cicchetti, C. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on immigrant and refugee families: Qualitative perspectives from newcomer students and parents. *School Psychology*, *36*(5), 348.

Sehajpal, K., McCrostie, C., Charles, L., Hamill, A., Terei, P., & Hamill, J. (2024). Reflexive thematic analysis of a coaching- based, holistic approach to child development.

Child: Care, Health and Development, *50*(1), e13205.

Stodden, D. F., Pesce, C., Zarrett, N., Tomporowski, P., Ben-Soussan, T. D., Brian, A., Abrams, T. C., & Weist, M. D. (2023). Holistic functioning from a developmental perspective: A new synthesis with a focus on a multi-tiered system support structure. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, *26*(2), 343–361.

Vertel, A., Korolenko, V., Shapovalova, O., & Bereziuk, T. (2024). The role of the family in the education and upbringing of children. *Cadernos de Educação Tecnologia e Sociedade*, *17*(se1), 54–64.