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**RESEARCH PAPER**

## The Missing Spark: Enhancing Parental Engagement in Punjab's Early Childhood Education Programs

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**ABSTRACT**

This qualitative research explored parental roles in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs within Jhang and Dera Ghazi Khan Districts of Punjab, Pakistan. It aimed to understand family perspectives on program effectiveness and parental engagement in public schools. Parental involvement is crucial for a child's educational success. However, concerns exist regarding family engagement in Pakistani public schools, particularly within ECE programs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve parents from both rural and urban areas of Punjab. Interviews focused on parental perspectives on ECE programs, their level of engagement in schools, and factors influencing participation. Findings revealed a strong parental preference for high-quality ECE programs and supportive learning environments. However, parents expressed concerns about a perceived lack of teacher enthusiasm and communication regarding their children's progress. While acknowledging the importance of play in learning, a lack of adequate play spaces was also noted. These findings highlight the need for improved educational practices and enhanced collaboration between parents and educators. Schools should prioritize providing regular updates on children's progress and consider creating stimulating learning environments with dedicated play spaces to foster active learning within ECE programs. This study offers valuable insights for promoting more effective parental engagement in their children's early education.

**KEYWORDS** Child-friendly Environment, Early Childhood Education, Parent Teacher relationship, Parental Involvement

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**Introduction**

Involvement from parents is essential for students to succeed. Researchers have used it to forecast future academic performance in lower grades. Early childhood education (ECE) researchers have discovered that improved student results occur when parents are involved in their child's education. School parental engagement programs benefit children's academic achievement regardless of their financial situation. Insufficient parental participation during prekindergarten can lead to maladaptive and issue behaviours that can hinder future academic progress and the transition to kindergarten (Classen & Westbrook, 2020).

Early Childhood Education is a structured environment where children get systematic education. These ECE schools play a crucial role in facilitating parental involvement and supporting children's development. Educators and parents need to collaborate in order to address all elements of children's developmental needs. An amicable interaction between parents and school instructors will have a favorable impact on the

youngster. Based on these factors, it is evident that parental engagement in children's education is an essential need in every educational institution to maximize the growth and goals of children's schooling (Muzaffar, e. al. 2020).

Nevertheless, parental participation at many ECE establishments needs to be improved. This is due to a significant need for more cooperation between parents and early childhood education management. Parents, educators, or stakeholders often convene only when there are issues that need discussion. Regularly scheduled meetings are necessary.

Early schooling can have a significant impact on children's development and help them improve their skills and abilities. The knowledge and skills that children acquire from the time they are born serve as the foundation for their future learning. Assessing this fundamental ability might indicate their preparedness. Readiness refers to the equilibrium between a child's age in time and their growth, development, and maturity. Readiness refers to the attainment of the necessary skills and abilities needed to engage in a certain learning task successfully. School readiness refers to the specific capabilities of children when they begin school, enabling them to learn and adapt to the school environment effectively. School preparation encompasses several dimensions, such as children's physical well-being and their abilities in intellectual, social, emotional, and linguistic domains.

School readiness refers to the collection of abilities that children need in order to thrive in several areas, such as physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive development. The foundation for school readiness is established by the progressive acquisition of abilities such as maintaining composure, concentrating on assignments, adhering to directives, and articulating thoughts. School readiness refers to the skills and abilities that a child has developed in several areas of their development. Put, school readiness encompasses all the necessary behaviours needed to engage in learning activities.

Each child has distinct features in terms of their growth. In conjunction with the increased adoption of the developmental approach, research pertaining to school preparation has concentrated on the child's cognitive attributes. School readiness has been characterized in research studies that assess children's academic-cognitive abilities, as well as their socio-emotional and behavioral competencies. Intellectual proficiency, which is crucial for school preparation, includes cognitive abilities and pre-literacy language skills, including the recognition of words, recognition of phonemes, arithmetic abilities, and attention and focus. These skills play a significant role in fostering potential for school achievement. Social skills include qualities such as attentiveness, tenacity, resilience in the face of frustration, seeking suitable guidance, adhering to instructions, and engaging with both adults and peers.

Psychological competency, influenced by social interaction, encompasses the ability to feel emotions, recognize the feelings of one and others, and regulate emotions effectively. Physical and motor ability refers to the development of an individual's growth rate, as well as their fine and gross motor abilities, as well as personal care skills. Developing competencies in the social, emotional, mental, linguistic, and physiological domains, together with ongoing assistance from outside factors starting from infancy, may facilitate school preparedness.

The kindergarten transition is "the cornerstone for long-term success in schools. Children's behavior, attitudes, ability to control their emotions and well-being, and social skills are all improved when parents participate in school events. Parents of preschool-aged children get involved in the school because they think that education is

essential to academic success. Due to its wide focus on preschool students' entire families, attention to low-income children, and attention to differences in mother and father involvement patterns, earlier research on parental involvement in ECE has been restricted internationally (Cummings et al., 2015).

In Pakistan, children as young as five years old can start formal schooling in grade one. Working and financially well-off parents prefer to send their children to daycare centers, nurseries, or kindergarten schools when they are three to five years old. The private sector is offering this service for profit in urban areas across the nation. Pre-primary (Kachi Class) students at public schools learn in multi-grade classrooms with subpar amenities. Preschool education centers present difficulties for parents and children due to under-qualified staff and subpar amenities (Friend & Cook, 2021).

Moreover, the bulk of research papers have concentrated on primary education and its different facets. Thus, a study of modern preschool practices and issues would be pertinent in the Pakistani context. The relationship between parental participation in early childhood education (ECE) and child development in Pakistan needs to be well-established. The majority of research on this topic has been conducted on elementary school students. There needs to be more conversation about parental involvement in ECE caused by these defects (DeSpain & Hedin, 2022).

Beyond examining other aspects of ECE in Punjab and Pakistan, research on parental involvement in ECE is crucial to comprehend. This study sought to explore the possibilities for parental involvement in early childhood education (ECE) in Punjabi public schools. It may offer a comprehensive examination of the elements of parental involvement and the difficulties parents have when their children are in preschool. This topic is present in the current literature review; hence, this study is likely to close this knowledge gap (Ekchian, 2019).

## **Literature Review**

### **Evolution of Parental Roles in ECE**

The parental responsibilities in early childhood education (ECE) have seen substantial development over the years. In the past, parents needed more engagement in formal education settings since the main responsibility for a child's education was placed on schools and instructors. However, as research on child development advanced, there was a change in perspective toward acknowledging the vital influence that parents had in their children's early learning experiences (Froiland et al., 2013).

This trend may be ascribed to several causes, such as shifts in cultural views towards parenting, developments in educational theory and practice, and increasing recognition of the significance of the early years in moulding a child's future. Bronfen Brenner's ecological systems theory, which highlights the interdependence of many environmental factors on child development, has led to a wider recognition of the importance of family dynamics and parental engagement in early childhood education (ECE). Furthermore, the growing focus on the socio-cultural environment of education, as suggested by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, has highlighted the significance of parental involvement in promoting children's cognitive and socio-emotional growth. Consequently, there has been a steady shift towards more cooperative methods of education, where parents are seen as active participants in their child's learning process rather than passive users of educational services. This shift demonstrates a wider acknowledgment of the essential role parents have in enhancing favourable results for young children. It emphasizes the need for ongoing

research and efforts to encourage meaningful parental engagement in early childhood education (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### **Education level of parents**

The education level of parents is regarded as a significant hindrance to their involvement in their child's schooling. A study conducted by Froiland, Peterson, and Davison (2013) indicated that parents with a higher level of education were much more interested and engaged in their children's school activities. At the same time, the significance of parental engagement throughout the child's educational journey is often mentioned. However, there needs to be more knowledge of the variables contributing to parental engagement at this early age due to a need for more study in the field of early childhood and parental involvement. The importance and advantages of parental involvement in early childhood education should not be underestimated, as parents and teachers can collaborate to enhance various skills of young children, ultimately promoting their cognitive, social, and emotional development (Butera et al., 2016).

### **Engagement of parents and Childs**

ECE fosters improved academic performance by facilitating focused dialogue and intimate engagement between children and their parents. Parents are more equipped to address the emotional, social, and cognitive developmental needs of their children at home and in schools when they have a comprehensive understanding of these requirements. Ahmad (2011) states that providing ongoing assistance is necessary for fostering the development of children by parents, relatives, guardians, and other caregivers. Each of them assumes a prominent position and must promote the overall welfare of children, so facilitating their progress across all domains. All programs and policies should promote the collective responsibilities of parents, families, caregivers, and society as a whole in order to emphasize the importance of early childhood education (ECE). Comprehensive, unified, enduring, and steadfast policies for early childhood education (ECE) should be formulated via discussions including all relevant stakeholders as a top priority in order to improve the well-being and future achievements of preschool children (Butera et al., 2016).

### **Historical view of involvement of parents in ECE**

Prior studies on parental participation in early childhood education (ECE) have yielded useful knowledge about the complex structure of parental roles and the influence of parental engagement on children's development. Multiple studies have extensively established the beneficial impacts of parental participation on several facets of children's academic performance, socio-emotional health, and overall success in school. Epstein and Sanders (2006) conducted a study that highlighted the significance of parental support in promoting children's academic motivation and accomplishment (Bruder & Dunst, 2015).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) conducted research that emphasized the important influence of parental encouragement and support on children's learning, both at home and at school. Furthermore, studies have shown that parental engagement goes beyond academic endeavours and includes a diverse array of interactions and experiences that enhance children's overall development. Englund et al. (2004) discovered that when parents actively participate in early literacy activities, such as reading to their children and ensuring they have access to books, it has a good impact on the language and literacy abilities of the children (Carlson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Hill and Taylor (2004) showcased the significance of parental engagement in fostering favourable social behaviours and peer connections among young children. In general, past studies have continuously emphasized the crucial importance of parents as collaborators in their child's educational path and

emphasized the need for ongoing initiatives to improve parental engagement in early childhood education programs. Research continually emphasizes the considerable influence of parental roles and responsibilities on children's academic success, socio-emotional development, and general well-being in early childhood education (ECE) (Burke, 2013).

The research conducted by Epstein and Sanders (2006) highlighted the crucial significance of parental support in promoting children's academic motivation and achievement. Similarly, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) emphasized the essential role of parental encouragement and involvement in shaping children's learning experiences, both within the home environment and at school. Englund et al. (2004) discovered that when parents actively participate in early literacy activities, it has a good impact on their children's language and reading abilities. Similarly, Hill and Taylor (2004) proved that parental involvement also has a role in promoting healthy social behaviours and peer interactions in young children. These findings highlight the crucial need to foster and facilitate meaningful collaborations between parents and early childhood education (ECE) programs to guarantee the best possible results for children's development (Cameron et al., 2015).

Parenting is widely recognized as a significant determinant of a child's academic advancement. Parental engagement is considered a valuable resource and effective technique as it offers valuable insights into a young child's specific requirements and aids instructors in enhancing their teaching abilities. According to UNESCO (2000), early childhood care and education (ECCE) include more than just getting children ready for primary school. The objective is to address all aspects of a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical requirements, with the goal of establishing a strong and comprehensive basis for lifetime learning and well-being (Garbacz et al., 2019).

Early childhood and care education has the potential to cultivate compassionate, competent, and accountable individuals who will become future citizens. Countries worldwide are increasingly recognizing the significance of early childhood education (Comer & Ben-Avie, 2010). Several scholars have postulated that active parental participation is a key factor in enhancing academic success and promoting the active engagement of children in schools. Parental participation in a child's development, growth, and learning offers several significant benefits. In the contemporary learning environment of accountability and performance in early childhood education, the researcher states that the interaction between early childhood instructors and parents, as well as other family members, is becoming limited in many countries (Coussens et al., 2021).

In the Kocyigita (2015) study, teachers addressed their challenges in educational activities by communicating with parents, increasing the frequency of educational activities, modifying the timing of educational activities, seeking assistance from the school counsellor, and involving parents in the decision-making process.

According to researchers, factors such as poverty, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status in low-income countries hinder parental participation in the early education of their children in schools. Societal disparities and inequities often result in educational disparities among students (Muzaffar, 2016; Classen et al., 2019).

In his study, Mendez (2010) identifies three key categories that influence parental engagement, a complex phenomenon in a child's education. The variables include human characteristics (such as the age of parents, their education level, and work status), environmental factors (such as the neighbourhood, community, and available resources), and learning opportunities (including the frequency and length of such chances). Early childhood education offers opportunities for parents and teachers to establish mutual

respect and understanding via activities such as monthly parent-teacher meetings, supporting school events, and volunteering at the school (Daniel et al., 2016).

According to Waanders (2007), low-income parents who are experiencing economic difficulties and hardship tend to have the least interest in and participation in the educational activities of their preschool children. Parents engaged in manual labour have rigid work schedules, leaving them with no additional time to engage or participate in their school-age children's academic pursuits, diminishing their importance (Keengwe & Onchwari, 2022).

The administrators and instructors of schools are required to provide feasible chances to include parents in their children's learning environment actively. According to Mata (2018), parents have a crucial role in the early stages of their children's lives. Their words, actions, and beliefs have a significant impact on their children's growth and education. Engaging parents in their children's education not only enhances the academic performance of the child but also facilitates a better understanding between parents, children, and instructors, leading to improved instructional methods. Studies have shown that effective communication, cooperation, and harmony between parents and teachers have positive effects on young children throughout their early developmental phases.

According to Epstein (2018), actively incorporating parents into early childhood education has a positive impact on students' academic achievement, leading to improved grades, school attendance, and test scores. Additionally, it promotes the social and emotional growth of the child within the educational setting. According to Daniel (2015), instructors need help choosing between engaging parents and focusing on curricular results because they feel overwhelmed since both need a significant amount of their time. Parents and families mistakenly believe that their input in the early education and development of their children will not be understood, acknowledged, or taken into account. Huang and Mason (2008) state that the majority of parents favour family education programs, which provide practical chances for parents to engage with one other and access supportive resources

Powell, File, and Froiland (2012) assert that parents play a crucial role in facilitating their children's effective transition when the educational learning environment becomes more stringent and intricate over time. The performance of these preschool learners is closely correlated with their behavioural regulation abilities and acquired attention, which both instructors and parents facilitate.

Pakistan needs to catch up in early childhood education due to a need for more focus from policymakers. As a result, the importance of family participation, which is crucial at the preschool level, needs to be recognized. The government considers ECE to be its lowest priority. The budget allocated for Early Childhood Education (ECE) is insufficient, and the finances provided for ECE as part of the education sector reforms are inadequate to meet the requirements of almost 8 million children in the corresponding age range (Herman & Reinke, 2017).

## **Material and Methods**

### **Population and Sampling**

The research aimed to conduct interviews to investigate parental roles and responsibilities in early childhood education in Jhang and Dera Ghazi Khan, cities located in the Punjab region of Pakistan. The researcher used a qualitative case study research technique. Twelve parents from early childhood education (ECE) institutions in both Jhang and Dera Ghazi Khan Cities of Punjab were included in semi-structured interviews.

## Research tool

An adaptive-based semi-structured interview ((Barton & Smith, 2015) is a data-gathering strategy that may effectively capture the experiences, views, knowledge, and perspectives of the participants.

## Data collection and Data analysis

The researcher used an easy sampling strategy to select individuals. The data was analyzed using a theme analysis technique. Thematic data analysis involves the identification of primary themes derived from a structured organization of comparable and contrasting ideas gathered from the data sets (Yin, 2014). The study consecutively provided many themes, aligning them with the goal and research questions of the study.

## Results

The information obtained from parents has been categorized into broad categories and then broken into subcategories after transcription.

**Table No 1**  
**Thematic analysis table with themes and sub-themes**

| <b>Theme</b>                           | <b>Sub Theme</b>                                |
|--|---|
| Advantages of this Educational Program | Friendly environment with students              |
|  | Performance of Students                         |
|  | Difficulties of Students                        |
| Teachers' Behavior                     | Teacher Relationships with Parents and Students |
|  | Teaching Methodologies                          |
| Suggestions                            | Assessment by educational experts               |

## Advantages of the ECE Program

The contentment of the parents is the fundamental cornerstone of every educational system. When a cluster of private schools exists nearby, there arises a pressing need to address the concerns of parents with children attending public schools. All participants of this survey acknowledge the need for and significance of early childhood education (ECE). Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) serves as the fundamental basis for acquiring knowledge and skills. The capacity for a young child to acquire information is greater throughout the early stages of life compared to later periods. A parent participant remarked that it is a fundamental cornerstone of a child's future education. "This is the critical stage where if a child establishes a strong bond between friendship and education, it can greatly impact and sustain their educational journey," said Participant 2.

When schools are attractive, early childhood education can be at its most productive. When a child is willing to learn, it is most effective to do so. All of the study's participants believe that in addition to basic numbers, children in early childhood education should be familiar with the alphabet in both English and Urdu. "He should read the Urdu, English, and Math Kaeeda (book) and talk about Islamic education," explained one participant in further detail (Participant 1).

Current studies have demonstrated that meeting established goals at school requires a child-friendly atmosphere. For the sake of achieving the ECE goals, public schools make a concerted effort to keep it on campus. Every participant in this study stressed the importance of creating a child-friendly atmosphere in ECE schools. A participant shared that his child was looking forward to coming to school, saying things like, "He enjoys his time at school and wants to go to school even on Sunday" (Participant 5).

The instructors are awarded for their exceptional success in educating children throughout the Early Childhood Education (ECE) stage, which is a result of their diligent efforts. All of the participating parents have expressed dissatisfaction with the instructors' unwillingness to engage. One of the participants said that the teacher is often absent. Participant 6 said that she neglects to give her pupils her attention.

The majority of participants express dissatisfaction with the haughtiness shown by instructors at the early childhood education (ECE) level. For instance, one participant highlighted the lack of attention provided to their child at school. A sole caregiver is responsible for supervising a group of 100 children in the classroom. We allocate funds to concentrate on him inside the confines of our home. There currently needs to be a course on ethics being taught at school. My youngster does not get any assignments from his school. The following are the primary deficiencies of public schools. That is why parents choose to enroll their children in private schools rather than public institutions. Participant 3

### **The Behavior of the ECE Teacher**

Strong teacher-student relationships improve learning. Teachers who are harsh cause students to drop out. Our public schools have had this problem for decades. Even today, most participants have addressed the same school issue. Teacher absence is common, according to one participant. She ignores students. Children play in school. She mistreats children when she comes to school intermittently (Participant 10).

One participant expressed satisfaction with the bond between her child and the teacher. She stated that the teacher of her child is extremely caring. She devotes her complete focus to children. Participant 5 mentioned that she has a large number of children in her class.

The majority of participants have expressed dissatisfaction with the pedagogical approach employed by the teachers. One participant expressed that the individual in question cannot effectively instruct. She is employed on a private basis for a monthly salary of RS 4000. Participant 4 is indifferent to what is happening in the classroom.

A participant expressed her contentment with the teaching methodology employed by the teacher. She expressed her comprehension of children's abilities. My daughter greatly admires her. Participant 9 stated that she requested that I visit her teachers' residence on the weekend.

Every parent has the fundamental right to get accurate information from the institution on their children's performance. Public schools disregard this reality and cultivate the sources of dissatisfaction among parents. All the attendees strongly oppose the failure to start parent/teacher meetings in public schools. One participant said that there needs to be a system in place to provide information on his performance from the school. Participant 12 said that their instructor disapproves of their visits to the school for inquiries.

### **Suggestions for the Improvement of ECE Schools**

The viewpoints of parents are quite significant as they provide them with perceptive knowledge about the essential requirements for children to flourish in public schools. It also provides insights into the needs of teachers in supporting children's development and learning, as well as the requirements of administrators in properly managing and promoting good long-term change in the lives of children in public schools. The participants of this survey strongly advocate for the need to establish a high-quality educational setting in public schools, so enabling individuals to forgo private institutions that impose exorbitant prices.

A participant expressed the opinion that public schools should provide a high-quality atmosphere comparable to that of private schools. The government is paying instructors one thousand rupees. "If individuals do not enjoy teaching, then they should be given pre-retirement opportunities," said Participant 2.

Utilizing play as a method of learning creates a joyful and appealing learning atmosphere for preschool children. An appropriate playground enhances outdoor play activities. All participants have highlighted the inadequacy of these shortcomings in our public schools. One participant expressed the need for scheduled and frequent parent-teacher meetings at school. The maximum allowable number of pupils in an ECE class is 50.

The school administrator should prioritize the implementation of activities inside the classroom. Playgrounds must be diligently maintained and equipped with swings to provide children with amusement, according to Participant 1.

A well-functioning check and balance system organizes the system and helps it reach its goals. Evaluating the results of the current ECE program in public schools is crucial. Almost every participant has brought attention to this fact. One of the participants informed the others that higher authority should make unexpected school visits. All of the teachers are present when they do their scheduled visits. This unexpected visit needs to happen once a month on a regular basis, according to Participant 4.

## **Conclusion**

Upon analyzing interviews conducted with parents on their roles and responsibilities in early childhood education (ECE), many prominent themes emerged that are consistent with the results of earlier research. Initially, parents repeatedly stressed the significance of actively participating in their child's educational progress, reflecting the views stated in research conducted by Braiden et al. (2010). Several parents emphasized the importance of offering assistance and incentives to their children, both in terms of academics and emotions. This aligns with the research showing that parental engagement has a good effect on children's academic drive and socio-emotional growth.

The head teacher clarified that parental involvement is needed in decision-making regarding certain events. For example, surveying parents to obtain input is considered a means to make modifications to the learning program. In the event of particular issues, a formal meeting is organized by the school, teachers, and parents. However, the school already has a dedicated committee to make decisions about significant policies. Moreover, the majority of parents who are questioned express satisfaction in participating in decision-making processes, while a minority believe that the school's choices are always in the best interest of their child, thus rendering their participation unnecessary (Rentzou&Ekine, 2017).

In addition, parents emphasized the importance of participating in early literacy activities with their children, such as reading together and ensuring they have access to books. This aligns with the findings of Kocyigita's (2015) study. In addition, parents emphasized the significance of cultivating favourable social behaviours and peer interactions in their children, demonstrating an understanding of the influence of parental engagement in this element of growth, as highlighted by Hill and Taylor (2004). In summary, the interview analysis confirms the idea that parents have a vital role in supporting their children's education and emphasizes the need for ongoing efforts to encourage meaningful collaborations between parents and early childhood education programs in order to enhance children's development (Kocyigita, 2015).

Parental engagement in all educational activities directly influences children's interests and academic accomplishments. Several acts demonstrate parental recognition of the significance of their engagement in their children's education. Parenting is a recurring activity that occurs every three months. However, not all parents are able to participate due to their job commitments. The issue may be remedied by arranging weekend activities for parents to engage in, with the aim of enhancing their knowledge, comprehension, and proficiency in child development, parenting styles, and matters relating to children. This exercise engages parents as participants, providing them with knowledge and skills related to parenting.

Building off Coleman's (2012) assertion, it is suggested that parents actively engage in their role as learners by organizing seminars or courses to enhance their knowledge and abilities. The school fosters parent engagement via the establishment of a communication system. Parental engagement, as described by Epstein (2018), refers to the participation of parents via communication activities that entail exchanging information between the school and home. It includes sharing updates on school programs and the progress of children's learning. The presence of several communication channels between parents and instructors facilitates the establishment of exceptional and efficient communication. Parents have the freedom to choose their preferred method of receiving information on their child. Nevertheless, this situation undoubtedly places demands on instructors since they need to use several communication techniques while interacting with parents. Parents must comprehend and grasp the material provided by teachers since they possess varying degrees of comprehension (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014).

This research sought to examine family perceptions on the efficacy of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program and the extent to which chances for parental engagement are provided in the existing early childhood education program in public schools in Punjab. Interviews done with parents revealed that parents strongly advocate for early childhood education (ECE) for their children. The belief is that the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE) has the potential to be very effective in promoting learning and development, provided that schools provide a stimulating and appealing learning environment. A setting that is suitable for youngsters encourages them to remain engaged for a longer duration while they are learning. The research participants have expressed dissatisfaction with the instructors' unwillingness to engage in public schools. Typically, ECE instructors show less care for the child's academic success. Participants indicated a need for more information from the school on their children's daily performance (Kurth et al., 2020).

The play facility plays a crucial role in facilitating active learning. According to the participants of this survey, public schools need to provide sufficient play facilities for their children. High-ranking officials need to evaluate the results of the existing Early Childhood Education (ECE) program in public schools to enhance it and attain the intended goals (Liu et al., 2020). Parents enroll their children in early childhood education to acquire social, emotional, and intellectual skills. Specifically, they choose preschool programs that prioritize literacy development via engaging activities. Empirical research has motivated parents to enhance parental participation and emphasize the importance of the interaction between school and home.

Rafiq et al. (2013) established a correlation between parental engagement in their children's academic endeavours and their academic success. The study's findings confirmed Epstein's (1995) model, which identifies six different ways in which parents might contribute to their children's academic success. The study conducted by Bano, Jabeen, and Qutoshi (2018) highlighted the importance of fostering a robust connection between parents and teachers in order to enhance students' academic performance. It can be achieved

through parent-teacher meetings, vigilant supervision, and support, which can further contribute to students' high academic achievement (Marshall et al., 2020).

Parental involvement, teacher participation, and school collaboration are integral components of every school activity. This is a strategy to enhance parents' comprehension of the significance of parental competence in their children's education. According to Kurth et al. (2020), when parents are given the authority to make choices and establish regulations, they feel empowered. When parents feel competent and powerful in their child's education, they consider parental engagement to be essential. Parental participation in field activities includes engagement with the environment and community organizations, such as participating in field trips.

The recognition of the issue of the complexity of the parental connection in early childhood education is very stimulating. This provides a more comprehensive and subtle comprehension of this connection. Cottle and Alexander (2014) emphasize that policy discourses tend to oversimplify the intricacies of the intricate parental connection. This intricacy may arise in several elements of the execution of policy matters in early childhood education service; however, some difficulties may be more challenging. Another explanation for the prevalence of parental engagement in the study might be that it aligns with the rhetoric found in early childhood education policy. Due to the increasing individualization of our society, parents are considered a crucial role in policy-making. The significance of the parental bond has been recognized from the early days of Froebel's kindergarten. Referring to parents as partners in policies may appeal to parents when selecting an early childhood education program, as it demonstrates a distinct emphasis on and regard for parents. This could appeal to a larger demographic of middle-class families who appreciate the ability to choose from a variety of early childhood education and care providers. The intricacy of this reasoning is related to the implementation of policies and involves a hierarchical mode of thinking that is tied to the vertical framework.

### **Recommendations**

From the analysis of the interviews on parental roles and responsibilities in early childhood education (ECE), we may recommend numerous ways to improve parental engagement and promote the overall development of children. First and foremost, educators and politicians should prioritize efforts that focus on fostering and supporting parental involvement in their child's educational path. This may include providing parents with tools and information on efficacious methods to enhance their child's academic and socio-emotional growth within the home environment, using the knowledge acquired from prior studies. In addition, early childhood education (ECE) programs should use tactics to promote consistent communication and cooperation between parents and teachers, cultivating a feeling of partnership and mutual accountability for children's education.

Furthermore, study results support the idea that measures aimed at encouraging early literacy activities in families, such as granting book access and organizing literacy-focused seminars, might enable parents to take a more proactive part in developing their child's reading abilities. Moreover, it is essential to exert endeavors in establishing all-encompassing and hospitable atmospheres in early childhood education (ECE) settings that appreciate and honor various family origins and cultures. It will guarantee that every parent feels bolstered and included in their child's educational journey. By incorporating these recommendations, educators and policymakers may strive to provide a setting in which parents are empowered and prepared to actively participate in their child's early education actively, hence leading to enhanced results for children's holistic development.

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