

A Study of Early Childhood Educational Environment and Conducive Factors for Pre-School Education: Highlights of Findings, Limitations, Implications and Recommendations

Tripti Juyal¹, Sanjay Kumar², Ashish Semwal³

¹Research Scholar, Faculty of Education, NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana

²Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana

³Professor, Maya Group of Colleges, Dehradun

1.0 ABSTRACT:

This research will examine how the physical environment in the preschool classroom affects children's behavior in that environment. Attention will be paid to the distribution of space created by the classroom furniture and the effect of the crowd in the environment. Contributions to children's social and cognitive development in the classroom can include pace, zoning, and planning. The literature review that follows focuses on these features. In addition to the recent literature, it is important to consider the published work of two authors, whose works are less recent, G. T. Moore and S. Teets. The lack of information on space planning for young children makes their work important and noteworthy.

Keywords: Preschool, Kindergarten, Learning Habits

1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Bredekamp and Copple (1997), In recent years, the demand for childcare centers that can improve the educational environment of children has increased. The No Child Left Behind legislation authors recommend that all children be able to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Many of today's children can spend as many as 12,000 hours in a daycare or nursery before starting formal schooling (Isbell & Exelby, 2001).

Demand for kindergartens is growing, and researchers are questioning whether these facilities are sufficient to meet the needs of all children. Children learn by understanding. Positive or negative, the way they see their environment affects their learning (Read, Sugawara, and Brandt, 1999). Careful and considerate design of children spaces may lead to more interaction and involvement by the children toward their tasks and promote better learning habits (Doctoroff, 2001).

During childhood, the child undergoes a remarkable transformation from a productive, successful infant to an independent, self-sufficient individual with thoughts and feelings. Everyone wants their child to behave well. However, behavioral problems may develop in children aged 6-12 years. These childhood disorders are usually defined as abnormalities in at least one of these, be it emotional, behavioral, or social. (Roberts, 2002).

The purpose of this study is to help teachers recognize behavioral problems and give some tips to support and encourage parents' involvement in preschool education. Findings from this study may help teachers and administrators provide activities for parents that encourage parent involvement in school activities and make parent involvement more productive.

1.2 HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

The results showed that all parents enjoyed in-person meetings, and most said their child's school explained the benefits of parent involvement. Additionally, all of the parents reported that their children's teachers explained their expectations at the beginning of the school year. Many parents say they seek advice to help their children learn. Most parents said they sometimes attended school events. However, they said that they did not receive any feedback from the teachers after the incident.

According to reports, the main reason that prevents most parents from participating in school activities is work conflict due to full-time work. Even though parents have a busy schedule, they communicate with teachers every week and like to communicate with teachers via text messages. Additionally, more than half of the parents liked the classroom activities and extracurricular activities. The results suggest that teachers need to improve communication with parents, who say they want more information about their children's performance and behavior in the classroom. Additionally, teachers want parents to be involved in curriculum/special education, help their children with homework, and communicate openly and honestly with teachers.

Teachers also reported that most parents liked classroom/extracurricular activities, and this preference was also expressed by the parents themselves. Also, the thing parents least like about teachers is volunteering. Most teachers said they run courses to explain the benefits of parental involvement; much like parents respond to teachers teaching their children the benefits of parenting collaboration. Teachers are also willing to talk to parents at school pick-up and drop-

off. This incident shows that both teachers and parents prefer to communicate in writing or face to face. The best qualities teachers want to demonstrate in their relationships with parents are open communication, trust, use of feedback and willingness to help.

Results show that both teachers and parents want to talk openly. Interview results show that parents like in-class activities, while the activities that parents do not like to participate in are extracurricular activities, volunteering and parties. Additionally, the results of the interviews showed barriers to parental involvement, such as poor English skills, conflicting work hours, cultural differences, and the belief that teachers know their job. Some parents cannot go to school or talk to their child's teachers due to a speech impediment.

Additionally, some parents do not have time to participate because they work as full-time students. Parents also said that they trust teachers to do their job and do not want to interfere. Some parents said teachers did not explain parenting expectations to them at the beginning of the year. Other parents said they received little information about communication and education plans and no details about parental rights and involvement. Additionally, some parents cannot understand the teachers' expectations because they do not come to school on the first day of school.

1.3 LIMITATIONS

1.3.1 Convenience sampling

A small sample of participants was included in this study. Participating parents are from the same school, and I obtained their emails or personal contact information from a what's app group, the school provides for parents of students. The teachers who answered the teacher questions came from three different schools. I received emails from teachers through the school website or personal contact. I interviewed 10 parents, which was a small sample and not representative of the entire population.

1.3.2 Time

Due to the short duration of this study, the time is limited as the data collection and analysis were carried out in a short time. Given enough time, longer data collection, more interviews, and more analysis can be conducted to examine the impact of parent-child involvement on learning. In this

study, Interpreter Teachers showed a desire for parent involvement, and parents expressed a desire for good communication with teachers. Teachers should also provide feedback to parents after participating in activities. This finding concurs with Mahmood (2013), who argues that providing positive feedback increases parental involvement based on social exchange theory.

This theory examines the development of relationships based on the exchange of interests and how people respond to the actions of others. An important part of the social process is the exchange of values; This means, for example, that parents appreciate teachers and thank them for their cooperation. This mutual respect strengthens the relationship. Exchange theory focuses on the exchange of information between people and the evaluation of benefits and costs in a relationship. Also, the behaviors that individuals engage in that lead to positive consequences are likely to be repeated (Mahmood, 2013).

The results showed that teachers want parents to trust them. The importance of trust is mentioned by Mahmood (2013), who asserted that trust between parents and teachers is also important in social exchange theory because it increases the commitment of partnership. Social exchange theory can be related to parental involvement because the theory helps teachers to understand how the relationship between parents and themselves affects the degree of parental involvement (Mahmood, 2013). In addition, Canker, Deutsch, and Syntonic (2012) mentioned that the communication between parents and teachers that occurs frequently leads to developed trust and responsible relationships between teachers and parents (Cankar et al., 2012).

The results showed that both parents and teachers want open communication. The importance of communication is supported by Kocyigita (2015) who mentioned that the most important step towards better parental involvement is for parents, teachers, and administrators to work together on effective communication. Parents in this study expressed a lack of interest in participating in certain activities at school.

Parents said that they saw events such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas as related to their own culture, and that they did not participate in the school culture because they did not clearly understand their meaning or importance. Cultural differences have been mentioned as a factor by some parents but have not been examined in previous literature. The findings of this

study will have some relevance because they are related to the parents, the majority of whom are students who have graduated from university and will eventually return to their home country.

The assumption here is that temporary residents who come from other cultures and do not speak English as their first language are less likely to participate in the school's cultural activities. Curious parents will attend these events to participate in the relationship and better understand these activities. Parents do not want to intervene because they believe that the teacher can do his job and they think that the teacher will be disturbed if the parents intervene. Teachers need to understand their students' culture so they can better understand how to encourage parental involvement in school activities. Additionally, the results show that English is a barrier to parental involvement.

1.4 IMPLICATIONS

Teachers will benefit from knowing their students' culture, thus making a difference between students and parents and encouraging parents' involvement in school activities. Providing information about school activities can also help parents understand these activities and demonstrate the importance of parental involvement in their child's education. Teachers should know that the parental involvement they need is available in Dehradun but not in some communities.

Teachers and administrators need to understand that parents do not know that the school wants their participation. Teachers need to understand that parental involvement is not a universal expectation and does not exist in some cultures. Providing parents with opportunities to interact with teachers helps build relationships and improve parental involvement. Relationships between parents and between parents and teachers provide wonderful opportunities for the exchange of information and support. Additionally, building relationships between parents and teachers helps them understand each other's needs and expectations.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

I want teachers to help parents who do not speak English well and to teach parents who understand English and have a good cultural background. Building relationships with parents who speak English and have been living in Dehradun for several years will help new parents in

Dehradun integrate into and learn the new culture. Parental support for each other encourages parent involvement in their child's school. Schools can also invite parents to talk about their culture and holidays in their children's classes and among other teachers. Additionally, teachers need to understand the culture of their students and understand the education of other countries. Having books in school libraries is beneficial for students and teachers. Schools should hold meetings to explain to parents what is expected of them and the importance of parental involvement.

Also, teachers should attend meetings to help them understand other cultures and understand that attending panel discussions or parent-teacher conferences is new to some teaching parents. Discussions between parents and teachers and between parents can only occur through parent nights, informal discussions with parents and teachers. Informal meetings between teachers and parents can help break the ice and provide time to talk in detail about children at home and at school. Building a strong relationship between parents and teachers can help increase teacher and parent involvement.

Future research should expand the survey and interview sample. Additionally, a study that would provide a better understanding of parental involvement is a study that compares two or more schools in various sectors. Parents can be divided into different groups based on their culture, and barriers to participation can be compared between each group. Additionally, future studies can focus on parents and expand the sample to more cities in Dehradun district through online survey. Another possibility for future research is to investigate parent involvement across classrooms.

REFERENCES:

Achenbach, T. M., Corners, C. K., Quay, H. C., Verhulst, F. C., & Howell, C. T. (1989). Replication of empirically derived syndromes as a basis for taxonomy of child/adolescent psychopathology. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 17, 299-323.

Antia, S., & Kreimeyer, K. (1992). Social competence intervention for young children with hearing impairments. In S. Odom, S. McConell, & M. McEvoy (Eds.), *Social competence of young children with disabilities: Nature, development and intervention* (pp. 135-164).

Asher, S. R., & Williams, G. A. (1987). Helping children without friends in home and school in children's social development: Information for teachers and parents. Urbana, IL: ERIC, Clearing House on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Retrieved from ERIC-Education resources Information Centre: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal>.

Bechtel, R. B. (1997). Environment and behavior: An introduction. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc. Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (1997). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Barrera, M., Jr., Castro, F. G., Strycker, L. A., & Toobert, D. J. (2012). Cultural Adaptations of Behavioral Health Interventions: A Progress Report. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 81(2), 196-205. DOI: 10.1037/a0027085.

Berkowitz, L. (1989). Frustration–aggression hypothesis: Examination and reformulation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 106, 59–73. DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.106.1.59. Berkowitz, L. (1993). *Aggression: Its causes, consequences, and control*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Bylinsky, G. (1982). New clues to the causes of violence. In D. Krebs (Ed.), *Readings in social psychology: Contemporary perspectives*. (2nd ed., pp. 134-146). Cambridge: Harper & Row.

Caspi, A. (2000). The child is father of the man: Personality continuities from childhood to adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(1), 158-172. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.78.1.158.

Coie, J. D., & Dodge, K. A. (1988). Multiple sources of data on social behavior and social status in the school: A cross-age comparison. *Child Development*, 59, 815-829. DOI: 10.2307/1130578.

Doctoroff, S. (2001). Adapting the physical environment to meet the needs of all young children for play. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 29, 105-109.

Dudek, M. (1996). *Kindergarten Architecture*. London: E & FN Spon. Gordon, M., & Williams-Browne, K. (1996). *Beginnings and beyond: Fourth Edition*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.

Dodge, K. A. (1993). Social-cognitive mechanisms in the development of conduct disorder and depression. *Annual Review Psychology*, 44, 559-584. DOI:10.1146/annurev.ps.44.020193.003015.

Johnson, L. J., LaMontagne, M.J., Elgas, P. M., & Bauer, A. M. (1998). Early childhood education: Blending theory, blending practice. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. 81-82

Kemple, K. M. (2004). Arranging the environment to support peer interaction. In Let's be friends: Peer competence and social inclusion in early childhood programs. (pp. 30-54). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Kostelnik, M. J., Phipps Whiren, A., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L.C., & Gregory, K. (2002a). Influencing children's social development by structuring the physical environment. In Guiding Children's Social Development: Theory to Practice (4th ed. pp. 255-267). New York, NY: Delmar.

Lascarides, V. C. & Hinitz, B. F. (2000). History of early childhood education. New York, NY: Falmer Press. McEvoy, M.A., Estrem, T.L., & Rodriguez, M.C. (2003). Assessing relational and physical aggression among preschool children: intermethod agreement. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 23, 53-63.

Maxwell, L. E. (2003). Home and school density effects on elementary school children: The role of spatial density. *Environment and Behavior*, 35, 566-578. "Hawthorne Effect." Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. (2005) Retrieved June 25, 2005, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com>.

Moore, G.T. (1987). The physical environment and cognitive development in child-care centers. In C.S. Weinstein & T. G. David. (Eds.), *Spaces for children: The built environment and child development* (pp. 41-67). New York: Plenum Press.

Mahmood, S. (2013). First-Year preschool and kindergarten teachers: challenges of working with parents. *School Community Journal*, 23(2), 55-86.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). Retrieved March 28, 2005, from http://www.nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2002/section1/tables/t01_1.asp

Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., Payne, C., Cox, M. J., & Bradley, R. (2002). The relation of kindergarten classroom environment to teacher, family and school characteristics and child outcomes. *The Elementary School Journal*, 102, 225-237. Olds, A. R. (2001). *Child care design guide*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Ramirez, A. F. (2003). Dismay and Disappointment: Parental Involvement of Latino Immigrant Parents. *Urban Review*, 35(2), 93.
- Read, M. A., Sugawara, A. I., & Brandt, J. A. (1999). Impact of space and color in the physical environment on preschool children's cooperative behavior. *Environment and Behavior*, 31, 413-428.
- Sonestain, F.L, Gates, G.J., Schmidt, S. & Bolshun, N. (2002). Primary child care arrangements of employed parents: Findings from the 1999 national survey of America's families. Washington, DC : The Urban Institute. *Assessing the New Federalism Occasional Paper* 59.
- Sage. Kocyigita, S. (2015). Family involvement in preschool education: rationale, problems and solutions for the participants. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 15(1), 1- 17.
- Teets, S. (1985) Modification of play behaviors of preschool children through manipulation of environmental variables. In J. L. Frost & S. Sunderline (Eds.), *When children play* (pp.265-272).
- Turney, K., & Kao, G. (2009). Barriers to school involvement: Are immigrant parents disadvantaged?. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 102(4), 257-271.
- Waanders, C., Mendez, J. L., & Downer, J. T. (2007). Parent characteristics, economic stress and neighborhood context as predictors of parent involvement in preschool children's education. *Journal of School Psychology*, 45(6), 619-636.
- Watkins, K. P., & Durant, L. Jr. (1992). *Complete early childhood behavior management guide*. West Nyack, NY: The Center for Applied Research in Education.
- Wehaton, MD: Association for Childhood Education International. Trawick-Smith, J. (1992, Winter). The classroom environment affects children's play and development. *Dimensions*, 27-31.