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# The Role of Parental Involvement in Supporting Early English Learning Among Preschool Children

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**Abstract**
*This research is designed to investigate the characteristics and contribution of parental involvement toward English vocabulary readiness among preschool children in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Methods: A cross-sectional survey of 150 parents of children aged four–six years was conducted. Four domains were used to measure parental involvement: home-based learning activities, providing learning resources for children aged 0–6 years (e.g., books, games), exposure routines, and parents' self-efficacy. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and hierarchical multiple regression were conducted to analyze the data. The results showed moderate to high parental involvement, with self-efficacy being the most strongly associated with children's English readiness. ($r = .524$, $p < .001$). Results from regression analysis indicated that parental involvement was a significant predictor of English readiness ($R^2 = .398$, $p < .001$), with self-efficacy ($\beta = .312$, $p < .001$) and home-based learning ($\beta = .285$, $p < .001$) as the strongest predictors. Urban families had better access to learning resources and English exposure; however, parental engagement and self-efficacy were similar across urban and rural groups. These results demonstrate that psychological factors, and uniquely parental confidence, shape early English development at least as much as material resources. The main contribution of this study is demonstrating that parental self-efficacy and home-based learning involvement are the strongest predictors of children's English readiness, suggesting that interventions targeting parental confidence and home learning practices offer an effective approach to support early English language development in EFL contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Parental Involvement; English Language Learning; Preschool Children; Home Literacy Environment.*

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## 1. Introduction

This is one of many research studies showing that English has gained increasing importance in Indonesia's educational system. Early exposure is considered beneficial for children's cognitive and linguistic development (Wahyuni & Bee Tin, 2024). In West Sumatra, families use Minangkabau–Indonesian bilingualism in children's daily language use; therefore, preschool learners have limited access to formal English instruction (Andriani, D., & Kartika, 2022; Muryanti et al., 2023). Many kindergartens teach English in the classroom; however, parents play a very important role, especially in providing facilities and engaging in simple English conversations at home (Yogi Saputra et al., 2023). Children's exposure to English mostly occurs in the home environment through parental engagement in introducing English during early childhood (Li et al., 2024; Niklas et al., 2020).

Parental involvement in education is related to positive academic achievement, even in different cultural settings (Boonk et al., 2018; Lansford, 2022). However, research specifically addressing parental involvement in early English foreign language learning at the preschool level remains scarce (Estrada-ChiChón, 2022; Guo et al., 2025; Murshidi et al., 2023; Rowiyah et al., 2024). Very little is found in areas where English functions as a foreign language instead of a second language. In such settings, parents often assume multiple roles. Parent could be a language facilitators, learning resource providers and motivators. Family members can shape children's initial English experiences through everyday interactions at home. Understanding how parents mediate English exposure in early childhood is therefore essential to illuminate informal learning processes that complement limited formal instruction (Sepyanda & Mutiya, 2025; Stachnik, 2025).

Studies showed that parental involvement covers various aspects not limited to supervising learning activities. Literacy at home is not only about providing books, but parents are also directly involved and interact in their children's language activities (Romero-González et al., 2023). Children's literacy development is supported by diverse and meaningful daily interactions at home (Hayes et al., 2025). It can be understood that parental involvement is not only in the form of direct interaction, but also includes providing facilities, forming learning habits, and parental confidence in helping children learn English (Lau & Richards, 2021; Li et al., 2024).

Children in Indonesia are exposed to several languages from an early age, this can be a challenge in learning English (Rusdiansyah et al., 2025). The people of West Sumatra live in a trilingual language environment with different functions. They use of Minangkabau as a regional language, Indonesian as the national language, and English as a foreign language introduced through educational contexts (Miranda & Lim, 2025). It can be seen that children already use more than one language at home. Therefore, parents need to carefully consider how and see how far English should play a role in their children's lives. The choices parents make will greatly influence how children first encounter English. The family is a major factor in the process of language development

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involving more than one language (Zheng et al., 2021).

Digital technologies facilitate children's exposure to English despite the limited availability of formal educational resources. Children can expand their English vocabulary through digital media, as they are regularly exposed to the language in informal and repeated contexts (Sundqvist et al., 2024). Due to the limited availability of conventional learning materials in certain areas, digital media has become the primary source for children to listen to and learn English (Sundin et al., 2025). As a result, parents play an important role in regulating, guiding, and supervising how children learn English through digital media (Liu et al., 2024).

Parents' beliefs about their own competence influence in shaping their involvement in their children's education. The higher parents' confidence in their own abilities, the more likely they are to be involved in supporting their children's foreign language learning (Sumanti & Muljani, 2021). When parents believe in their own abilities, they tend to set clear goals and be more consistent in supporting their children's learning process (Bandura, 1997; Ma et al., 2024). Most parents are not used to using English in their daily lives. However, their confidence in their own abilities becomes important in supporting their children's English learning (Fata et al., 2022). Parents face certain limitations, yet they still play an important role, and their level of confidence strongly determines the quality of their involvement (Lumbanbatu et al., 2023).

The social and economic conditions of a family can influence how far parents are involved in their child's education, for example in providing learning facilities, accompanying the child, or providing academic support (Ahmed et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024). Study reported that families with better economic conditions and educational backgrounds tend to have more resources and greater confidence in supporting their children's learning (Kazim & Ashwani, 2025; Premo et al., 2023). In West Sumatra, children living in urban areas generally had greater access to books and digital technologies than their peers in rural regions. As such, restricted access to English materials might result in the unequal support granted by parents for children's English learning (Azzahra & Purnawan, 2025; Tao & Xu, 2022).

This research project highlights parents' involvement to facilitate English learning for preschool children in West Sumatra. Specifically, this study aims to: (a) describe the nature and extent of parental involvement across four dimensions (home-based learning, resources provision, exposure routines, and parental self-efficacy); (b) examine the relationships between parental involvement dimensions, parental self-efficacy, and children's English readiness; (c) identify relevant demographic predictors of children's English readiness; and (d) this research describes and identifies relevant demographic predictors. As a result, it can explore differences between urban and rural setting. The findings are expected to contribute to both theoretical contributions and practical implications to improve early English learning support.

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## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design examining parental involvement in supporting English learning among preschool children in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Data were collected during September-November 2024 across eight regencies/cities.

### 2.2. Participants

150 parents were involved in this study. They are parents of preschool children aged 4–6 years from various early childhood education centers across West Sumatra. This study chose a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation of both urban and rural areas. The sample was proportionally allocated based on the number of early childhood education institutions in each area. Subsequently, participants were randomly selected within each category.

To ensure that the sample in accordance with the research objectives and that the data obtained were valid, the researchers established participant selection criteria to determine eligibility. The focus of the researchers was parents of children 4–6 years of age enrolled in early childhood education institutions. Ethical procedures were carefully followed throughout the study. Before completing the questionnaire, parents were requested to provide written informed consent to participate in the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. All responses were anonymised, and confidentiality of participants' identities and data was strictly maintained. The data collected were used solely for research purposes in accordance with established ethical research standards. Demographic information was also obtained in order to better understand the findings. This information included the gender and age of both the parents and the children, parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, and the area where they live. These factors were considered important for understanding patterns of parental involvement and the home literacy environment in early EFL learning, especially when comparing urban and rural areas in West Sumatra.

### 2.3. Instruments

To examine parental involvement and home literacy environments in early EFL learning, this study employed an adapted structured questionnaire comprising four subscales: home-based learning activities, resources provision, exposure routines, and parental self-efficacy. The instrument was adapted from established parental involvement measures (Epstein, 2009; Walker et al., 2005). The instrument was refined for early childhood EFL contexts through expert consultation. Each subscale was operationalised through multiple items designed to capture both behavioural practices and parental beliefs related to supporting children's English learning at home. An overview of the measurement constructs, number of items, and sample questionnaire statements is presented in Table 1.

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**Table 1.** *Overview of Measurement Instruments*

| Construct | Number of Items | Measurement Focus | Sample Item |
|---|---|---|---|
| Home-based Learning | 8 | Frequency of parent–child English activities (shared reading, singing, games, routines) | I read English storybooks with my child at least twice weekly. |
| Resources Provision | 6 | Availability of English learning materials (books, toys, apps, digital media) | My child has access to English educational apps. |
| Exposure Routines | 7 | Consistency of English input through cartoons, music, and play-based activities | We have regular English media times. |
| Parental Self-efficacy | 9 | Parents' confidence in supporting English learning and persisting despite challenges | I am confident I can help my child develop basic English vocabulary. |

**Note: All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree/never to 5 = strongly agree/always).**

Prior to data analysis, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were examined properly. It is to ensure the appropriateness of the instrument for measuring parental involvement in early EFL contexts. Content validity was established through expert judgments. They evaluated the relevance, clarity, and contextual suitability of the items, while reliability was assessed using internal consistency and test–retest procedures. A summary of the validity and reliability results for each subscale is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Validity and Reliability of the Instrument*

| Subscale | Number of Items | Content Validity Index (CVI) | Cronbach's Alpha (α) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Home-based Learning | 8 | .88 | .82 |
| Resources Provision | 6 | .85 | .78 |
| Exposure Routines | 7 | .90 | .85 |
| Parental Self-efficacy | 9 | .92 | .88 |
| **Total Scale** | **40** | — | **.91** |

**Note:** Content validity was established through expert judgement involving five early childhood specialists and three English teaching experts. Test–retest reliability conducted with 30 parents over a two-week interval yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = .86$, $p < .001$.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

Analysis of data was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). The data checking procedures completed for the main analysis were yet to be performed. Missing data were low (<5%) and mean substitution was applied where necessary. Standardized scores (z-scores) were used to assess potential outliers, and no cases fell beyond the extreme range of ±3.29. For each construct (home-based learning, learning resources, exposure routines and parental self-efficacy), composite scores were derived by averaging the responses to relevant items. We calculated descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and ranges) to characterize participants demographic profiles and main study variables. Cronbach's alpha test was used for reliability analysis to examine the internal consistency of the scales.

To determine the relationships of parental involvement dimensions, English exposure and children English readiness, Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was performed. Hierarchical multiple regression was performed to assess predictors of English readiness. Demographics variables (parental education and socioeconomic status) were entered in Model 1. In Model 2, the parental involvement subscales were included as predictors to evaluate their additional contribution. This was followed up by independent samples t-tests investigating group differences between urban and rural parents in terms of parental involvement dimensions and exposure to the English language. Statistical tests were two-tailed, and a significance level of p <. Statistical significance was determined via a p-value of 0.05 or less.

## 3. Results and Discussions

### 3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics appear in Table 4. The mean age of parents was 33.2 years (SD=5.1), age of the children 5.1 years (SD=0.8). The sample showed diversity in education and SES, with representation across urban (58.0%) and rural (42.0%) areas.

**Table 3.** *Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 150)*

| Variable | n | % | M (SD) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parent Age (years) | | | 33.2 (5.1) |
| Child Age (years) | | | 5.1 (0.8) |
| Parent Gender | | | |
| Female | 117 | 78.0 | |
| Male | 33 | 22.0 | |
| Parent Education | | | |

| Variable | n | % | M (SD) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Primary/Junior Secondary | 22 | 14.7 | |
| Senior Secondary | 45 | 30.0 | |
| Diploma/Bachelor | 53 | 35.3 | |
| Postgraduate | 30 | 20.0 | |
| Socioeconomic Status | | | |
| Low | 53 | 35.3 | |
| Middle | 67 | 44.7 | |
| High | 30 | 20.0 | |
| Location | | | |
| Urban | 87 | 58.0 | |
| Rural | 63 | 42.0 | |

Based on the above table, it shows that parental involvement means ranged 3.18-3.64, indicating moderate-high levels. Self-efficacy presents highest mean (M=3.64, SD=0.72) and resources provision exhibits lowest mean (M=3.18, SD=0.85). Weekly English exposure averaged 3.52 hours (SD=2.15). English readiness M=3.20 (SD=0.69)

**Table 4.** *Descriptive Statistics and Reliability*

| Variable | M | SD | Range | α |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parental Involvement Subscales | | | | |
| Home-Based Learning | 3.48 | 0.68 | 1-5 | .82 |
| Learning Resources | 3.18 | 0.85 | 1-5 | .78 |
| Exposure Routines | 3.45 | 0.71 | 1-5 | .85 |
| Self-Efficacy | 3.64 | 0.72 | 1-5 | .88 |
| Total Involvement | 3.44 | 0.68 | 1-5 | .91 |
| Child Outcomes | | | | |
| English Exposure (hrs/week) | 3.52 | 2.15 | 0.5-12 | — |
| English Readiness | 3.20 | 0.69 | 1-5 | — |

### 3.2. Bivariate Correlations

Table 5 presents Pearson correlations. All involvement dimensions correlated positively with readiness (ps<.001). Self-efficacy shows strongest association (r=.524, p<.001, large effect), followed by home learning (r=.471), exposure routines (r=.442), and resources (r=.389).

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**Table 5.** *Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Home-Based Learning | — | | | | | |
| 2. Learning Resources | .51*** | — | | | | |
| 3. Exposure Routines | .54*** | .42*** | — | | | |
| 4. Self-Efficacy | .66*** | .31*** | .58*** | — | | |
| 5. English Exposure | .39*** | .45*** | .36*** | .30*** | — | |
| 6. English Readiness | .47*** | .39*** | .44*** | .52*** | .40*** | — |
| ***p < .001 | | | | | | |

### 3.3. Urban-Rural Comparisons

Urban parents reported significantly higher resources (Murban=3.51 vs. Mrural=3.08; t=3.21, p=.002, d=0.55) and exposure (Murban=3.86 vs. Mrural=3.02; t=2.87, p=.005, d=0.41). No significant differences are found in home learning, routines, or self-efficacy.

### 3.4. Regression Predictors

Hierarchical regression examined readiness predictors (Table 6). Model 1 with education and SES: $R^2$=.186, F(2,147)=16.73, p<.001. Model 2 added involvement subscales: $R^2$=.398, $\Delta R^2$=.212, F(6,143)=15.81, p<.001. Self-efficacy strongest predictor (β=.312, p<.001), followed by home learning (β=.285, p<.001).

**Table 6.** *Hierarchical Regression Predicting English Readiness*

| Predictor | Model 1 β | 95% CI | Model 2 β | 95% CI | $sr^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parent Education | .284*** | [.15, 42] | .173* | [.04, 31] | .028 |
| Socioeconomic Status | .227** | [.08, 37] | .098 | [-.05, 25] | .009 |
| Home-Based Learning | — | — | .285*** | [.15, 42] | .075 |
| Learning Resources | — | — | .089 | [-.06, 24] | .007 |
| Exposure Routines | — | — | .156* | [.01, 31] | .023 |
| Self-Efficacy | — | — | .312*** | [.18, 45] | .089 |
| $R^2$ | .186 | | .398 | | |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | .175 | | .373 | | |
| $\Delta R^2$ | — | | .212*** | | |
| F | 16.73*** | | 15.81*** | | |

**Note.** β = standardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval; $sr^2$ = squared semipartial correlation.

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

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## 4. Discussion

The main finding of this study is that parental self-efficacy (PSE) is the single strongest predictor of young children's English readiness in a West Sumatran early EFL context, compared to the material resources available to families. This conclusion advances a theoretically important argument: rather than resource endowment, psychological empowerment may be the critical mechanism through which parents shape their children's early language learning (Stiévenart & Perez, 2020; Strother-garcia et al., 2025). Grounded in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, the finding calls for a paradigm shift in early EFL intervention design from provision of resources to development of parental efficacy and behavioural engagement.

Child gender was not linked to any of the outcomes ($t(148) = -1.09$, $p = .28$). In models stratified by child gender, parental self-efficacy was the strongest independent predictor of English readiness ($\beta = .312$, $p < .001$), consistent with its strong bivariate correlation with the involvement dimensions ($r = .524$). This pattern is consistent with social cognitive theory: parents who believe that they can successfully engage their children in learning-related activities were more likely to initiate and maintain supportive behaviours (Bandura, 1997). Waid et al (2025) and Glatz et al (2024), in a recent overview of PSE research and child development, found that self-efficacy does not simply correlate with favorable outcomes. It is an active mechanism that determines the quality and frequency of parent engagement. Study of Kong & Yasmin (2022) on the Significance of PSE in Early Childhood Learning likewise found that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between parenting style and an essential developmental outcome, confirming that confidence is the cognitive engine driving effective parental habits. This is particularly impactful in early EFL contexts, where parents might especially lack confidence in their own language ability; a parent who consequently opts out of helping English learning altogether will not fully utilize available time and resources.

Romero-González et al (2023) make clear that, in distinguishing between parental beliefs and actual high-quality involvement in children's learning, parental investment, not mere belief, advances children's learning. This is particularly true in early EFL settings as these activities require only a sustained willingness from parents to engage (Bunting et al., 2021; Lucas, 2023) and not high English proficiency. One explanation for this is that PSE and home-based learning interact in a mutually reinforcing cycle: parents with higher confidence are more likely to engage, who in turn reinforce their sense of confidence through meaningful engagement.

Perhaps the most theoretically significant finding lies in the urban rural comparison. Although more parents from urban areas reported having access to learning resources and greater opportunities to be exposed to English, parental engagement and self-efficacy were statistically similar across these geographical areas (Hasnat & Kabir, 2024; Murshidi et al., 2023). This is not a null result but an interpretively rich one – it points to differences in psychological and behavioural dimensions of parental involvement beyond material advantage (Wang, 2026; Zhang & Anuar, 2026). Families

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from less resourced rural spaces engaged as frequently, and with the same level of self-efficacy to promote learning in their children, suggesting that motivation and belief may be equalising forces that work independently of socioeconomic context. This finding is consistent with Hayes et al. 's (2025) argument that home learning environments are shaped as much by parental values and beliefs as by material conditions. From a theoretical standpoint, this challenges resource-deficit models of educational disadvantage and suggests that PSE may represent a domain in which rural families already hold latent strengths amenable to intervention.

These findings carry clear implications for the design of early EFL programs. When parents feel confident and actually get involved, their children are more ready to learn English no matter their background. Therefore, programs that only try to improve parents' English or just give them materials might miss what really matters. Programs should instead focus on ways to build parental confidence in practice. The activities could be through modelling activities, workshops focused on setting expectations for success, and peer support networks that normalise participation among parents regardless of their level of English language ability (Fang et al., 2021; Sigit & Anam, 2024). Similar levels of engagement, especially in rural areas, show that parents are already committed. What is needed now is to build on this commitment while improving access to quality programs and better digital media. Chu et al., (2024), Muslem et al., (2022) and Sundqvist et al., (2024) suggest that the effectiveness of digital platforms for early language learning depends more on guided parental involvement than on how often the platforms are used. Good-quality content and watching together with children are important. These studies show that active support from parents plays a key role.

Several limitations restrict the conclusions from this study. First, the cross-sectional design of this study does not permit causal inferences regarding the relationships between parental involvement and children's English readiness. Longitudinal or experimental designs would be needed to establish causal directions. Second, it should be noted that this study measured parental perceptions of children's English readiness through parent-reported questionnaires rather than administering a direct vocabulary assessment or language test to the children. Therefore, the findings reflect perceived readiness rather than objectively measured vocabulary acquisition, and future research should incorporate standardised child language assessments to validate these results. Third, the reliance on parent self-report data may be subject to social desirability bias, whereby parents might overestimate their involvement or their children's readiness. Fourth, the sample was drawn exclusively from West Sumatra, which may limit the generalisability of findings to other Indonesian regions with different linguistic and cultural contexts. Additionally, this study shows a connection ; it does not prove that one thing causes another (Lena & Nikolov, 2025). One problem is that parents reported the information, which might not be entirely accurate; future studies should compare what parents say with what children do and what teachers observe (Murray et al., 2021). The study only looked at West Sumatra, which makes it hard to apply the

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results to all of Indonesia since the country itself has different cultures and languages (Farahdina et al., 2023; Hasanah et al., 2025). The study also used numbers to understand readiness, for English. It did not show how parents help their children at home; other types of studies could help us understand how parents can best support their children's learning (Rowiyah et al., 2024). Future research should try to find out if helping parents get involved works and how it works, such as what makes children motivated to learn and like languages (Shebani et al., 2025). The key point found in this study is that resources are not the main factor in children's language learning success; parental confidence and engagement are.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examines parental involvement in preschool English learning in West Sumatra. Urban-rural differences in engagement may be smaller, as participation is likely more dependent on resource access than on resource volume. We suggest opportunities for intervention targeting types of involvement that are least bounded by material resources. By illustrating the multidimensional nature of parental involvement and the central role of self-efficacy, the findings contribute to theory. Based on these findings, several concrete recommendations can be offered for various stakeholders. For early childhood educators and preschool teachers, it is recommended to incorporate parent-oriented literacy programmes and English learning workshops that build parental self-efficacy, particularly for parents with limited English proficiency. For early childhood curriculum developers, designing home-based English learning modules and family engagement components that support parents regardless of their own English proficiency is essential. For policymakers, developing programmes that address urban–rural disparities in access to English learning resources should be prioritised. For future researchers, it is recommended to incorporate direct child language assessments, adopt longitudinal designs, and conduct intervention studies to establish causal relationships between parental self-efficacy and children's English development. The results inform family-centred interventions in practice. If so, strategies that target self-efficacy and activity suggestions, promote ideas for digital curation and respond to constraints can help promote engagement and language development. Consequently, partnerships between educators, parents, and stakeholders can use their strengths to address existing gaps. This can help expand opportunities for young learners to learn English across Indonesia's diverse multilingual contexts.

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