

## Parent's Involvement in Children's English Literacy Skills

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### Abstract

*The current study aimed at investigating parental involvement in developing children's English literacy skill. This study was a descriptive qualitative conducted in Aura Sukma Insani school Bali. To conduct the study, questionnaire, interview and observation were employed. The results showed that the parental involvement programs in Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten were parents conference, parents' interview, final report, and eco-enzyme. The specific programs which involved parents applied four out of six parental involvement frameworks proposed by Epstein et al., (2002). Parenting was applied through giving parents' guidance book about the learning process. Then, decision making was applied through asking parents' decision about learning which will be applied. During the implementation of parental involvement programs, A number of problematic challenges exist in the parents' involvement implementation at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. According to the interpretation level of the teacher's perspective, decision-making and collaborating with the community had the most problematic Challenges. Overall, the teachers faced at least one to two challenges in every type of involvement. The problems mostly came from fewer responses obtained due to the less effective activities. This imperfection could be fixed if these two parties, the parents and the school, recognized their interchangeable roles were important.*

**Keywords: English; Literacy; Involvement; Parental**

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## INTRODUCTION

The involvement of parents in literacy programs is very important to stimulate children in doing literacy. Parents would repeat children's knowledge of literacy which has been taught at school when the learning of literacy is done at home by giving stimulation to children in order to maximize the development of children's literacy (Capotosto et al., 2017). Children who usually see their parents doing English literacy activities were stimulated and habituated to practice concrete English literacy. In this case, the children would have a strong and positive attitude toward literacy which is acquired when reading and writing (Liu et al., 2010). Besides

the stimulations, the factors affecting children's success in literacy are parents' education, motivation, interest, and learning guidance (Alsubaie, 2022; Ghanney, 2018).

Parental involvement refers to parents' behavior in relation to their children's school, which can be seen as a manifestation of their involvement in their children's education (Bakker & Denessen, 2007). Parental involvement is defined as direct effort which is provided by the parents in order to improve their children's educational outcomes (Kigobe et al., 2021). It means that a parent showing great motivation to be involved in a child's school could be influential to the development of the child's education. Parents should be involved in their children's education in order to motivate and encourage the children to study especially in literacy learning (Hume et al., 2015). In literacy learning, parents' involvement has a positive effect because the children feel comfortable and excited when their parents can help them in doing learning activities such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, doing homework, and solving problem (Saçkes et al., 2016). According Hillier (2021), parents' engagement has a favourable impact on students' accomplishment and is advantageous to the students. Parents' involvement is well known as involvements towards students' education. Similar to this, Jaiswal and Choudhuri (2017) say that the level of parental engagement, which is in a dynamic state of parental roles, is determined by the involvement that has been given to the students by their parents in the form of incentive, financial support, and aid. Furthermore, parents are recognized to be stronger when it comes to managing their children's time.

Stutzel (2019) explains that parents' role in literacy can influence children's literacy development because the children's interaction in literacy activities with their parents can motivate and encourage the children in literacy learning. The earlier parents aware towards the contribution, the more they learn about effective way to be connected to school in meeting the needs. Consequently, it is much better when parents involve in children education start from early childhood. Generally, the invitation of parents and teachers meeting is regarded to problem arisen by the behaviour of the children which should discussed to find the solution (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The involvement of parents in literacy program is very important to stimulate children in doing literacy. Parents would repeat children's knowledge of literacy which has been taught at school when the learning of literacy done at home by giving stimulation to children in order to maximize the development of children's literacy. The stimulations that can be done are to demonstrate literacy activities. Children who usually see their parents doing English literacy activities would be stimulated and habituated to practice a concrete English literacy. In this case, the children would have strong and positive attitude toward the literacy toward the literacy which is acquired when read and write. Besides the stimulations, the research results of Saputri et al., (2017) showed that the factors of affecting children success in literacy are parents' education, motivation, interest, and learning guiding. Then, Padmadewi et al. (2018) stated that the development of children literacy needed a long term process and support from the parents. When parents were involved in teaching and learning process, students showed more effort, and more interested in learning and gain higher competence (Gonzalez-Dehass et al., 2005). Padmadewi et al. (2018) also stated that the literacy programs developed by schools should be informed to the parents so they could understand how to support the children.

Based on the explanation above, it is known that parent's involvement is one aspect that influences students during the learning process, especially in the EFL class. The involvement of parents in inclusive schools is urgent for in-depth investigations for regular students. It is expected to obtain in-depth and holistic information about the role of parental involvement. The information is expected from three stakeholders, namely: parents, schools, and teachers. Here, the types, programs, various challenges of parents with regular students are described in order to get rich information for educational development. According to Epstein, (2010), there are six types of parents' involvement, they are parenting, communicating, learning at home, volunteering, decision making, and collaborating with the community. This research used this theory as a framework theory in investigating parents' involvement in children's English literacy program at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. Thus, this study aims at analysing parents' involvement in supporting students in learning activities or English literacy.

This study investigates the parents' involvement in this problem, this study described; 1) types of parent's involvement that can be found at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten including the activities for each type. 2) the parents' contribution to their children's English literacy program at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. 3) to figure out if there are some differences in term of parents' involvement activities conducted by those parents and describe the challenges faced by the teachers in empowering parents' involvement activities

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

In this study, the researchers used a descriptive qualitative design by using procedures of Parents' involvement implemented by national plus kindergarten in children's English literacy skills. The Subject of this research were the parents of students, teachers, and principal of private national plus school at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. This is one of the schools in Bali that follows the Indonesian curriculum but facilitates a learning process above and beyond what is required by state certification. This is due to the additional subjects that students have to study, which are known as international basic subjects. Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten uses project-based learning methods to develop students' creativity, critical thinking, and effective communication skills. Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten because it has a special program that involves parents in its implementation. This program has been implemented since the establishment of the school in 2005.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Three methods were used to collect data for this study: observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The data were collected by researchers through observation of the teaching and learning process. This was done to learn more about the different types of parent involvement, the steps involved in assisting children in the learning process, and the challenges parents face. Interviews would also be used to confirm observation findings in order to gather further information. Guidance is needed when conducting interviews so that everything goes smoothly. The interview guide was used in this study when in-depth interviews are conducted. In order to gather more information and compare the findings from the observations of the researchers, this study used interviews with the parents of the kindergarten students.

## Data Analysis

A descriptive and qualitative analysis of the data were carried out using the theory of Miles, et al., (2014), in line with the research objectives previously mentioned.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. The kinds of parent's involvement activities in children's Literacy Development at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten

Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten has several programs that involve parents to support students in the teaching and learning process. The school program data is presented below in tabular form. The table contains information about the programs implemented and their classification based on Epstein's parent involvement framework. The findings below are based on the results of observations, questionnaires and interviews with school principals.

**Table 1. Parents' Involvement Program and Activity in Aura Sukma Insani**

Types of Parental Involvement	Parents' Involvement Programs and Activities in Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten
Parenting	There was an activity that provided a book of health protocols for parents to be followed by parents and students concerning how to help kids be safe during the pandemic.
Communicating	Three programs were concerned with communicating: Parent conferences, parent interviews, and final report.
Decision Making	There was an activity when the schools asked parents' decisions about the need to give orientations for kids to help them understand the materials and the need for their wellness. To do this, the school needs the parents' decision.
Collaborating with Community	There was one program referring to collaborating with the community namely eco-enzyme.

To support the data above, the results of the questionnaire analysis are presented in the form of tables.

**Table 2. Parenting**

Statement	1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
Parents are advised to create conducive home conditions to support children's learning				25%	75%
Parents are invited to attend the parenting meeting	25%		25%		50%
Parents support school programs that involve parents that have been developed by the school					100%
Parents comply with school rules in supporting parents to contribute to children's English literacy				25%	75%
Parents take advantage of the service center provided by the school to consult about the problems they face during online learning				50%	50%

The first type of parent involvement program in Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten identified was parenting. The main idea of parenting according to Epstein et al., (2002) is to help parents build a good home environment that supports children as students. Epstein et al., (2002) also suggested several parenting practices such as; providing advice to parents about an environment that supports learning, giving examples of parenting and parenting practices, parental education or training for parents, etc. In the Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten, based on interviews with the school principal, none of the parenting departments was formed into a special program. Although there are no programs related to the parenting framework, based on the questionnaire, Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten carried out several activities outside the program that referred to the parenting framework. The school provides advice to parents on how to create a good environment to support students. Parents were also given guidebooks on how to help students survive the pandemic. It can be seen that Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten tries to help parents to make students comfortable.

**Table 3. Communicating**

Statement	1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
Parents attend meetings to share needs and solutions during learning.				25%	75%
Parents can be contacted by the principal in any unexpected situation related to learning				25%	75%
Parents use contact books to inform children's learning at home to the teacher					100%
Parents get feedback from student assignments during learning					100%
Parents know the policies, school expectations, stages and assessment of learning					100%
Parents get information about learning through various media					100%

The second framework discussed is communication. Epstein et al., (2002) stated that communication is an effective way to communicate between schools and parents or vice versa regarding student progress and school programs. Epstein et al., (2002) also suggested some communication practices that could be adopted by schools, such as meetings with parents, report cards, providing clear information to parents about school policies and programs, etc. Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten has three programs that pay attention to the school's efforts to carry out two-way communication with parents. In line with this, it is known that the Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten has three programs related to the school's efforts to carry out two-way communication with parents. The events are Parents Conference, Parents Interview, and Final Report. These programs show the school's desire to involve parents in the student education process during the to support student education at home.

The three programs previously mentioned, such as the Parents Conference, Parents Interview, and Final Report are implemented in different ways. The difference between the three programs lies in how schools communicate with parents. Parents conferences are held every six months to discuss student development. In addition, the parents' meeting also discussed problems faced by parents at home related to student education. The next one is the Parent Interview. There is no schedule set by the school to implement this program. This is done if there are things that require direct communication between the school and parents. In addition, parents are also given the opportunity to request a special meeting to discuss issues related to student education. The last is the Final Report. This program is carried out at the end of each semester to provide parents with the results of an evaluation of their children's education in one semester. Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten conducts a communication framework in every possible way for parents to provide information about student development at home during a pandemic. Any problems that occur at home related to student education can be discussed during the Parents' Conference.

The three programs that are concerned with communication show that the school really involved parents in the student education process during the pandemic. It was because students couldn't come to school. The students also need to learn the material through online learning. This makes the teacher unable to see firsthand the progress of students during learning activities. Therefore, parental involvement in terms of communication helps the school in monitoring developments.

**Table 4. Volunteering**

Statement	1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
Parents fill out a form regarding interest in volunteering	50%		50%		
Parents participate in school activities (judges, committee, and supporters)	50%		50%		
Parents' participation is valued by the school	25%			25%	50%
Parents take part in meaningful volunteering activities	50%		25%		25%

The third framework from the parent involvement framework proposed by Epstein et al., (2002) is Volunteering. The idea of a voluntary framework put forward by Epstein et al., (2002) involves parents in school programs by recruiting and organizing them to get their help and support in school activities. Epstein et al., (2002) suggest several examples of voluntary framework practices. The practice is; school and classroom volunteer programs, parent rooms or family centers, annual postcard surveys, etc. This program shows that parents are involved in school programs during the pandemic as volunteers. Parents volunteer to help students as resource persons in virtual field trips. In addition, Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten is trying to keep its programs running well even in a pandemic situation. Therefore, this program provides an opportunity for parents to volunteer in school activities.

**Table 5. Learning At Home**

Statement	1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
Parents inform expectations of students in learning				25%	75%
Parents follow up on the feedback given by the teacher					100%
Parents help children in completing interactive homework		25%			75%
Parents are supported by teachers to create independent lesson plans					100%

The fourth framework discussed is learning at home. [Epstein et al., \(2002\)](#) stated that the learning framework at home is a school program that provides advice or information to parents or families about how to help children learn the material at home. That is, students study the material in their own homes. Parents are responsible for accompanying students during the learning process at home. If something goes wrong during the learning process, parents can help students to solve it. For example, students lose their connection during online learning. In addition, parents were asked to send photos of students while studying and were also asked to send photos of student learning outcomes to the teacher. This shows that the school wants parents to help them become a liaison between the child and the school when problems occur during learning. In addition, parents also have the responsibility to provide understanding to students when problems occur in online learning.

**Table 6. Decision Making**

Statement	1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
Parents actively participate in Parent-Teacher gatherings on a platform to discuss current issues regarding learning					100%
Parents are involved in making decisions regarding school activities regarding learning during			50%		50%

The fifth framework of the parental involvement framework proposed by [Epstein et al., \(2002\)](#) is decision making. [Epstein et al., \(2002\)](#) the idea of decision making involves parents in making school decisions related to school activities and programs. In Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten, parents are not involved in the school's decision-making process related to school programs and activities. Before the new school year, school stakeholders will hold a meeting to determine the program for one year and all activities in one year will follow the results of the internship meeting. The school does not involve parents in the meeting process. Parents only provide information on the results of the meeting through the WhatsApp platform. Parents were also given a book containing the results of the school's meeting and program. Parents followed the plan that the school made at the meeting before the new school year. So that when the school holds a meeting and makes a program it is adapted to the current

situation. Parents are rarely involved when the school makes decisions related to school programs and activities. However, parents' decisions are urgently needed when the school asks for parents' decisions about the need to provide orientation to children in order to help them understand the material and also their health needs. This shows that schools do not make unilateral decisions during a pandemic in the learning process during a pandemic.

**Table 6. Collaborating with the community**

Statement	1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
Parents are informed by the school about community services regarding learning			25%		75%
Parents are involved to participate in community service	50%			50%	
Parents collaborate to take the initiative to invite other communities	50%		50%		
Collaborate with parents in initiating to invite other communities (other schools or educational organizations)	50%			50%	

The final framework of the parental involvement framework proposed by cis in collaboration with the community. Epstein et al., (2002) The main idea about collaborating with the community is identifying and working with communities around the school environment to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student development. Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten held a program called eco-enzyme. Based on interviews with the school principal, the program was not officially programmed by the school. This program is carried out at the initiative of parents. The program was born from the idea of parents developing eco-enzymes. Eco Enzymes are carried out by utilizing leftover food into something useful such as disinfectants, hand sanitizers and cleaners. Parents who develop eco-enzymes invite teachers to learn how to make eco-enzymes and sort food waste. Even though this program was not programmed by the school, the program has been carried out. Parents in this program act as eco-enzyme practitioners and can be called a community from outside the school. Thus, the program involves the community in the eco-enzyme program as a source of eco-enzyme steps. If this program is already being carried out with students, it will give students a real experience that may be important in the future.

## 2. The Problem Faced

The interview with the principal has two main ideas. The first is the parent involvement program at the Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten, while the second is the problems faced by teachers during the implementation of the parent involvement program. The head of Kindergarten Bilingual Aura Sukma Insani when interviewed said the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing parent involvement programs during the teaching and learning process. The first problem was an error contacting the parents' WhatsApp number for a meeting. Usually, parents have several WhatsApp numbers which make teachers confused

about which number to contact. The second problem is the mood of children. In doing so, learning problems often occur. This makes students unable to hear what the teacher is talking about. In addition, it also affects students' mood to learn because they think the teacher doesn't listen to them.

*The school implements a learning process, where all learning activities also rely on the involvement of parents. There are no more in-depth problems, it's just that sometimes it's confusing to contact parents who have other numbers to contact.*  
(Headmaster)

*There seems to be no problem when students come to school, during orientation and simulation there are no problems. When studying online, sometimes the problem that arises is when we contact the parents' WhatsApp number. The problem is when we call the parents' WhatsApp number, and they don't pick up, he said "what number to call him?". That's what often happens. When we started, the parents said, "Sorry miss, it turned out that he called him on another number. "That's all that usually happens.* (Teacher 1)

*So far so good, parents are following the procedures from the school.* (Teacher 2)

Based on interviews with school principals, the problem faced by teachers in implementing the program is how to run the program so that it continues. As long as learning activities are carried out face-to-face or offline. There are not many problems encountered, it's just how to convince the program. Thus, connectedness is a common problem faced by teachers in implementing school programs. Fortunately, Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten provides learning packages to overcome the problems that occur. Based on interviews with Toddler Class Teachers, the problems encountered were having problems contacting parents' WhatsApp numbers to conduct learning. Teachers sometimes contact the wrong WhatsApp number and need to call the right number to carry out the lesson. It takes time to remember the right numbers and can interfere with learning schedules. Based on interviews with class B teachers, the problem raised in the implementation of programs that involve parents is the problem of students' moods. The results of interviews with school principals and teachers indicated that the teacher's obstacles in implementing the parent involvement program were technical problems, errors when contacting parents' WhatsApp numbers, and students' moods. These technical obstacles arose because the Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten learning activities were carried out. The error when contacting the parent's WhatsApp number appears because the parent has several WhatsApp numbers. This made teachers confused about which number to call for online learning. Student mood problems occur during online learning due to connectivity issues. It makes students unable to hear what the teacher is saying. It affects the mood of students.

Both of teacher and teacher and parents have significant role in developing children's literacy by involving themselves to the children's literacy learning. Hume et al., (2015) pointed out that parental involvement is critical to children's reading success. So, every parent has a unique role in early child's literacy. Since parents teach their children at home to talk, sit, stand, eat and walk without undergoing any form of training. Parental involvement means that a parent showing great motivation to involve in child's school could be influential to the development of the child's education (Clark, 2007). Furthermore, Ateş, (2021) found that parents should have a strong motivation to help their children learn English. Parents can do

well to support their children's development, especially in early childhood, but parental involvement requires attitudes and behaviours among school educators, administrators and staff that welcome, encourage and support this involvement (Çalışkan & Ulaş, 2022).

Parents should involve in their children education in order to motivate and encourage the children to study especially in literacy learning. In literacy learning, parents' involvement has positive effect because the children feel comfortable and excited when their parents can help them in doing learning activities such a listening, speaking, reading, writing, doing homework, and solving problem. According to parental involvement improve children's educational outcomes (Hemmerechts et al., 2017). Crosby et al., (2015) emphasized that parents take part in children's learning and school performance by offering cognitive and emotional support to students at home. These researchers demonstrated that parental help with homework positively affects the students' interest in school assignments' accomplishment and study time organization at home. Necşoi et al., (2013) extended that the manner in which parents exercise their authority may contribute to student' outcomes.

Parents should engage children in reading activity by supporting children to read in their leisure time at every age, by looking at reading through picture or chapter books for example, parents can help to ensure that children are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in later life (Mudzielwana, 2014). Parents' involvement with reading activities at home has a significant positive influence not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills, but also on children's interest in reading and attitude towards reading (Hume et al., 2015). When parents are involved they encourage and motivate their children to work harder, by so doing it makes the child to be motivated, work hard and achieve academically (Tavşanlı et al., 2020).

Based on the findings and discussion described above, this study shows that parental involvement in the teaching and learning process is important. Furthermore, parental involvement in the learning process is needed to support students and help students when problems occur in the learning process. In addition, parental involvement helps the school to monitor student progress during online learning at home. During online learning, schools cannot monitor students directly, so parental involvement is needed to help implement school programs and support student development in the learning process.

Although parental involvement is important, problems that may occur can interfere with the learning process. There are three problems faced by teachers in implementing parent involvement programs. These problems are connectivity issues, problems contacting parents, and students' moods due to connectivity issues. Fortunately, Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten offers another way for parents who find it difficult or uncomfortable doing learning.

## CONCLUSION

The parental involvement programs in Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten were parents conference, parents' interview, final report, and eco-enzyme. The specific programs which involved parents applied four out of six parental involvement framework proposed by Epstein et al., (2002). The other parental involvement framework proposed by Epstein et al., (2002), namely parenting and decision making were not formed into specific programs. Those two parental involvement frameworks were applied through several activities which not

included into specific programs. Parenting was applied through giving parents' guidance book about the learning process. Then, decision making was applied through asking parents' decision about learning which will be applied.

During the implementation of parental involvement programs, teachers faced some problems in implementing the programs. The first problem was the connection problem. The connection problem happened because the learning was done through WhatsApp platform which need good connection to run it smoothly. The second problem was the teacher confusion in dial parents' WhatsApp numbers. The parents usually had several numbers registered; thus, the teacher could dial the wrong number. Then, this could make the learning time reduced to recalling the right number. The third problem was the students' mood during learning. In conducting the learning, the teachers should be aware whether the students did not listen to teachers' explanation because of the connection problem or because of students' mood themselves. Fortunately, Aura Sukma Insani Bilingual Kindergarten provided an offline learning package to solve the problem raised during learning.

A number of problematic challenges exist in the parents' involvement implementation at Aura Sukma Insani Kindergarten. According to the interpretation level of the teacher's perspective, decision-making and collaborating with the community had the most problematic Challenges. Overall, the teachers faced at least one to two challenges in every type of involvement. The problems mostly came from fewer responses obtained due to the less effective activities. This imperfection could be fixed if these two parties, the parents and the school, recognized their interchangeable roles were important.

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