

PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION AND THEIR ROLE IN CHILDREN'S EARLY LEARNING

GRACE ANN MATHEW* and NISHA VIKRAMAN

Department of Home Science, St. Teresa's College, (Autonomous)
Ernakulam, Kerala - 682 011

Date of Receipt : 02-02-2026

Date of Acceptance : 08-05-2026

ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out in 2023 and adopted a quantitative research design to assess parents perception on preschool education and their involvement in children's early learning. The area selected for the study was Ernakulam district of Kerala and the sample was 400 parents of 3 to 6-year-old children attending either preschool or Anganwadi that were selected through stratified random sampling. The findings showed that parents highly value preschool education and desire meaningful involvement, yet remain doubtful about giving early academic instruction. 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that preschool is crucial. Strengthening parent-teacher partnerships, providing parental training on developmentally appropriate practices, and fostering opportunities for parents' participation may help bridge this gap.

Keywords: Early literacy, Parents' perception, Parental involvement, Parent teacher partnership, Preschool education

INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement is crucial to attain the full potential of Early Childhood Education. Parents serve as the first educators and play an essential role in the holistic development of a child. The importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE) has become increasingly recognized as crucial for shaping the future of individuals and societies around the globe. Children's formative years are vital for holistic development, reinforcing the importance of ECE during this stage (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010). This period, spanning the first eight years of a child's life, is a pivotal time for cognitive, emotional and social growth.

Evidence consistently shows that experiences during these early years establish a foundation for future achievements in academics, relationships, and health outcomes (Heckman, 2006). Parental engagement has a strong impact on children's academic, social, and behavioural outcomes, often exceeding the influence of socio-economic status as emphasised by Wildmon *et al.*, (2024). Similarly, it is the responsibility of the parents to create an environment at home that encourages learning and development (Kong & Yasmin, 2022). Common forms of involvement include home-based learning, academic support, school interaction, and providing resources (Kambona, 2025).

*Corresponding Author Email: graceannmathew15@gmail.com

When parents actively participate in their child's learning, children tend to achieve higher academic performance, exhibit better social skills, demonstrate improved behaviour, and enjoy greater graduation rates. Parents can create a connection between home and school by providing emotional and cognitive support. Research highlights that children who receive greater cognitive stimulation at home benefit more significantly from preschool programs (Cabrera *et al.*, 2020). The implications of parental involvement extend beyond academic success. When parents actively engage in their child's education, they are better equipped to advocate for their child's needs and ensure that the learning environment nurtures their overall development. By participating actively in the educational process, parents can help shape policies that address their children's needs, fostering a supportive environment where every student can flourish.

Epstein's (2002) framework about parental involvement outlines six types that shows different ways parents can engage in their children's educational journey. These types represent unique forms of involvement that can impact student achievement and development. The typologies, such as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community, show that parental involvement can manifest in numerous ways, ranging from direct support at home to active participation in school policies and community collaborations. Using this framework, the present study adopts a holistic approach that includes several aspects of involvement, including home-based support, school interaction, and volunteering. This study is significant as it examines how parents view and participate in Early Childhood Education (ECE) during the most crucial years of child development. In contrary to many

existing studies that mostly focus on the outcomes of parental involvement, this research emphasises on understanding how parents perceive preschool education and their roles within it. Furthermore, the study provides empirical insights that can guide educators, policymakers, and practitioners in designing effective parent engagement strategies. The findings of the study highlight parents' growing interest to get involved in classroom settings and to participate in the curriculum formation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study carried out in 2023, adopted a quantitative research design to assess parents perception on preschool education and their involvement in children's early learning. The area selected for the study was Ernakulam district of Kerala and the samples were 400 parents of 3 to 6-year-old children attending either preschool or Anganwadi. In the present study, demographic information was limited to variables such as the type of institution attended by the child (Anganwadi, government, CBSE, ICSE, Montessori, and kindergarten). Stratified sampling was applied during the selection of institutions. Based on the syllabus or management type, the entire population of preschool was first divided into six strata that are Anganwadi Centres (Government-run), Government schools (State Syllabus), CBSE schools, ICSE schools, Montessori schools and Kindergarten schools. From each stratum, schools/centers were selected using simple random sampling. An average of 10 parents were selected from each selected institution through random sampling. In total 40 schools were included in the study. The questionnaires were then distributed to the parents by the teachers. The data were collected through a survey after obtaining parental consent. The

Table 1. Importance of Preschool Education**(n=400)**

Preschool education is crucial for a child's development	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	7	1.75
Disagree	9	2.25
Neutral	64	16
Agree	163	40.75
Strongly Agree	157	39.25
Total	400	100

questionnaire was designed to gather parents' perception across eight dimensions like importance of preschool education, pre-preschool introduction of alphabets, teaching basic concepts before preschool, introducing concepts beyond the syllabus, right to discuss syllabus with teachers, weekly classroom observation, participation in classroom activities and equal parenting roles in education. The collected data were systematically coded and percentage analysis was done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined parental perceptions regarding preschool education and the role of parents in supporting early learning under eight components based on the

Epstein's (2002) framework about parental involvement. The findings have been presented below under 8 components:

A. Importance of Preschool Education

A substantial majority of parents affirmed the critical role of preschool education in child development. Approximately 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that preschool is crucial, whereas only about 4% expressed disagreement (Table 1), indicating a broad agreement on the importance of early childhood education. This aligns with empirical evidence showing that preschool education improves cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes particularly when paired with consistent parental engagement (Marti *et al.*, 2018).

Table 2. Pre-Preschool Introduction of Alphabets**(n=400)**

Parents should introduce alphabets to children before entering the preschool	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	64	16
Disagree	86	21.5
Neutral	89	22.25
Agree	98	24.5
Strongly Agree	63	15.75
Total	400	100

Table 3. Teaching Basic Concepts (Shapes, Colours, Numbers) Before Preschool (n=400)

Children should be taught concepts like shapes, colours, size, numbers before going to preschool

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	75	18.75
Disagree	119	29.75
Neutral	70	17.5
Agree	66	16.5
Strongly Agree	70	17.5
Total	400	100

Table 4. Introducing Concepts beyond the Syllabus (n=400)

Parents should introduce new concepts and ideas to children apart from the school syllabus

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	86	21.5
Disagree	101	25.25
Neutral	93	23.25
Agree	74	18.5
Strongly Agree	46	11.5
Total	400	100

Table 5. Right to Discuss Syllabus with Teachers (n=400)

Parents should have a right to discuss with teachers about the syllabus

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	1
Disagree	14	3.5
Neutral	57	14.25
Agree	143	35.75
Strongly Agree	182	45.5
Total	400	100

B. Pre-Preschool Introduction of Alphabets

Views were more varied regarding early academic exposure. Only 40.25% of parents supported introducing alphabets before preschool, whereas 37.5% disagreed and 22.25% remained neutral (Table 2), revealing

substantial mixed responses. This hesitation may be attributed to the belief that it is the responsibility of formal preschool structures to introduce alphabets. Research increasingly emphasizes that readiness should be holistic, balancing emergent literacy and numeracy with socio-emotional foundations (Naeem & Khan, 2023).

Table 7. Participation in Classroom Activities**(n=400)**

Parents should get a chance to participate in children's classroom activities	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	0.5
Disagree	2	0.5
Neutral	16	4
Agree	123	30.75
Strongly Agree	257	64.25
Total	400	100

C. Teaching Basic Concepts (Shapes, Colours, Numbers) Before Preschool

Similarly, responses were divided on whether children should learn cognitive concepts before preschool enrolment. Approximately 34% agreed, whereas 48.5% disagreed, indicating a stronger resistance to early academic instruction (Table 3). Studies have found that parent involvement is often limited when parents lack guidance, resources, or knowledge about developmentally appropriate practices (Thamarasseri, 2025).

D. Introducing Concepts Beyond the Syllabus

Only about 30% of respondents agreed that parents should introduce concepts outside the formal syllabus. In contrast, nearly 47% disagreed, and 23% remained neutral,

reflecting a conservative view of parental instructional roles (Table 4).

E. Right to Discuss Syllabus with Teachers

Parents showed overwhelming support for active communication with teachers, with more than 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they should have the right to discuss the syllabus. Only 4.5% disagreed (Table 5).

F. Weekly Classroom Observation

A notably high proportion (93.25%) supported weekly opportunities to observe their children in the classroom, indicating a strong desire for transparency and involvement (Table 6), which is in line with the research finding showing parents who engage in their children's early education feel a stronger connection to the school community, which enhances their overall satisfaction and encourages continued involvement.

Table 8. Equal Parental Roles in Education**(n=400)**

Both parents must have an equal role in children's education	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	0.25
Disagree	12	3
Neutral	63	15.75
Agree	158	39.5
Strongly Agree	166	41.5
Total	400	100

G. Participation in Classroom Activities

About 95% of parents favoured participation in classroom activities, suggesting parents' eagerness for collaborative engagement with teachers and children (Table 7). Prior research shows that collaborative home–school partnerships significantly enhance children's academic motivation, self-regulation, and mental well-being (Ngadni & Chen, 2024; Cai *et al.*, 2024).

H. Equal Parental Roles in Education

Most parents (81%) agreed that both parents should share equal responsibility in their children's education, underscoring a strong normative belief in co-parental participation (Table 8). Research confirms that both parents' involvement contributes to more consistent learning and strengthens relationships with teachers (Akshaya, 2025). Encouraging both maternal and paternal involvement may benefit children's early learning.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicated strong parental interest in their participation in preschool activities and in the syllabus structuring. The majority of parents recognise the importance of preschool for children's overall development. In contrast, parents expressed mixed feelings about introducing alphabet, shapes, and numbers before preschool. Parents also showed limited enthusiasm for introducing concepts beyond the formal syllabus, likely reflecting uncertainty about curricular expectations or limited confidence in their own abilities. This implies that preschools may need to provide structured support to empower parents to extend children's learning at home in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways.

On the other hand, parents showed overwhelming support for communication, transparency, and collaborative involvement with schools. The high levels of agreement regarding weekly observation, classroom participation, and rights to discuss the syllabus reflect strong parental motivation to be involved. The findings of this study reinforce these empirical patterns, highlighting parents' agreement with the need of engagement. Finally, the strong support for equal parental responsibility underscores the changing attitudes toward co-parenting. Overall, the findings showed that parents highly value preschool education and desire meaningful involvement, yet remain doubtful about giving early academic instruction. Strengthening parent–teacher partnerships, providing parental training on developmentally appropriate practices, and fostering opportunities for parents' participation may help bridge this gap.

Funding

This research was supported by Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala (University Junior Research Fellowship).

REFERENCES

- Akshaya, E. 2025. Influence of parental involvement on Early Childhood Care and Education: Teachers' perspectives. *The Journal of Research ANGRAU*, 53(2): 68-74. <https://epubs.icar.org.in/index.php/TJRA/article/view/172674>
- Cabrera, N. J., Jeong Moon, U., Fagan, J., West, J. and Aldoney, D. 2020. Cognitive stimulation at home and in child care and children's preacademic skills in two-parent families. *Child Development*, 91(5):1709–1717.
- Cai, L., Huang, P. and Guo, Y. 2024. Relationship between parental involvement and children's positive

- mental character during early years: the moderating role of parent-teacher relationship and teacher-parent relationship. *Frontiers in psychology*.
- Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R. and Van Voorhis, F. L. 2002. *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press.
- Heckman, J. J. 2006. Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. *Science*, 312(5782), 1900–1902. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1128898>
- Kambona, W. 2025. Exploring parental involvement in early childhood education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11(1), Article 101367.
- Kong, C. and Yasmin, F. 2022. Impact of parenting style on early childhood learning: Mediating role of parental self-efficacy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 928629.
- Marti ,M., Merz, E.C., Repka, K.R., Landers, C, Noble K.G. and Duch H. 2018. Parent involvement in the getting ready for school intervention is associated with changes in school readiness skills. *Front Psychol*.DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg. 2018. 00759. PMID: 29904362; PMCID: PMC5991166.
- Naeem, S. and Khan, N., 2023. Parental Involvement and AcademicMotivation in Early Years: A Quantitative Analysis. *Global Educational Studies Review*,VIII(II), 257-270.[https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2023\(VIII-II\).24](https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2023(VIII-II).24)
- Ngadni, I. and Chen, S.Y. 2024. The Role of Preschool Teachers, Parents, and Principals in Facilitating Home-School Partnership in Early Childhood Education. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*.
- Thamarasseri, I. 2025. Parents as facilitators for learning experiences in children. *I-manager's Journal on School Educational Technology*, 20(3), 1–10.
- United Nations General Assembly. 2015. Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf
- Wildmon, M. E., Anthony, K. V. and Kamau, Z. J. 2024. Identifying and navigating the barriers of parental involvement in early childhood education. *Current Issues in Education*, 25(1).<https://doi.org/10.14507/cie.vol25iss1.2146>

Grace Ann Mathew and Nisha Vikraman.2026. Parents' perception of preschool education and their role in children's early learning.The Journal of Research ANGRAU,54(2) : 37-43