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THE ROLE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ENHANCING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE ABILITIES AND LEARNING APPROACHES

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Annotation

This article explores the critical role of parental involvement in enhancing preschool children's language abilities and learning approaches. Drawing on the ecological model of human development, it distinguishes three primary forms of involvement—home-based involvement (HBI), school-based involvement (SBI), and home—school communication (HSC)—and examines their respective impacts. Empirical evidence underscores the positive effects of HBI and HSC on children's language acquisition and learning behaviors, while the influence of SBI appears inconsistent, particularly under restrictive conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The article emphasizes the significance of high-quality language environments at home, strong home—school collaboration, and the necessity of adaptive parental engagement strategies. It also highlights the need for further research into how different types of involvement uniquely contribute to early childhood learning outcomes.

Keywords: parental involvement, preschool education, language development, home-based involvement, school-based involvement, home-school communication, learning approaches, competence motivation, early childhood development, ecological systems theory.

Parental involvement is widely recognized as a vital component in early childhood education. It encompasses a broad range of behaviors, beliefs, and actions by parents that support children's learning and development. In preschool settings, parental involvement is a multidimensional concept that includes active participation in





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educational activities, both at home and at school, as well as communication with educators. Grounded in the ecological model of human development, this involvement reflects the critical interaction between the child's home and school environments. The nature and quality of these interactions have far-reaching implications for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, particularly in areas such as language acquisition and learning behaviors.

Parental involvement can be divided into three primary subtypes: home-based involvement (HBI), school-based involvement (SBI), and home-school communication (HSC). Each of these forms plays a distinct role in shaping children's early learning experiences.

Home-based involvement refers to learning-related activities that take place within the home environment. These include reading together, engaging in scientific exploration, and visiting museums. This form of involvement allows parents to create a rich and stimulating language environment that encourages vocabulary development and comprehension.

School-based involvement includes parents' direct participation in school activities, such as helping organize classroom events or participating in joint educational activities with their children. This interaction helps build a bridge between the family and the educational institution, reinforcing the child's learning experiences across different contexts.

Home-school communication involves the exchange of information between parents and teachers about a child's behavior, progress, and challenges. It allows both parties to collaborate effectively in supporting the child's development and addressing any issues that may arise.

Research has consistently shown that parental involvement positively impacts children's intellectual and academic development. The family's language environment, particularly the quality of language interactions and the richness of learning experiences, plays a crucial role in the development of children's receptive vocabulary—the words they understand through listening and reading.

Englund et al. (2004) highlighted that early and consistent parental involvement is a predictor of children's academic success [2]. Dickinson and McCabe (2001) emphasized the importance of high-quality language interactions in promoting





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literacy and cognitive development [1]. Similarly, Foster et al. (2005) found that a language-rich home environment forms the foundation of strong reading and literacy skills.

Ma et al. (2016) further argued that engaged parenting enhances children's skills in reading, mathematics, and language. In low-income households, active parental support has been linked to improved peer communication, better self-control, and increased cooperation both at home and in school settings (McWayne et al., 2004b). Xia (2022) also confirmed that parental involvement is positively related to children's readiness for learning, which includes language skills [9].

Despite this, some studies report conflicting findings. For instance, while home-based involvement and supportive home environments are positively associated with language development, direct parental involvement at school does not always yield the same results (Fantuzzo et al., 2004a, b, 2013). Pancsofar et al. (2006) found that even after accounting for parental education and childcare quality, maternal vocabulary input at home did not predict language abilities [6]. Wen et al. (2012) noted that classroom quality moderates the effect of home-based involvement on vocabulary growth, suggesting that environmental factors play a significant role.

These discrepancies may arise from a lack of differentiation between types of involvement and insufficient attention to the interactions between home and school settings. A strong mesosystem—comprised of interconnected home and school environments—fosters mutual trust, shared goals, and responsive parenting, all of which are essential for children's language development. Conversely, when these systems are poorly connected, children's growth may be hindered. The COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies this challenge, as parental access to preschools was significantly restricted, reducing the potential impact of school-based involvement on language outcomes.

Based on these insights, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Home-school communication is positively related to children's language abilities.
- H2: School-based involvement does not significantly impact children's language abilities.
- H3: Home-based involvement positively influences children's language abilities.





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Approaches to learning, although often underexplored, are critical for understanding how children engage with educational experiences. This concept focuses on the behaviors and motivations children demonstrate when participating in learning tasks, rather than the specific content they acquire. Key dimensions of approaches to learning include competence motivation, attention and persistence, and learning strategies.

Competence motivation refers to a child's willingness and determination to take on and complete learning tasks. Attention and persistence describe a child's ability to stay focused and maintain effort in challenging situations. Learning strategies reflect the techniques and problem-solving approaches children use, including their openness to seeking assistance.

Parental involvement significantly influences these dimensions. Parents' beliefs about their child's learning potential and their active support of educational activities can foster intrinsic motivation and improve learning behaviors [5]. Moreover, family learning environments enriched with materials and experiences enhance children's self-regulation and executive functioning, which are essential for effective learning [4].

However, the pandemic brought unique challenges. With limited access to preschools, opportunities for parents to participate in school-based activities declined, potentially weakening the impact of this form of involvement on learning approaches. This highlights the need for adaptable strategies that strengthen homebased support and enhance communication between parents and educators.

Parental involvement is a multifaceted and dynamic contributor to preschool children's development, particularly in language acquisition and learning approaches. While home-based involvement and effective communication with schools have demonstrated clear benefits, school-based involvement may be less influential, especially under conditions such as pandemic restrictions. Differentiating among the types of involvement and understanding their unique contributions is essential for designing interventions and educational practices that maximize children's developmental outcomes. Future research should continue to explore these distinctions and prioritize strategies that bridge home and school





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environments, ensuring a cohesive and supportive learning experience for young children.

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