

# The Roles of Parents, Social Support, and School Readiness in Early Children

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**Abstract:** Prior studies have reported that after two years of the pandemic, teachers have experienced negative environmental impacts on children. Some researchers have argued that this condition was related to children's family circumstances during the pandemic. This study aimed to explore how parental conditions and social support contribute to childhood learning (school) readiness during the post-pandemic period. This study was a systematic review. Literature was searched on an online platform using keywords such as early childhood, parental roles, social support, and learning/school readiness. The results revealed that readiness can be improved through parental and social support. This implied that a healthy family environment with parents who performed their roles well and social support from teachers was crucial in increasing early childhood learning (school) readiness. The current study highlights the importance of parental and social support for the environmental dimension of children. The study also suggests that interventions to improve early childhood (school) learning readiness should include both in-school and at-home interventions.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 had forced humans to change and quickly adapt. This condition certainly had given an impact on human life. The Covid-19's negative impact was not only on human life but also on the development of early childhood (Lau & Li, 2021; González et al., 2022). Every child has the right to be able to play freely with peers. Parents fail to act as guide, playmates, and tutors at home as the first learning environment for children (Martini & Hikmah, 2022). During a pandemic, many stressors threaten the health, safety, and economic well-being of families. This condition makes parents complacent so they ignore the parenting role that parents have to give to their children (Brown et al., 2020). Not a few parents give smartphones to make their children calm, so they don't disturb their parents.

Parents have an important role in preparing children for learning. Prior studies found that parents play an important role in children's school readiness (Efastri & Suharni, 2021). The role of parents was the initial determining factor in how children enter

the world of learning and schools (Edwards & Knoche, 2008).

Parenting style during the pandemic made children familiar with smartphones. Smartphones also took part in teaching and learning activities. Excessive use of smartphones in early childhood can interfere with their development process. Sigman (2011) argued that if a child was addicted to a smartphone, the child became indifferent to their surrounding environment. Smartphones had a direct influence on the development of speech and language. Smartphones also had affected the social-emotional development of children such as socialization with the environment and children's independence. This aspect of development can develop if the child had experience in communicating and interacting directly with the surrounding environment. On the other hand, during the pandemic, many young children became addicted to smartphones, so the experience of direct communication and interaction did not occur. This situation went on for approximately 2 years.

2 years was enough time to change the child's habits. After the pandemic, problems were encountered by parents and teachers of Playgroups,

Kindergarten, and Early Childhood Education. Parents find it more difficult to let their children go of their smartphones, children became fuss more, and cry for longer periods of time. Based on the results of interviews with 10 parents who have early childhood, after the pandemic they have to struggle harder to encourage their children to want to go to school because their children cry and fuss, and 7 of them find their children difficult to communicate or experience speech delay.

Post-pandemic teachers found a delay in early childhood development. Based on research and interviews that I conducted at a school in Semarang, 2 sample classes obtained the results that in the first class of 18 students, there were 4 students experiencing communication delays, and in the second class of 19 students, there were 5 children having difficulty communicating. Besides communication difficulties, there were also other delays such as children having difficulty accepting orders or rules; there were also children who were often sleepy, fussy, crying easily when playing with friends, or having difficulty doing their assignments while in class. School is a new environment for children after the pandemic because children studied more at home during the pandemic. Children who start school will be faced with a social environment that is different from the home environment, and of course, special rules provide children with new life experiences. In this new social environment, children are required to perform tasks such as adjusting to rules within a disciplinary framework, carrying out teacher instructions, and participating in learning to read, write, and count (Erkan, 2011). However, before children can acquire basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, they must first get used to school. Children who are ready for school need time to get used to school and succeed at school (McTurk et al., 2008).

The conceptual framework for school readiness was viewed from two dimensions: school readiness and family readiness (UNICEF, 2012). In the school readiness dimension, the school environment facilitates the transfer of children from the previous educational environment, namely, at home, to a new educational environment, namely, school, with the hope that the child's needs are met and the child's developmental characteristics are monitored through activities that focus on children. This dimension emphasizes that school readiness includes the teacher's readiness to provide social support to children, such as the readiness of the teaching and learning environment, the readiness of learning materials, and the awarding of awards to children

after completing assignments. The second dimension of readiness is family readiness, i.e., a family that is ready and allows school children is a family that is interested in the early development of children's education, ready to facilitate the child's transition to school, and the readiness of parents to be able to support children in the transition period by carrying out their role as parents properly (UNICEF, 2012). The family environment is the first environment in which children learn. Positive stimulation and experiences provided to children by parents are indicators of effective parenting. Healthy families with parents who perform their roles well provide stimulation and experience for children to prepare them to enter the school environment (Britto, 2012).

Considering the post-pandemic phenomena experienced by young children and the conceptual framework above, we compiled this research to explore how conditions the role of parents and social support contribute to early childhood learning or school readiness in the post-pandemic period.

## 2 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

This theoretical overview begins with the theoretical definitions of school readiness or learning readiness, the theoretical definitions of the role of parents, the theoretical definitions of social support, and the characteristics of early childhood.

### 2.1 The Definition of School Readiness

Slameto (2010) stated that readiness is the overall condition of a person that makes him ready to respond in a certain way to a situation. Readiness to learn is a self-condition that has been prepared to carry out an activity (Djamarah, 2011). Dalyono (2012) also stated that readiness is someone's readiness or willingness to do something. Darsono (2000) argues that readiness factors, both physical and psychological, are the initial conditions for a learning activity.

Readiness to learn can be interpreted as several many developmental levels that must be achieved by a person to receive new lessons. Readiness to learn is closely related to maturity. Readiness to accept new lessons will be achieved if someone has reached a certain level of maturity. Then he will be ready to accept new lessons. School readiness/learning readiness can be defined as the condition of the skills, knowledge, and abilities of a child in a learning activity that was needed by the child to

successfully provide the responses/answers that were in him to achieve certain teaching goals.

## 2.2 The Definition of the Role of Parents

The role of parents can be divided into two broad categories: nurturing and structural. In the parenting role, parents are responsible for taking care of the child's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, health, etc., as well as providing love, attention, time, support, and acceptance. Another part of parents' job is to provide structure for their children. In this role, parents provide direction, introduce discipline, introduce rules, set limits, set and follow up with the consequences that children will get, hold children accountable for their behavior, and teach values. Parents provide guidance to help children change, grow, and mature. Responsible behavior agrees with the child's maturity level.

The role of parents as providers of structure is often difficult, but this role is essential for children's development. Parents must determine and maintain standards to help children succeed according to developmental stages. In this way, parents help their children feel capable, thus improving their self-esteem. Parents must find a balance between fulfilling this parenting role and this structure's role so that their children grow and develop healthily. The role of good and balanced parents will help build healthy families with children who grow and develop healthily. The characteristics of a person are obtained from their environment. Environmental attribution theory is known as bioecological theory, which was coined by Urie Bronfenbrenner. This theory posits that a person's growth is influenced by their environment in terms of growth, thinking, and behavior. Environmental elements that influence a person's growth and development include biological, psychological, social, and cultural contexts (Bern, 2010). The role of parents was the method used by parents in carrying out their mandate and being responsible for nurturing, educating, protecting, accompanying, establishing communication, providing opportunities, supervising, encouraging or motivating, directing, and preparing children for social life.

## 2.3 The Definition of Social Support

Sarafino and Timothy (2011) argued that social support is the comfort, attention, appreciation, and

assistance that individuals receive from a person or group of people. Taylor and Shelley (2009) argued that social support is defined as information from others in which one is loved, cared for, esteemed, and valued and is part of a network of communication and mutual obligation. Social support is the availability or presence of resources that provide physical and psychological comfort through the knowledge that a person is loved, cared for, and valued by others and becomes part of a communication network or group that has common interests. Social support has four forms:

- a) Emotional support includes expressions of empathy, care, and attention from the teacher toward students so that they feel comfortable, safe, and loved.
- b) Appreciation of support: This support is in the form of positive appreciation for the efforts made by students, or it can also be in the form of encouragement, approval of ideas, feelings, or positive comparisons with others.
- c) Instrumental support is provided in the form of direct and in-person assistance with materials and services. This assistance refers to the availability of equipment, materials, and services needed by students in the school environment.
- d) Information support. This support includes providing advice, rules, instructions, suggestions, and feedback so that it can direct students on how to solve the problems they are facing (Sarafino & Timothy, 2011).

## 3 METHOD

This study used a systematic literature review. A systematic literature review can be defined as a systematic method for collecting and synthesizing the results of previous research that can serve as a basis for knowledge development, create guidelines for policy and practice, provide evidence of effects, and if done well, generate new ideas and directions for specific fields (Snyder, 2019). The use of this method was chosen to collect research results from abroad about school readiness both before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and after the pandemic. The results of this research from abroad will also be analyzed together with the results of research on school readiness in Indonesia since the post-pandemic. The purpose of this literature review is to provide references as anticipation in dealing with learning (school) readiness during the post-pandemic period concerning the roles of parents and social support teachers in Indonesia.

This research began during a pandemic when the author made direct observations as a tutor. The author sees that there are so many children who are difficult to manage, have difficulty communicating, and play more with cell phones, quite a several children do not know letters or numbers, there are even children aged 9 years in grade 3 elementary school who cannot read, children aged 13 years in grade 6 SD cannot be counted simply, besides that the author also sees that many children are not interested in learning, learn if there are assignments from school, children are also less responsible for their assignments, many of their parents end up having to do their children's schoolwork. The author believes that children who receive this type of tutoring are less prepared to learn.

The authors returned to direct observations and interviews with teachers at a school in Semarang regarding student learning readiness after the pandemic. The results of the observations and interviews that the author received were quite monitored because there were so many students who found it difficult to communicate, it was difficult to be regulated/act as they pleased, they did not understand the rules, it was difficult to accept learning material due to a lack of understanding. Observations, direct interviews by discussions between authors, and research learning readiness issues were conducted in other countries. News searches related to post-pandemic learning readiness for children were obtained from open-access sources.

This research limits the publication of scientific journals and articles from 2011 to 2022. According to research topics, articles, and scientific journals from the search results, there are approximately 30 scientific journals. The journal consists of 25 journals from foreign authors and five from Indonesian authors. The journals used in this research include quantitative, qualitative, and literary studies.

Data were collected using Google Scholar. The search was accomplished using the keywords "school readiness" "early childhood school readiness" "the role of parents and school readiness" and "early childhood social support". Considering

that school readiness, which is the focus of the research, is post-pandemic school readiness, the authors expanded the scope of the research using the keyword "post-pandemic school readiness".

The research data were analyzed by descriptive content analysis. Descriptive content analysis was conducted to determine, at a descriptive level, the trends and results of studies on a certain subject (Calik et al., 2008).

## 4 RESULT AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Articles Description

The distribution and grouping of articles containing dimensions of school readiness according to the year of distribution and topic of discussion are presented in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows that the topic of school readiness (learning) has become a topic of special concern since 2012–2022, and 31 articles have been published both domestically and abroad. However, it was also found that among the articles taken as the scope of the research, only in 2014 excluded the dimensions of school readiness. Based on Figure 1, it can also be seen that there has been an increase in the number of research articles on school readiness between 2018 and 2022, with as many as 21 articles in 4 years published. This shows that in those years, many people saw more and more problems that children experienced regarding school readiness, and many people increasingly understood the importance of giving special attention to children to increase school readiness.

Looking closely at Figure 1 you can also see the number of articles with topics discussing school readiness and the role of parents, school readiness, and teacher social support, as well as school readiness, the role of parents, and teacher social support. Each topic of discussion shows that children's school readiness consists of two environmental dimensions: the home environment with parents and their roles and the school environment with teachers, friends, materials, and learning facilities.

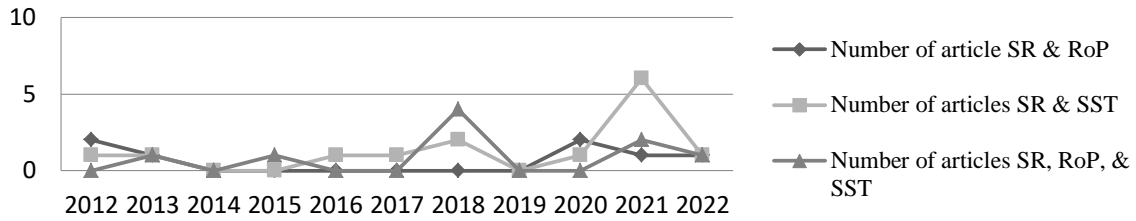


Figure 1. Articles' Distribution According to the Year and Topic.

#### 4.2 The Schools' Readiness Dimension

Findings related to the environmental dimension of school readiness: the home environment and school environment. Home environment, this dimension relates to parenting practices (Majzub & Rashid, 2012), family interactions (Pekdoğan & Akgül, 2016; Öngören, 2020), level of education, employment, age (Tunceli & Akman, 2013), preschool participation (Şahin et al., 2013), perceptions of readiness to learn (Rahmawati et al., 2018), psychological conditions such as stress level or depressive symptoms (Brown et al., 2020), socioeconomic status (Rochimah et al., 2020; Wangke et al., 2021), parental involvement in increasing learning readiness (Wangke et al., 2021), and the scope of the discussion above includes the

condition and role of parents in the family. The school environment, in this dimension relates to school readiness in preparing for an effective school readiness process, teachers' views/perceptions about school readiness (Şahin et al., 2013; Rahmawati et al., 2018), school readiness to improve students' cognitive, language, motor, and emotional abilities (Christopoulou & Pampaka, 2015; Niklas et al., 2018) in addition to moral and religious values (Pangestuti et al., 2018), series of activities, and assessments of school student readiness that have been programed (Seran et al., 2017; Altun, 2018), professional knowledge, and teacher skills (Rahmawati et al., 2018), the scope of the discussion above includes teacher social support to students while in the school environment.

Table 1. Results of The Literature Review.

Article	Statements obtained from the findings in the articles concerning the schools' readiness dimension	Components relevant to the statements
Majzub and Rashid (2012)	Carrying out activities that stimulate child development, providing the means to create a better learning environment at home.	Dimensions of the home environment
	Teachers provide support to parents to have the knowledge and practice more positive parenting.	Dimensions of the school environment
Öngören (2021)	Parents carry out practices related to friend relationships, social activities, educational activities, family interactions, and giving responsibility, as well as providing emotional support such as involving in oral communication, spending time together, and doing activities together such as knowing numbers, reading books, games, and provide opportunities for feedback, as well as provide opportunities for children to carry out self-care activities independently with supervision, provide responsibility, and become role models for children.	Dimensions of the home environment
Sahin, et al. (2013)	Teachers and institutions setting up effective school readiness processes. Provides preschool education. Overcome difficulties encountered and provide effective advice in the school readiness process.	Dimensions of the school environment
Pekdoğan and Akgül (2016)	Building good and effective communication with parents regarding academics, skills, social communication, and areas of development that affect children	Dimensions of the school environment
Seran, et al. (2017)	Involve children in planning annual activities that have been programmed into the school curriculum	Dimensions of the school environment

Article	Statements obtained from the findings in the articles concerning the schools' readiness dimension	Components relevant to the statements
Rahmawati, et al. (2018)	The similarity of perceptions between teachers and parents regarding the factors that influence school readiness, both cognitive and non-cognitive. Supporting children to successfully adjust to school is the first step in improving children's school readiness.	Dimensions of the school environment
Lailiyah and Nuraini (2020)	Morning journal activities raise interest in children's learning, so that children can complete activities, can survive until learning ends, experience an increase in learning, and aspects of development develop well	Dimensions of the school environment
Rochimah, et al. (2020)	Family socioeconomic status has a direct negative effect on family stress, and family stress can also have a negative direct effect on parental involvement in a child's education. These findings imply that it is important to create a warm and supportive family environment to carry out their roles and functions optimally in children's education.	Dimensions of the home environment
Wangke, et al. (2021)	5 factors that influence school readiness, namely stunting, mother's educational status, socioeconomic status, and preschool.	Dimensions of the home environment
Lau and Li (2021)	Teacher social support has a positive impact on the relationship between parents and children because parents' competence increases, and parents spend more time with children.	Dimensions of the home environment
Efastri and Suharni (2021)	Parents play an important role in children's school readiness, namely being responsible for children's school readiness, and motivation, as role models, as supervisors, and as counselors so that all needs in children's school readiness are met.	Dimensions of the home environment
Nurhayati, et al. (2021)	Schools carry out the PPK program and evaluate programs to assist school readiness	Dimensions of the school environment
Retnawati, et al. (2021)	Assessment of child development achievement is carried out in a formative manner, mostly using performance appraisal.	Dimensions of the school environment
González, et al. (2022)	Teachers and caregivers need to focus on the cognitive and motor domains to help children catch up with the pandemic.	Dimensions of the school environment
Martini and Hikmah (2022)	Parents are required to provide appropriate situations for children at home to replace the teacher's role at school and restore children's motivation and desire to go to school. Parents' perceptions certainly greatly influence the stimulation that will be given to children.	Dimensions of the home environment

Based on table 1, we can identify the state of inclusion of the school readiness environment dimension in the articles that became the subject of the study. It can be seen in table 1 that the two dimensions of school readiness environment are home environment and school environment.

## 5 DISCUSSION

Comparing academic articles containing dimensions of school readiness published in electronic media between 2012 and 2022 shows that the most published articles were in 2021. The reason for this finding may be that research on learning preparedness materials has gained momentum

following the changing situation and conditions of the pandemic, with many researchers finding problems in children during the post-pandemic period. The articles in the sample contain dimensions of school readiness related to the role of parents, and teacher social support to both parents and children, with the hope that children's school readiness will increase if parents and teachers provide new and uniform stimuli and habits.

The findings obtained from the articles in the sample show that the dimensions of the home and school environments are balanced. This indicates that the home and school environments cannot be separated from each other, both are interrelated to improve children's school readiness. Children's school readiness in the home environment becomes

the role of parents, while children's school readiness in the school environment becomes the teacher's role in providing social support to children. Parents and teachers who work together to provide a supportive learning environment for children can help children catch up during a pandemic.

Other findings obtained in this literature study are that there are problems that arise from parents in their approach to communicating with children, the low knowledge of parents makes school preparation for children less than optimal, and that socioeconomic status also has an indirect impact on school readiness. Children parents' perceptions of school readiness also determine children's school readiness because parents have the perception that school readiness is the responsibility of parents, and parents with high or low socioeconomic status do not matter. On the other hand, parents who have the wrong perception about school readiness will make their children ignore them and hand over all responsibility for preparing children for school to teachers or caregivers.

The family is the first social group in human life, where he learns and expresses himself as a social human being in interaction with their group. Gerungan (2002) experiences in social interaction within the family also determine ways of behavior toward other people in social interactions outside of his family and in society in general. Apart from the general group role of the family as the first social framework, in which humans develop as social beings, certain roles in family circumstances can also affect individual development as social beings (Gerungan, 2002).

Someone learns to behave in a social environment, either in the family or at school, which is closely related to the response given by the environment to this behavior. A behavior is repeated or strengthened if there are positive consequences, and vice versa (Sarwono et al., 2009). This learning process needs to be experienced by a child so that the child learns to accept and give the right response as a process of increasing school readiness. This experience is a learning process. Learning occurs as a result of experience and precedes behavioral changes (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2008).

## 6 CONCLUSION

Early childhood at school in 2 environmental dimensions: home and school environments. The home environment comprises parents who are regulated to care for, educate, protect, support, build

communication, provide opportunities, supervise, encourage or motivate, direct, and prepare children to enter social life. Parents who run it well will build a healthy family.

A healthy family promotes the growth and development of early childhood regardless of the situation and conditions that exist outside the family. The environment outside the family can change over time, but a healthy family begins with both parents who are good parents for their children. The role of good parents is to help children prepare themselves to enter the community, especially the school environment.

The school environment is the second environment for children after the family environment. Within the school environment, some teachers must provide social support for children/students, especially for early childhood who still need a lot of help and social support from adults around them to get to know their environment and learn many things about it.

A school environment that is full of social support—emotional support, appreciation support, instrumental support, or informational support—which is very much needed by children/students can increase children's enthusiasm for going to school. This is certainly very helpful for children in their preparation for learning.

Readiness can be increased through parental and social support. This implies that a healthy family environment with good parental and teacher support is crucial for improving early childhood (school) readiness.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of parental and social support in the environmental dimension of children. Studies have also suggested that interventions to improve learning (school) readiness among early-aged children should include both school- and home-based interventions..

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