

Family Involvement in Early Reading and Writing: A Needs Analysis Based on Stakeholder Perspectives

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the multidimensional structure of family involvement in early reading and writing education and the needs that arise within this scope, based on the views of teachers, families, and field experts. In the study, the exploratory sequential design of mixed-methods research was adopted; the findings from interviews with stakeholders were supported by data obtained from 490 classroom teachers through a survey. The data obtained were analysed based on thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. The findings from the interviews revealed that all stakeholders considered family involvement to be a fundamental and indispensable element of the early reading and writing process. Furthermore, it was emphasised that this process should be supported not only through traditional forms of involvement but also through systematic family information meetings and home- and classroom-based involvement methods. It was found that teachers and families experienced similar difficulties, especially at the beginning of the early reading and writing process, and had common needs in terms of information meetings and family involvement. According to the survey findings, families need to be informed about issues such as developmental processes, effective communication and fine motor skills development, and are expected to support their children in areas such as fine motor skills development, reading comprehension and legible writing. Stakeholder views indicate that family involvement processes based on home and classroom settings can be carried out in a more conscious and sustainable manner when families are informed based on their needs. In this context, it has been observed that needs-based, programmed, and systematic family involvement processes have the potential to increase student achievement.

Keywords:

Early Reading and Writing, Family Involvement, Needs Assessment, Mixed-Methods Research

Introduction

A child's first experiences with language take place within the family. As Vygotsky (1978) emphasised, cognitive schemas shaped by social interactions within the family gradually structure the individual's inner world, paving the way for higher-level skills. Language is undoubtedly at the forefront of these critical skills.



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Language is acquired through social means in the family environment. Children exposed to auditory input gradually develop listening skills, followed by speaking skills through observation, imitation, and reinforcement processes. Children who acquire comprehension and expression skills to the extent provided by their families, by interacting with reading and writing materials while modelling their parents, also reinforce early reading and writing skills such as phonological awareness, word awareness, and letter knowledge (Carter, Chard, & Pool, 2009). Similarly, Cole and Engestrom (1993) exemplify that language is socio-culturally constructed within the family through reading skills. According to them, cognitive functions in the reading process do not originate solely from the individual's personal qualities; they are shaped by the influence of social actors in their environment, such as family, teachers, and friends. Language and literacy skills, which are socially shaped by family support and opportunities, continue to develop through the early reading and writing process. Early reading and writing instruction is critical in this process.

The main goal of early reading and writing teaching is to develop the comprehension and expression dimensions of language and, based on basic language skills such as listening and speaking, to equip students with critical reading and writing skills that they will use throughout their lives (Çelenk, 2006). In other words, early reading and writing lessons lay the foundation for the academic, cognitive, social, and cultural skills that individuals will benefit from throughout their lives. For this reason, the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills should never be left to chance. It is particularly important that what is learned in early reading and writing lessons is not limited to classroom activities but is reinforced by the influence of social environments outside of school. This necessity makes it imperative for families to involve in the early reading and writing process.

Considering that first-grade primary school students have very short attention spans, reading and writing activities carried out in the classroom must also be continued at home in order to ensure lasting learning (Çelenk, 2003; Taymaz, 2000; Tok, Tok and Mazi, 2008). The existence of the "Sound-Based Sentence Method" applied in Türkiye is another determining factor that requires family involvement. The Sound-Based Sentence Method has been designed in line with the constructivist approach. This approach is based on the student's readiness level and aims to generate functional, innovative, and original learning experiences in the classroom (MEB, 2005). Families are undoubtedly the ones who can inform the school and teachers about the readiness level of first-grade primary school students and support them in bringing this level to a state suitable for learning. In schools, parallel to the basic characteristics of

the early reading and writing process, families can be provided with educational skills related to "preparation for early reading and writing, perceiving sounds, forming syllables from sounds, forming words from syllables, and forming sentences and texts from words." Families who acquire these skills can engage with their children one-on-one during the reading and writing processes, organising shared activities based on imitation, repetition, and creativity. In this way, the skills acquired in groups at school can be supported at home in a personalised manner in line with the child's needs, expectations and individual performance (Lonigan and Whitehurst, 1998, cited in McMahan, 2010). Thus, families can both support the teaching process and make important contributions to the creation of a successful school life (Özbaş, 2013).

Numerous studies have shown that the child's immediate environment plays a more effective role than school-related factors in literacy success (McMahon, 2010; Power, 1992). The studies by Fan and Chen (2001), Ferguson (2011, cited in Bronfenbrenner, 2006b) and Au (2000) reveal that family involvement in early reading and writing has a much greater impact on academic achievement than the family's social status, size and parents' educational level. Furthermore, family involvement has been found to be crucial in the acquisition and improvement of literacy skills (Kayser, 2006; Lerner, 2000; Li, 2003), the development of children's written language skills (Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Griffin and Morrison, 1997; Rush, 1999) and improving reading comprehension levels (Leseman and deJong, 1998).

In addition, studies have shown that family involvement in reading, especially at home, positively affects reading achievement, language comprehension, and expressive language skills (Gest et al., 2004, cited in Clark, 2007a; 2007b), as well as increasing children's interest in reading, their attitudes towards it, and their involvement in class (Rowe, 1991, cited in Clark, 2007a; Clark, 2007b).

Families can be involved in the early reading and writing process as teaching assistants or as part of school organisations based on cooperation and effective communication, just as they do in other subjects. In addition, guided families serve as role models for literacy from the preschool period onwards, provide home-based authentic contexts for oral and written language development, and thus make important contributions to their children's literacy development (Gül, 2007).

Children whose parents read to them four to seven times a week demonstrate a more positive attitude towards reading and are more successful in this area (Ramotowski and Trepanier, 1977, cited in Salıcı Ahioğlu, 2006). Children whose families discuss books they read together achieve higher reading success

and have a broader conceptual vocabulary (Silvern, 1985). Moreover, children with high reading success and comprehensive conceptual knowledge generally come from families with more reading materials. Children whose parents serve as role models for reading and encourage them in this direction show a more pronounced increase in reading achievement and rapid progress in performance (Hansen, 1969, cited in Salıcı Ahioğlu, 2006). Furthermore, it is believed that families who not only take on the role of role models but also adopt supportive, school-contributing, and decision-making roles positively influence literacy skills. The supportive role of the family means creating a home environment that encourages the child to learn sounds and letters, having high but realistic expectations about the child's success and future performance, and actively participating in the process in line with these expectations.

Family involvement in early reading and writing, despite its critical importance and necessity, is influenced by numerous factors that affect the quality and frequency of involvement and, in some cases, even hinder the process. One such factor is parents' beliefs about reading and writing. In particular, parents' beliefs about the importance of reading and writing and their attitudes towards it directly determine the quality and duration of involvement (Özen Altınkaynak and Akman, 2016). Families who believe in the importance of reading and writing skills in academic and social life involve more intensively in the process both at home and in the classroom and spend quality time with their children. When democratic, consistent, and determined family structures are added to these beliefs and attitudes, the effect inevitably increases (Şahin and Tuğrul, 2019). Another important factor that affects family structure, parents' beliefs and attitudes, and, naturally, involvement in early reading and writing is the level of education. It is known that families with a high level of education have more positive attitudes towards reading and writing and involve more effectively in the learning process (Akin, 2016; Erbasan and Erbasan, 2020; Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunninham, 1991). Another factor related to beliefs, attitudes, and educational level is the knowledge and experiences of families regarding the early reading and writing process. The more knowledge and experience families have about the primary literacy method used, the more confident they feel about participating and the more they take advantage of opportunities to involve (Carter, Chard, & Pool, 2009; Sağırılı, 2022). For this reason, it is crucial for teachers to take on a leadership role in the involvement process and build positive and sustainable school-family relationships. In this way, families' knowledge and experience regarding early reading and writing can be increased. George (2009) states that this role of the teacher has a positive effect on language skills, especially reading.

The materials available to children at home and an appropriate working environment are among the other determining factors that influence the process. The richer the reading and writing environment and opportunities available at home, the greater the desire of parents and children to spend time together. Epstein and Van Voorhis (2001) show that daily or weekly reading and writing involvement materials increase families' interest in involvement and improve children's reading and writing skills. Additionally, reading sessions in which parents act as role model readers increase children's interest in the involvement process and positively impact their literacy performance (Cassidy, 2004; Livingston and Wirt, 2003; Şahin and Tuğrul, 2019; Weigel, Martin, and Bennett, 2006). In addition to all these factors, it is also possible to encounter obstacles that may hinder the process.

As mentioned above, the educational level of the family directly affects the process of involvement in early reading and writing. A low level of education and, as a result, the family's lack of interest in the process not only negatively affects involvement but also disrupts communication between the family and the teacher (Özcan and Özcan, 2016). Parents who do not have a democratic, consistent, and determined family structure may behave in a domineering manner towards their children, lacking empathy. This unhealthy relationship between the family and the child also affects the process of involvement in early reading and writing; children who fail are scolded, their inadequacies are pointed out, they are humiliated by being compared to others, and they may be alienated from the entire process (Başar, Göncü & Baran, 2021; Sağırılı, 2022; Uslu, 2014). As seen, if families lack knowledge and experience regarding primary reading and writing methods, techniques, and processes, an involvement process that supports classroom learning in the desired direction cannot be established. In fact, misguided and incorrect teaching attempts by families can lead to inconsistencies with classroom learning, causing confusion among students (Başar et al., 2015; Başar and Tanış Gündüz, 2020; Erbasan and Erbasan, 2020; Sağırılı, 2022). Examples of this include attempting to teach sounds too early, emphasising letter names instead of sounds, and incorrectly showing letter forms. In order to ensure quality family involvement in early reading and writing, teachers must contend with other social barriers such as poverty, single parenthood, illiterate parents, and differences in native languages. Such problematic situations can negate the positive effects of the family involvement plan and create negative effects on the child's linguistic development due to a stressful lifestyle (Browne, 1996; Kucer, 2004, cited in Gül, 2007).

In order for stakeholders to benefit maximally from involvement in early reading and writing, they must go

through a carefully planned process and activities. The aforementioned activity processes must be prepared by taking into account the factors that determine the quality of involvement and the needs of stakeholders.

Families' awareness of their own literacy skills, overcoming misconceptions and prejudices, understanding teachers' expectations of themselves and their children, and most importantly, getting to know their children deeply can only be achieved through planned, systematic, and multifaceted involvement processes that involve families in the teaching process in line with their needs, rather than through family education and school-family communication activities alone. Thanks to this approach, families are informed and educated about the early reading and writing process, and planned and systematic involvement can be achieved through home- and classroom-based activities developed according to needs. However, despite the aforementioned ideal expectations, there has been no mention of family involvement in early reading and writing in Turkish language teaching programmes from the past to the present. Furthermore, the absence of family involvement programmes and activities that have been developed based on needs, tested, and evaluated for effectiveness in the early reading and writing literature clearly highlights a significant need in this area.

This study, conducted by considering the needs identified in the literature, aims to identify the family involvement needs related to early reading and writing.

Method

Research Design

This study covers the part on "determining needs and setting goals" from the front section of a doctoral thesis on the contribution of family involvement programmes to early reading and writing skills.

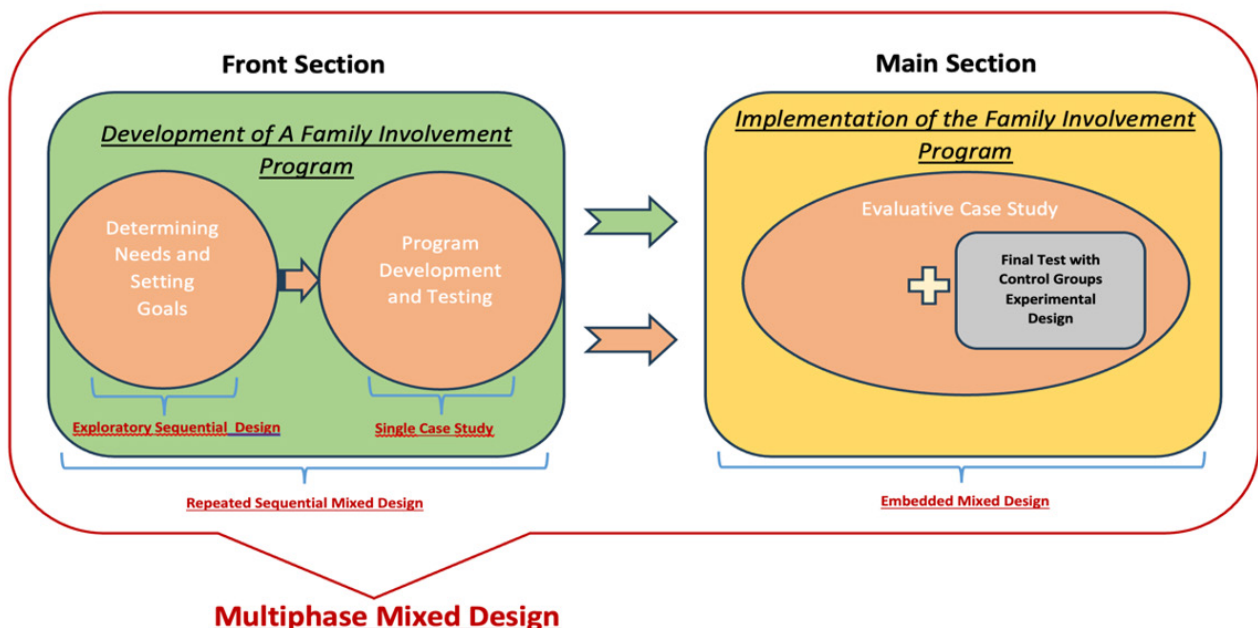
The "determining needs and setting goals" part of the study was conducted in accordance with the exploratory sequential design of mixed-methods research. This design refers to a sequential mixed design pattern that begins with qualitative processes to discover variables that are decisive in the quantitative process or to develop quantitative data collection tools, and continues with quantitative processes (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2015; Greene, Caracelli, and Graham, 1989). Using this pattern, the study first identified stakeholders' expectations and needs regarding family involvement through qualitative methods, developed a closed-ended needs assessment survey based on these findings, and listed the final needs for family involvement in early reading with the support of quantitative findings obtained from the survey.

Participants

In the qualitative phase of the exploratory sequential design, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with stakeholders, including classroom teachers, parents of first-grade primary school students, and field experts.

Figure 1.

The Place of the "Determining Needs and Setting Goals" Part in the Research Design



The classroom teachers who involved in the semi-structured individual interviews were selected based on the criterion of teaching first grade in upper, middle, and lower socio-economic neighbourhoods. In this way, three teachers were selected from upper socio-economic schools, four from middle socio-economic schools, and one from a lower socio-economic school. The demographic information of the teachers is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Demographic Information of Classroom Teachers Participating in the Interviews

Code Name	Years of Professional Experience	First-Grade Teaching Experience	Cities Where Assigned	School
Muzaffer	18	Five times	Muş, Ağrı, Eskişehir	A
Metin	15	Four times	Bingöl, Eskişehir	A
Hülya	5	First time	Konya, Eskişehir	A
Zeycan	2	Five times	Eskişehir	B
Yetkin	26	Six times	Ankara, Van, Eskişehir	B
Sinem	18	Five times	Erzurum, Diyarbakır, Bolu, Eskişehir	B
Haydar	16	Three time	Van, Niğde, Eskişehir	B
Gülsüm	11	Three time	İstanbul, Eskişehir	C

The parents who will involve in the focus group discussion were also selected according to the criteria sampling. The demographic information of six parents who volunteered to involve from a lower socio-economic school is presented in Table 2. A lower socio-economic school was selected to take into account the reflections of limited environment and insufficient learning opportunities and to identify as many needs as possible related to involvement within this scope.

Table 2.
Demographic Information of Parents Participating in the Interview

Code Name	Employment Status	Number of Children	Student's Gender
Hacer	Not Working	2	Male
Tülay	Not working	1	Male
Melahat	Working	1	Male
Sümbül	Not working	2	Female
Zeynep	Not working	2	Male
Pelin	Not working	2	Male

The last stakeholder group whose views were sought regarding family involvement was field experts. In determining the experts, criteria and appropriate

sampling methods were used. Five academics from three different state universities who met the criteria of having conducted research in the field of early reading and writing, having teaching experience in early reading and writing, and having taught early reading and writing at the undergraduate level were reached. Among the field experts who volunteered to involve, one is an associate professor, three are associate professors, and one is a professor.

"Teacher Opinions on Family Involvement in Early Reading and Writing Questionnaire Form," developed based on the findings from the interviews, was distributed online to classroom teachers working across Turkey using the snowball sampling method, and a total of 490 teachers completed the form.

The majority of teachers participating in the study were women (80%). When looking at the educational background of the participants, it was found that 80% were graduates of the Faculty of Education, 11.3% had a master's degree, and 2% had a doctoral degree. In terms of professional seniority, 22% of teachers have 12–15 years of experience, while 17.3% have 16–19 years of experience. Additionally, a significant portion of participants have taught first-grade students four times (17%) and five times (17%) so far. When examining the geographical locations of the institutions where the teachers work, it was determined that 53% are located in city centres and 31% in districts. In terms of socio-economic level, 57% of the schools where teachers work have medium socio-economic characteristics, while 33.3% have low socio-economic characteristics.

Data Collection Tools and Techniques

In this study, semi-structured individual interview forms, a focus group interview form, and a questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions were used.

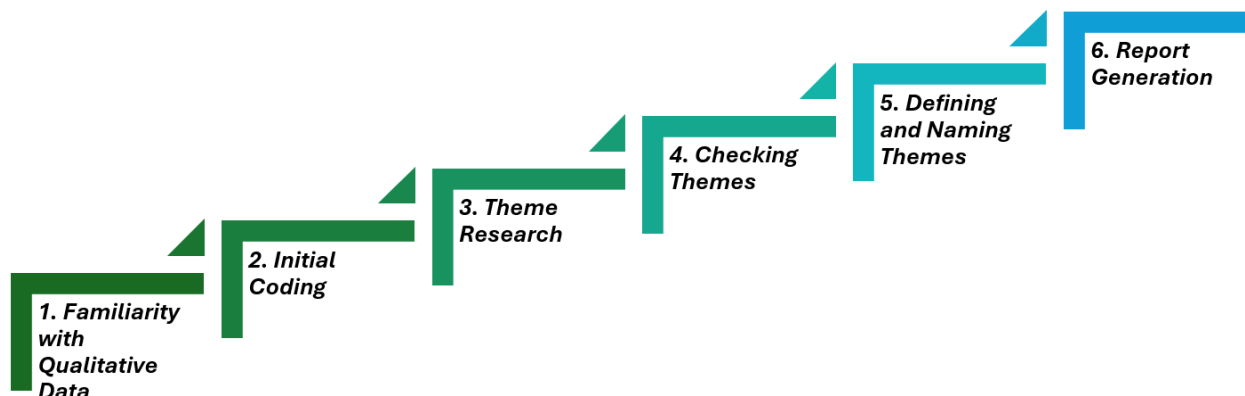
A draft teacher form consisting of seven semi-structured questions and a draft expert interview form consisting of six semi-structured questions were presented to six experts. Based on their feedback, the forms were reviewed and revised, and their final versions, including follow-up questions, were finalised.

A draft focus group interview form consisting of six questions was also presented to six experts to reveal families' views and experiences regarding early reading and writing. The final version included seven main questions and various probing questions.

Based on the findings from these interviews, notes from literature reviews, and the outcomes of Turkish language teaching programmes, a draft list of needs for family involvement in early reading and writing was created. Based on these lists, the question pools for the survey were created, and it was decided that the

Figure 2.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis Stages



survey would consist of three sections: a) demographic information, b) needs related to informing families, and c) needs related to family support.

In the first stage, a draft form consisting of Likert-type closed-ended items and three open-ended questions was prepared. This form was submitted to three subject matter experts for evaluation in terms of content, structure, and face validity. Various revisions were made to the form based on the feedback received from the experts. This form, created in Microsoft Word format, was then transferred to the SurveyMonkey platform and reviewed by field experts for feasibility. Subsequently, a pilot application was conducted with 10 classroom teachers using the online version of the form. The teachers who were involved in the pilot study evaluated whether the survey questions were clear and understandable and filled out the "pilot application feedback form" accordingly. Based on the teacher feedback obtained at this stage, the form was reviewed once again, and the necessary adjustments were made to finalise it. The final survey form consists of: a) Demographic Information (seven items structured with a classification scale), b) Needs for Informing Families (17 Likert-type questions and one open-ended question) and c) Needs for Family Support (12 Likert-type questions and two open-ended questions).

The closed-ended items of the "Teachers' Opinions on Family Involvement in Early Reading and Writing Survey Form," which consists of a total of 39 questions, are rated on a seven-point Likert scale. On this scale, "1" is considered "unimportant," while "7" is considered "very important." Additionally, in the online version of the survey, if a participant assigns a score of "1" to any question, the system automatically prompts an open-ended question: "Please explain why you consider it insignificant."

Data Collection Process

Individual interviews and focus group discussions conducted to identify family involvement needs were

carried out face-to-face and recorded using audio recording devices.

The questionnaire form, developed based on qualitative findings in accordance with an exploratory mixed design, was distributed to classroom teachers working in different parts of Turkey using snowball sampling and the SurveyMonkey application. In line with the findings obtained from the questionnaire, the validity of the items included in the draft list of needs was also verified through a wider group of participants (sample).

Data Analysis

Semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, depending on the size of the data sets and the researcher's desire to explore different conceptual relationships and conduct in-depth analyses. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis stages were used in the process. These stages are shown in Figure 2.

In the thematic analysis process, written transcripts of the video and audio recordings of the interviews were prepared. In the first stage, i.e., the "familiarisation with qualitative data" stage, the transcripts were read repeatedly to gain a deep understanding and internalise the data. In the second stage, concepts, situations, and relationships appropriate to the analysis objective of the research were identified, and the coding process was carried out. The coding process was based on selecting and classifying meaningful units. In the third stage, the coded data was reviewed in detail, codes that did not serve the purpose of the research were eliminated, some codes with similar content were combined, and codes with meaningful relationships were grouped and clustered. In the fourth stage, the clusters were checked again, and those that were unrelated were separated; some new subgroups were identified within certain clusters, or it was observed that an existing cluster encompassed other clusters. In this context, new arrangements were made between the clusters. In the fifth stage, the

themes and sub-themes were finalised and defined with names appropriate to their content. In the final stage, the “report creation” process, the findings of the study were begun to be written alongside other analysis results.

In the analysis of quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire, descriptive statistical methods were utilised. Descriptive statistics involve techniques such as frequency, percentage, measures of central tendency, measures of variability, and correlation coefficients to describe the characteristics of a sample and present them in an organised manner (Büyükoztürk, Çokluk, and Köklü, 2014; Salkind, 2013). In this context, the analysis yielded the mode, percentage, and frequency values. The qualitative data obtained from the three open-ended questions in the survey were evaluated using descriptive analysis methods. The primary reason for choosing descriptive analysis methods was that the open-ended questions had a single, clear purpose and the data set obtained from these questions was limited.

Ethical Considerations

An ethical committee report was obtained from the Anadolu University Research and Publication Ethics Committee prior to conducting the research. Immediately thereafter, an application was made to the Eskişehir Provincial Directorate of National Education, and the necessary permission for data collection was obtained.

All participants who took part in the interviews and completed the questionnaire expressed their consent through voluntary involvement forms. No information that could reveal the identities or personal details of the participants was included in any part of the study, and code names were used where necessary.

Findings

The findings are presented thematically, separated according to the participating stakeholders, and linked where deemed necessary.

Findings Based on Teacher Opinions

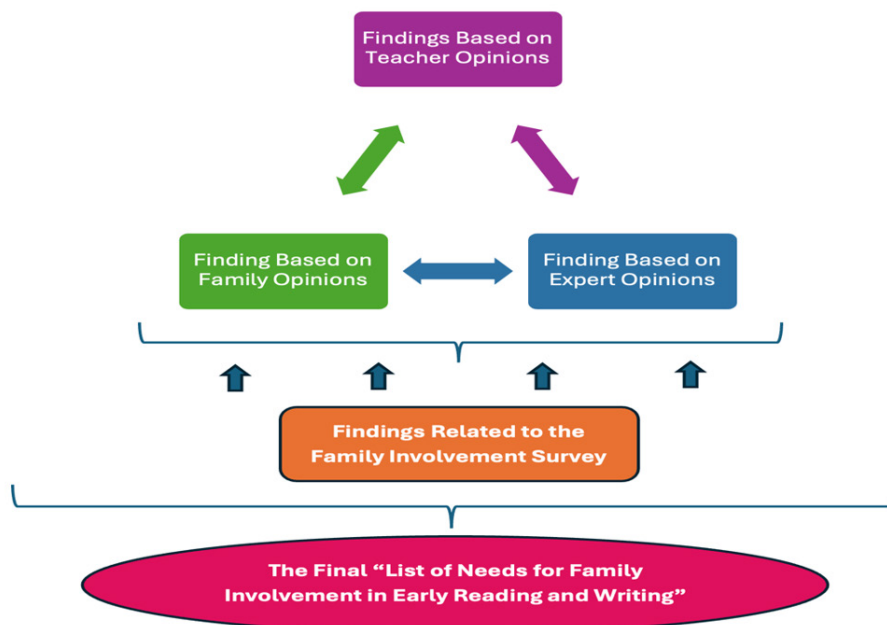
Class teachers’ views on family involvement are grouped under five themes: a) teachers’ perception of family involvement, b) the family involvement process, c) information about involvement, d) general measures related to family involvement, and e) teachers’ training needs regarding involvement.

Teachers’ Perception of Family Involvement

Teachers generally stated that family involvement is an important process, that it has a positive effect on the teaching-learning process, and that family involvement develops students’ sense of responsibility and self-confidence in relation to learning to read and write. According to them, while family involvement provides significant support to teachers, when it becomes overly controlling, it can lead to psychological stress among students, resulting in more harm than benefit. Teachers emphasised that this process should be carried out in a collaborative, coordinated and instantaneous manner. Considering that this stage is the initial stage of reading and writing instruction, they stated that involvement is indispensable. They have stated that if the related skills are not supported in the desired direction at home, the desired results cannot be achieved, emphasising that early reading and writing learning continues at home. Teacher Sinem expresses her views in this regard as follows: “I think the family is very important. Homework, encouraging reading, supporting their work... The family must always be there for the child.

Figure 3.

The Relational Diagram of the Findings



Otherwise, we achieve our goal later... If the child does not receive enough support from the family, they cannot make good progress on their own and with what the teacher shows them at school." (p. 1)

They have pointed out that the educational level, social environment, and socio-economic conditions of the family directly determine family involvement, and that families with better socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions show more willing involvement in the early reading and writing process. However, almost all teachers have emphasised that they have a participatory parent profile. Yetkin Teacher stated, "My parents repeat the reading and writing homework given by the teacher with their children at home, cooperate with the teacher, and make sure they do their homework" (p. 1), reducing family involvement in early reading and writing to doing homework, but emphasised in later conversations that involvement should be controlled, continuous, and more effective.

Family Involvement Process

Classroom teachers generally stated that families involved by reading stories and creating stories with pictures, asking comprehension questions, providing feedback and corrections, evaluating their children's reading and writing performance, doing practice and repetition homework with their children, and ensuring that letters were written correctly and in the right direction. It is noteworthy that one of the teachers mentioned that they visited families to monitor their involvement and observe the involvement process, but also emphasised that they did not fully understand how an ideal involvement process should be implemented and what it should entail.

Teacher Metin stated that he sought home-based involvement methods, within which families could be involved in the reading and writing development process and make process-based assessments: "This year, I had the parents purchase workbooks, and they did the activities at home. We followed up every week, assessed the children individually, and they were able to involve in the development process to some extent..." (p.3).

Class teachers emphasised the importance of family communication channels in ensuring coordinated and instant communication with families, and stated that they used WhatsApp and closed Facebook groups, phone calls, and individual and group parent meetings to communicate with families in general. In particular, teachers Metin and Hülya requested that families share videos of their involvement in closed groups in order to effectively monitor family involvement and motivate families to involve in the process. From the teachers' views, it is understood that they have not had much experience with class-

based family involvement and that, in general, class-based family involvement takes place in the form of observing lessons during the preparation stage for reading and writing.

In the interviews, it was emphasised that most of the unwanted and incorrect involvement attempts hindered rather than supported the teachers' work. Teachers mentioned that the individualistic and competitive nature of involvement undermined the process. According to them, parents' hastiness in working on sound groups, making students memorise words, teaching letters instead of sounds, thereby confusing students, ignoring and reinforcing incorrect pen-holding habits, causing illegible writing, failing to provide effective feedback and corrections, and writing in incorrect letter forms disrupt the involvement process. Teacher Muzaffer expressed that the impatience of parents, or in other words, their desire for their children to be ahead of other students, leads to unconscious and uncontrolled interventions in the early reading and writing process, which in turn disrupts the coordination between the classroom and the home, as follows: "There is a mindset that 'my child will read faster, mine will be ahead'. They try to act as teachers themselves, and then we end up singing from different hymn sheets. The child gets confused. This individualistic approach disrupts class unity." (p.2)

Teachers have indicated that they need families to involve in many aspects and activities of early reading and writing. In general, they need families to support teaching through sound and legible writing, to practise reading aloud and to model this behaviour, practise penmanship, practise feeling the sounds in words, provide feedback and evaluation on students' activities, act as role model readers, engage in game-based activities with their children, and use reward systems during activities. In addition, they want families to use notebooks effectively and regularly and monitor this habit, do paired line work, write numbers correctly, engage in joint activities aimed at developing fine motor skills, and provide support, especially in the stages of sound perception and reading. Teachers emphasise the importance of activities such as using scissors, playing with play dough, and making letters out of dough for the development of fine motor skills, paired reading methods for fluent reading, and activities such as forming words and sentences from syllables drawn from a tombola, and sentences from words, using 5W1H questions to understand what has been read, and colouring activities involving words containing a specific letter to develop letter awareness. Some teachers, however, emphasised the importance of active family support during the critical and challenging stages of early reading and writing, particularly in the stages of perceiving sounds and blending sounds to form syllables. For

example, Teacher Handan stated that family support is important and indispensable in the first two sound groups for all sounds to be heard, easily distinguished, and phonological strategies to be developed: "Combining sounds, reaching syllables... In order to understand that logic, the family's contribution is essential in the first two sound groups" (p. 2).

Although many teachers stated that family involvement based on the classroom is important, they pointed out that it is not easy for all families to involve at the same time due to spatial constraints and emphasised that classroom-based involvement can be achieved through the individual involvement of families within certain periods. In this context, they have indicated that it would be beneficial for families to involve in class-based activities through drama and play activities, sentence writing competitions, and providing feedback and corrections to writing activities by moving between rows. Some teachers have particularly emphasised the necessity of class-based involvement during the family information process and especially in the preparation for reading and writing and the teaching of the first group sounds. They stated that observing the lesson would internalise the stages of the Sound-Based Sentence Method, improve the quality of home-based involvement, and contribute to the coordination of classroom and home-based activities. Teachers also stated that classroom-based involvement should be limited and suggested that involvement activities should be related to life and freed from monotony.

Information Regarding Involvement

Teachers emphasised that informing families about how involvement should be carried out and what should be taken into consideration is as important as the involvement activities themselves. When the data was analysed, it was found that teachers did not provide specific and detailed information and that they provided general information at meetings at the beginning of the term or through individual meetings. In general, teachers informed parents about the differences between teaching through sounds and letters, the stages of the Sound-Based Sentence Method, the use of writing notebooks, how activities would be evaluated, the sharing of activity guidelines, and supporting pen-holding skills. Emphasising the critical importance of the first weeks in terms of informing parents, Teacher Muzaffer said, "In the first week, I draw up a roadmap for parents and distribute it. I explain to them one by one which letters we will teach and what they should pay attention to." (p. 2)

Despite all this information, teachers believe that parents need to be informed about the stages and functioning of the Sound-Based Sentence Method, how sounds are combined, the teaching plan, how to dictate writing, effective and meaningful ways of

reading, and how to write letter forms correctly and in the right direction. They have emphasised that these information meetings should be conducted in person or online by an expert using visuals, practical examples, and case studies. Teacher Muzaffer also stated that he provided small guidebooklets to participants at the parent meeting to inform them. "In the sound-based method, the family teacher must listen completely and ask questions about anything they do not understand. They must clearly understand what to do to avoid disrupting the process." (p. 1) Sinem Teacher also emphasised the importance of families actively and consistently participating in information meetings, as otherwise, misinformation would do more harm than good to their efforts to involve.

Teachers' Educational Needs Regarding Involvement

Teachers have stated that, in addition to informing families about involvement, they themselves need training, particularly on family involvement processes. They have indicated that they would like to receive training on topics and issues such as interpersonal communication, communication with students, and effective communication methods with families from different generations. They have also emphasised that this training should be interactive, practical, and enriched with visuals, similar to family information sessions. In this context, Teacher Zeycan emphasised the need for teachers to be trained in this direction in order to establish communication channels that will break the family shell and eliminate misconceptions about their children, expressing her opinion as follows: "Sometimes parents think they are doing everything right with their children. We need to break these misconceptions without pushing them away. At this point, I believe that we too need to receive training on effective communication with families." (p.2)

General Recommendations Regarding Family Involvement

Many teachers stated that the control mechanism in family involvement is coordination, that teachers and families should progress in parallel, and that involvement should be continuously active throughout the entire early reading and writing process, not just during a specific period. They also recommended that such involvement should not take on a coercive or oppressive dimension. Two teachers, however, deemed it necessary to use printed materials with a guiding nature for involvement and stated that this would enable families to always have the plans and programmes at their disposal.

Findings Based on Family Opinions

Parents' views on involvement are categorised under four themes: a) the role of the family in education, b) involvement experiences, c) involvement needs, and d) recommendations.

The Role of the Family in Education

In general, parents' views on the role of families in education are similar to those of teachers. Like teachers, parents have stated that family involvement is important, indispensable and essential, that it motivates students and makes them feel valued, and that it harmonises school and home life. One of them, Ms. Melahat, expressed her views as follows: "Children are much more successful when they receive individual attention. When their mother and father are with them, children feel more valuable. I saw this in my own child. When we work together, they become motivated and more enthusiastic." (p. 2)

When examining opinions regarding involvement in early reading and writing programmes, it is evident that family involvement is considered important for a successful process and that involvement enhances reading and writing performance. In particular, some participants emphasised the importance and necessity of inter-family cooperation in involvement, highlighting the negative aspects of individualistic and competitive involvement mentioned by teachers.

Involvement Experiences

Parents stated that mothers play a more active role in early reading and writing, while fathers show limited involvement or none at all due to work and fatigue. Parents also emphasised that siblings play an important role in involvement, that such supportive environments motivate their children, and that siblings of similar ages motivate each other academically even if they do not involve. In this context, some parents mentioned that nieces, nephews, and cousins also take an interest in the reading and writing process and play a motivating role.

During the interviews, parents emphasised the difficulties they experienced in relation to involvement in early reading and writing. After coding the data, it was observed that these difficulties were generally related to the difficulties their children experienced in early reading and writing. In this context, parents generally reported difficulties in writing legibly, omitting letters while writing, writing letters incorrectly (in terms of form and direction), writing within the lines, and confusing letters such as "b" and "d" while writing and reading. In addition, they were unable to determine how to involve in situations related to reading skills such as reading from letters, reading by heart, inability to pronounce sounds (especially the pronunciation of consonants and vowels) and omitting suffixes while reading, and therefore experienced difficulties.

Despite all this, parents stated that they tried to involve by providing feedback and corrections on their children's homework, using reinforcements and rewards, trying to help their children find their mistakes, and watching educational videos related to

phonetics together. Additionally, they explained that they involved in reading competitions organised at school, demonstrated class-based involvement, and that this motivated their children.

Some parents recalled the initial reading and writing process based on sentence analysis and stated that they tried to teach their children by teaching them letters first, which confused their children. Ms. Tülay said, "In our time, they taught us letter by letter. I naturally started that way. But when our teacher said that wasn't the way to do it, I found it difficult, to be honest... It confused the child a bit... There may be other parents who think like me. There is a big difference between the old method and the new one..." (p.7), thus highlighting the need for families to be informed about early reading and writing methods. In this regard, it can be said that the parents' need for information and the teachers' views in this direction are in line with each other.

Need for Involvement

When parents' views on their involvement needs were analysed, it was found that almost all needs were related to overcoming difficulties encountered in involvement. In this context, parents want to be informed about how to blend sounds, how to carry out activities for dividing words into syllables, how to combine letters, how to write letters correctly and in the right direction, what to pay attention to, and how to carry out activities related to the use of affixes. Ms. Zeynep, noting that most parents lack knowledge and experience in combining sounds, expressed her concerns that these issues could be overcome with expert support in the following lines: "I don't know exactly how to combine sounds. For example, when I put some letters together, I can't figure out how to read them. If there were an activity or an example, we could do it at home. I'm afraid of doing something wrong when working with my child." (p. 12) Parents also stated that they needed information about their roles in the preparation for reading and writing and what they should pay attention to when communicating with their children.

Parents who mentioned their general information-based needs structured their remaining needs around classroom-based involvement. In this context, parents emphasised that classroom-based involvement could motivate both themselves and their children and increase cooperation and communication between families. They stated that the Sound-Based Sentence Method would be effective in classroom involvement by using games, songs, and poems in the stages of feeling and recognising sounds and writing and reading letters. They also added that participating in writing instruction by evaluating written products would be beneficial in terms of tracking students' development.

Recommendations

Parents reading the introduction section of the involvement consent form ensured they had an understanding of the scope and process of the research. Perhaps as a result of this awareness, parents made suggestions for the development of a programme and plan for involvement in early reading and writing. In this context, some parents, particularly Ms Pelin, suggested that there should be a written document available to them that they could share with their spouses to ensure coordinated involvement. These parents wanted this guide to include practical information and examples of activities; they also considered it necessary to hold interim meetings and evaluations on the progress of family involvement. Ms. Pelin explained her views as follows: "It would be great if we had a booklet at our disposal so that we knew what to do. I would share it with my husband, and we could work together. Especially if there were examples on topics like sound blending and learning through games, we could provide more informed support." (p. 15)

Findings Based on Expert Opinions

The opinions of experts in the field regarding family involvement in early reading and writing are categorised under the following themes: a) the importance of the family in early reading and writing, b) topics that families need to be informed about, c) home and classroom-based involvement methods, and d) general recommendations.

The Importance of the Family in Early Reading and Writing

Experts have emphasised the importance of emotional family support for children starting primary school, stating that the perception of school created in children directly affects their attitudes towards learning. In this context, they have also emphasised the importance of providing high-quality teaching of writing during the same period. Based on these ideas, experts have stated that family attitudes towards early reading and writing are decisive in the process of adapting to school. In particular, it has been noted that the knowledge and experience of parents regarding reading and writing instruction are decisive in the first impressions children develop towards school. Dr. Yılmaz explained that the anxieties experienced by children in their inner world are often shaped by their families' attitudes towards school and literacy, saying, "The parent's trust in the teacher and the school in primary literacy positively affects the child. The family environment is important for the child to be open to learning..." (p. 2). In this context, it has also emerged that it is necessary to identify the concerns, prejudices, misconceptions, and unrealistic expectations of families regarding the process and to take the necessary steps. Similarly, Dr. Eda states, "When starting to read and write, if the parents are

anxious, the child also becomes anxious. It is very important for them to come to school together with a sense of trust and not to reflect their anxiety on the child while doing reading and writing homework. The way to do this is for teachers to understand families and carry out the process in a coordinated manner..." (p. 1), indicating that the way for stakeholders to get through the process with minimal damage is through coordination between the classroom and the home.

Family-teacher coordination has emerged as an important condition for quality early reading and writing instruction. Experts have stated that the family's harmonious cooperation with the teacher during the teaching process has a direct impact on the student's level of success. Dr. Eda emphasised that "if the family does not work in sync with the teacher, the child skips reading and writing exercises. This creates a sense of failure." (p. 2) She emphasises that the lack of coordination has a direct negative impact on learning outcomes. Additionally, expert opinions reveal that home-based early reading and writing activities not being conducted under teacher supervision and in parallel with classroom instruction negatively affect the student's motivation and sense of self-efficacy.

Dr. Hasan, on the other hand, has demonstrated that communication methods and tools used to ensure coordination can cause more harm than good if they are not used carefully and sustainably. Referring to problems encountered in the use of communication tools, he said, "When I write in the WhatsApp group, only five parents read it. Those who read it either misunderstand or continue reading what they already know. The rest stop following what is going on after a while. Teachers should communicate not only by writing but also through visuals and make sure that their messages reach the recipients." (p. 3) With this statement, he emphasised that digital communication channels are not used effectively enough, which makes teacher-parent coordination difficult. Dr. Yılmaz, who emphasises that digital communication channels should not be used solely for homework announcements, stated, "Teachers should not just make announcements; they should guide and raise awareness. Families should learn from teachers how to support reading and writing, and they should learn this step by step." (p. 2)

In this context, it is clear that the class teacher should be more than just a technician who shares homework assignments and related schedules; they should be an orchestra conductor who directs and coordinates the early reading and writing process. All stakeholders have emphasised the need for coordination between classroom and home-based learning, which should be sustained with the support and supervision of the teacher.

Topics That Parents Need to Be Informed About

This theme points to the risk of families making incorrect interventions in the learning process due to a lack of pedagogical knowledge. Like other stakeholders interviewed, experts also stated that families who are not familiar with sound-based teaching methods can negatively affect the process. Dr. Derya said, "For the process to be carried out more effectively, families should be informed about technical issues. If they do not know how to produce sounds or form syllables, they may force their children to learn using incorrect methods." (p. 2) emphasising that incorrect learning is inevitable if families are not informed. Dr. Eda, on the other hand, expressed her thoughts on the confusion between sounds and letters and the rapid teaching of sound groups as follows: "They are moving through the letters too quickly. We should focus on sounds, not letters. What matters is that the sounds can be understood at the end of the process; our goal is not for the child to quickly pronounce words they do not understand, such as ' '. Families who are unaware of this disrupt the process." (p. 5) All these statements reveal that families must be informed about the objectives and stages of the Sound-Based Sentence Method and the nature of free reading in order to involve effectively.

According to them, the fact that families do not have sufficient knowledge about child development, individual differences and needs causes them to intervene in the process unconsciously. Dr. Eda summarises her views on this subject as follows: "Parents should not compare their children with others, but should try to discover the stage of development they are at and their awareness and differences in relation to language. They should raise awareness about the importance of reading habits. The way to do this is to understand the developmental stage the child is in." (p. 3) It can be said that these views of the experts are parallel to those of classroom teachers.

The experts also emphasised that teachers should adopt an empathetic, constructive and guiding approach when holding information meetings. Dr. Hasan stressed the importance of teachers being supportive rather than judgemental in their relationships with parents: "It is very important for teachers to guide parents without judging or hurting them. Otherwise, parents will disconnect from meetings or online groups, and the teacher's authoritarian attitude will indirectly have a negative impact on reading and writing success..." (p. 3)

Dr. Yilmaz, on the other hand, argued that family education should not only be informative but also interactive and practical: "It is necessary to bring parents into the classroom, have them involve in activities related to the topics they are informed about, and teach them interactively. Simply informing

them is not enough; it does not lead to lasting results without application." (p. 7) According to some experts, this approach can enable the family to become an active participant who learns through experiencing the process.

Home and Classroom-Based Involvement Methods

According to experts, family-supported learning activities carried out in the home environment are of great importance in terms of reinforcing the knowledge and skills students acquire at school. They have stated that these practices should be supportive not only academically but also in terms of psycho-social development. Dr. Eda, in this context, emphasised the impact of making home-based reading and writing activities fun and stated the following: "Reading and writing activities at home should be done like a game, not like a teacher. Let's sing a song, I'll read and you repeat..." (p. 3) This statement highlights the importance of integrating the early reading and writing process into the child's life in a meaningful way.

However, this support process can be detrimental to learning if it is not sufficiently structured. Dr. Hasan stated that families' unconscious interventions can disrupt students' comprehension processes: "They are harming the process with their intention to help. Children move on to the next letter before fully learning the previous one." (p. 2) Most experts believe that this situation can lead to habits that are difficult to reverse, especially in sound-based teaching systems. The relevant findings once again highlight the importance of family information and indicate that involvement should be teacher-controlled and coordinated. In this context, it can be inferred that all stakeholders have similar experiences and thoughts.

Some experts have stated that the presence of parents as observers in the classroom increases families' awareness of the early reading and writing process. According to them, these practices enable families to directly observe the Sound-Based Sentence Method and deepen their pedagogical understanding. Dr. Derya recommended that families be included in the classroom as observers or participants on specific days and at specific times. However, she emphasised that this process must be carefully planned: "If parents are going to help in the classroom, this must be very controlled. We must not make mistakes while trying to do something good." (p. 3) This emphasis highlights the extent to which teacher guidance is decisive in classroom-based involvement.

Dr. Eda, on the other hand, described the transformative effect of classroom-based involvement on the teaching process as follows: "Seeing what we do in class creates change. Many parents said, 'I was doing it wrong with my child.'" (p. 3) This statement shows that it contributes to families redefining their

Table 3.*Descriptive Statistics on Topics on Which Families Need to Be Informed*

Topic Heading	\bar{X}	S	Min	Mo
Effective Communication with Children	6.79	0.65	3	7
Areas of Child Development	6.76	0.71	2	7
Children's Developmental Stages	6.68	0.73	2	7
Supporting the Development of Their Children's Fine Motor Skills	6.66	0.68	3	7
How Sounds Are Articulated/Combined	6.43	1.09	1	7
Line Drawing Activities with Children Under the Guidance of the Teacher	6.34	1.02	2	7
Appropriate Reading Distance, Angle, and Location	6.28	0.97	1	7
Proper Sitting Position for Reading and Writing	6.27	1	1	7
Correct Pencil Grip	6.27	1.04	1	7
Writing in Appropriate Size in Line Spacing	6.03	1.15	2	7
Character Form and Direction	6.02	1.34	1	7
Notebook Positioning and Use for Right-handed and Left-handed Students	6.02	1.26	1	7
Providing Home-Based Support for Early Reading and Writing Instruction	6.02	1.37	1	7
Phonics-Based Sentence Method and Stages	5.90	1.35	1	7
Differences Between Sound-Based and Letter-Based Early Reading and Writing Instruction	5.72	1.81	1	7
Classroom-Based Support for Early Reading and Writing Instruction	5.67	1.83	1	7
Number of Movements Required to Write Letters	5.54	1.49	1	7

Table 4.*Descriptive Statistics on Areas Where Families Should Provide Support*

Topic Heading	\bar{X}	S	Min	Mo
Supporting Basic Reading Comprehension Skills	6.61	0.74	1	7
Supporting dictation skills	6.54	0.89	1	7
Supporting legible writing skills	6.47	0.95	2	7
Supporting Text Production Skills	6.40	1	1	7
Engaging in activities with their children related to the blending/combining of sounds	6.30	1.17	1	7
Supporting their ability to feel and recognise sounds	6.29	1.23	1	7
Assessing their children's reading and writing performance (providing feedback and corrections, etc.)	6.08	1.34	1	7

supportive roles. Classroom-based involvement strengthens the interaction between the teacher-parent-student triangle by involving not only the child but also the parent in the learning process.

However, it has been noted that if such practices are not sustained and systematised, some parents may develop a tendency to remain mere observers. Therefore, structured observations and practical activities guided by teachers can help families involve more consciously and sustainably in the early reading and writing process.

General Recommendations

Experts have made general recommendations for making family involvement effective in early reading and writing education. These recommendations are, in brief: strengthening teacher-family interaction, raising awareness among families about methods and processes, structuring learning processes through involvement programmes or guides, and developing supportive policies by school management. Three experts, Eda, Derya, and Yilmaz, emphasised that strengthening teacher-family interaction is at the core of all these recommendations. In this context, Eda suggested that family information meetings should be transformed from a one-way transfer of information to a format based on mutual learning: "Parent meetings should not be limited to giving grades. Families should learn from each other, share experiences, and seek solutions" (p. 6). Dr. Yilmaz also argues that the process should not only be based on providing information but also on joint production: "Don't just tell the family about the child's situation; let's think together about what can be done". (p. 9) Dr. Derya, on the other hand, has assigned an important role to administrators in ensuring teacher-family interaction and emphasised that school administrators should encourage teachers to increase family involvement: "Administrators should not leave teachers alone in their relations with parents. Decisions regarding families should be made jointly." (p. 3)

According to experts, in order to improve the quality of family involvement in early reading and writing, the principles of transparency, mutual learning, continuous communication, and constructive guidance should be adopted in home and classroom-based practices. In particular, sample materials to guide home-based practices, plans for classroom-based observations, and family information sessions will facilitate families' conscious and positive contribution to the process. In addition, it is recommended that teachers' skills in establishing relationships with families be developed, that administrators support this process, and that environments conducive to effective family involvement be created.

Findings Related to the Family Involvement Survey

The findings above were used to create a draft list of needs based on notes from literature reviews and the outcomes of Turkish language teaching programmes. The findings of the survey developed based on these drafts are discussed under three headings.

Topics on Which Families Need to Be Informed

Class teachers' views on the topics that families need to be informed about were obtained through 17 Likert-type closed-ended questions. The relevant topic headings and statistical information are presented in Table 3.

When Table 3 is examined, it is observed that teachers place greater importance on informing parents about topics such as developmental processes, effective communication, and fine motor skill development. The fact that the average values are mostly above 6.5 indicates that all items are generally considered important by teachers. The lowest average, 5.53, corresponds to the item "how many movements are required to write letters," revealing that teachers relatively emphasise this technical detail less.

Areas Where Parents Should Provide Support

Classroom teachers' opinions on the areas where parents should provide support and be involved were obtained through 12 Likert-type closed-ended questions. The relevant topic headings and statistical information are presented in Table 4.

When Table 4 is examined, it is observed that family support is expected to contribute to the development of comprehension ($\bar{X} = 6.61$), dictation ($\bar{X} = 6.54$), and legible writing ($\bar{X} = 6.47$) skills. The high average values, similar to those in the informational topics, indicate that all items are generally considered important by teachers. The lowest average score of 6.08 is for the item "evaluating children's reading and writing performance (giving feedback, corrections, etc.)." Teachers' relatively lower scores for this item may stem from concerns that involving families in a technical and critical process such as evaluation may pose certain difficulties.

Teachers' Views on Open-Ended Questions

Teachers' views on informing and involving families were also revealed through open-ended questions in a qualitative context. The results obtained from the descriptive analysis were grouped under the themes of a) raising pedagogical awareness, b) developing home-based practices, and c) improving communication and cooperation opportunities.

Classroom teachers stated that families should view the early reading and writing process as a period of development and avoid making comparisons during this critical period. They emphasised that this can be achieved by raising awareness among families about topics such as areas and stages of development and individual differences. Many teachers emphasised the importance of families understanding children's individual development processes; the phrases "every child learns at their own pace" and "comparisons should not be made" were frequently repeated. This view is consistent with quantitative findings, as the highest scores were given to child development and communication topics.

Within the scope of the home-based applications theme, teachers requested practical contributions at home. In this context, qualitative data shows that expressions such as "creating reading hours at home," "dictation exercises," "writing exercises," and "setting up a library" were prominent. This finding is consistent with the relevant quantitative findings obtained from the survey. In addition, teachers expect families to provide not only academic support but also motivational and emotional support. Family attitudes that positively influence children's attitudes towards learning (patience, encouragement, trust) formed an important theme in the qualitative responses. This supports the high averages in items such as supporting writing habits and legible writing skills.

In the context of improving communication and cooperation opportunities, teachers stated that cooperation with families should be based on order and mutual respect, and that feedback should be constructive. They also predicted that positive communication and cooperation opportunities would increase students' motivation and success in reading and writing.

It can be said that the quantitative and qualitative findings obtained from the survey generally support the findings of the interviews conducted with stakeholders. In other words, the draft list of needs regarding family involvement in early reading and writing was presented to a wider group of participants to verify its validity. Thus, none of the items on the draft list of needs were removed. When the answers to the open-ended questions "What other topics do you think families need to be informed about?", "Do you think families need to provide support in other areas?" and "Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share?" were analysed, it was concluded that new items needed to be added to the lists.

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

This study has revealed the multidimensional and indispensable role of family involvement in the early reading and writing process and the related

involvement needs through the views of stakeholders, including classroom teachers, families, and field experts.

The interviews with stakeholders revealed a strong consensus that family involvement is a fundamental, necessary, and even mandatory element in helping students achieve the desired level of reading and writing. Similarly, Epstein (2001) identified family involvement as one of the six fundamental elements that directly contribute to student success. This finding is also consistent with the work of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), which is based on their model. Family involvement directly shapes not only student achievement but also children's self-efficacy perceptions regarding the literacy process. This common understanding has highlighted the need to reinforce involvement not only through traditional activities but also through systematic information and structured training. In particular, it has been observed that teachers and families face common difficulties at various stages of the early reading and writing process and have similar needs regarding family involvement. This series of needs clearly reveals the sensitivity of the process and the need for guidance for families. At this point, based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the importance of the social environment, especially the expectations and guiding and supportive role of the family and school environment, in individual learning is once again revealed (Vygotsky, cited in Salıcı Ahioğlu, 2006).

All stakeholder groups emphasised that family involvement is of vital importance in every stage of the literacy process, starting from the initial stages of teaching the first sounds, perceiving and recognising sounds, and writing and reading letters. According to the detailed and in-depth findings obtained from the interviews, the main topics requiring family information and involvement are the characteristics of phonics-based literacy, principles related to sound blending (synchronisation), correct spelling techniques, the ability to construct meaningful and correct sentences, methods that support fluent reading/word recognition, the development of fine motor skills, the correct writing of letter shapes and directions, and the development of legible handwriting. The prominence of these topics shows that literacy instruction is not merely a technical process but also a holistic area of development related to cognitive and psychomotor skills (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, cited in McMahan, 2010). Furthermore, these results directly align with the key findings of Carter, Chard, and Pool's (2009) study on early reading and writing skills. Their research revealed that when skills such as phonemic awareness, spelling, and word awareness are supported in the family environment, learning becomes more enduring. These prominent issues indicate that families need to have sufficient knowledge and skills regarding the process and the

methods and techniques used in order to support literacy education. According to the results obtained, providing families with such knowledge and skills, even at a basic level, will support them in participating more consciously, sustainably, and effectively in home and classroom-based collaborative environments. In this context, Leseman and de Jong (1998) also found that education programmes targeting family involvement increased children's comprehension levels and reading habits, thereby highlighting the necessity of teacher-family cooperation.

In the context of home-based involvement activities, it has been emphasised that, in addition to activities such as interacting with reading and writing materials with their children, organising story-reading sessions, and conducting conversations that reinforce reading and writing skills related to daily life, play-based and family-child interaction-based activities should also be encouraged. Similarly, Lonigan and Whitehurst (1998, cited in McMahon, 2010) found that interactive book reading and conversation activities between parents and their children were decisive in students' language development. Furthermore, research conducted by Hirsh-Pasek and others (2009) found that play-based applications support students' development in areas such as sensory awareness, attention span, and cognitive flexibility, particularly during the preschool and early primary school years.

In terms of the class-based involvement process, the importance of activities such as families attending information meetings organised at school, holding one-to-one meetings with teachers and participating in joint working platforms where they can observe student achievement has been emphasised. Whitehurst and Lonigan's (2001) research also shows that physical involvement in the school environment strengthens teacher-family interaction and positively affects students' literacy development. The stakeholders also emphasised that families can involve in the process by engaging in various activities such as games, role-playing, and role-model reading, especially during the stages of introducing the first sounds and writing and reading the corresponding letters. It was also noted that teachers could provide feedback and corrections to students' performance in writing tasks. Such interactions strengthen both students' motivation and expressive language skills, according to the findings of Gest et al. (2004, cited in Clark, 2007a; 2007b). In addition, it offers important opportunities not only for students but also for families in terms of creating pedagogical awareness and developing a sense of responsibility (Gest et al., 2004, cited in Clark, 2007a; 2007b).

The comprehensive qualitative findings obtained from stakeholder interviews show strong consistency with the quantitative and qualitative findings obtained

from the survey, and the survey results obtained from a much larger group of participants support the interview results. Considering the quantitative survey findings, it has been revealed that teachers place greater importance on informing families about issues such as developmental processes, effective communication, and fine motor development. This result supports the related thoughts of some of the stakeholders interviewed and is parallel to the finding emphasised by Cassidy (2004) that "structured motor skill activities in the home environment improve classroom writing performance."

When quantitative findings related to the topics expected to be supported by families were examined, it was concluded that teachers expected support from families in the context of developing reading comprehension, dictation, and legible writing skills. In general, this result is also parallel to the thoughts of the stakeholders interviewed. In this context, the stakeholders interviewed emphasised the need for home-based involvement, particularly in relation to forming meaningful sentences and comprehension skills. Rowe (1991, cited in Clark, 2007a) also emphasises that comprehension and meaningful writing can be developed not only through teacher guidance but also through support from families at home. Similarly, Clark (2007b) emphasises that children's comprehension and narration skills are strengthened by discussing texts at home.

Qualitative responses from the survey highlight the role of the family in developing children's positive attitudes towards learning (patience, encouragement, motivation, instilling confidence). This situation shows that family involvement cannot be limited to teaching reading and writing; planned involvement in the desired direction will motivate students, increase their self-confidence and positive attitudes towards learning, and thus support their reading and writing journey in all its aspects. The findings of Fan and Chen (2001) also reveal that family support positively affects children's social and academic self-confidence, thereby directly increasing their success. In addition, the findings obtained from survey responses and interviews have revealed the necessity of regular and sustainable cooperation between teachers and families based on mutual respect and constructive feedback. Expectations that this cooperation will increase motivation and success in reading and writing have shown strong consistency between quantitative and qualitative data sets. Furthermore, the results are consistent with the culturally based literacy framework proposed by Au (2000), which states that effective literacy is shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by the attitudes and collaborative contributions of the social environment.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates with concrete findings that planned, programmed, and systematic family involvement processes based on needs are not only desirable but also scientifically grounded, key, and indispensable elements for literacy success. The draft list of needs related to family involvement in early reading and writing was presented to a wide range of participants through a survey, thereby ensuring its validity and scope, and it was agreed that no items should be removed from the list. In this context, the draft list of needs was finalised with a few additions based on the open-ended survey results, and the final "List of Needs for Family Involvement in Early Reading and Writing" is included in the appendix. All of this has revealed common needs and expectations among stakeholders regarding family involvement.

These comprehensive findings emphasise the need for education policymakers and practitioners to encourage family involvement, raise awareness among stakeholders and make them an effective part of the process, particularly in the areas mentioned above, through needs-based, programmed and systematic involvement processes that bring together families, children and teachers. Other requirements and recommendations identified in the findings are outlined below:

- Families' involvement in the early reading and writing process should be organised according to needs; the roles of all relevant parties should be clarified, and this involvement process should be continued on a regular basis.
- Family involvement should be implemented at home and in the classroom under appropriate conditions, and these processes should be reinforced with family information meetings tailored to needs.
- Home-based involvement activities should be distinct from the concept of homework in order to ensure that families and children spend enjoyable and quality time together. In this context, activities that can be done together, are game-oriented, fun, and encourage creativity should be designed.
- Family information meetings should meet the needs of stakeholders and include topics that directly contribute to early reading and writing education.
- Information sessions should be organised to help families better understand their children and develop realistic expectations about them, covering the steps of the Sound-Based Sentence Method, the developmental characteristics of first-grade students, and individual differences.

Information

This study is based on the doctoral thesis research titled "The Contribution of the Family Involvement Program to Elementary Reading and Writing Skills" conducted at Anadolu University, Graduate School.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

This research was conducted with permission granted by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at Anadolu University, dated 17/06/2019 and numbered 48879.

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Appendix

LIST OF NEEDS FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY READING AND WRITING	
METHOD-DEPENDENT NEEDS	Communicative and Interactive Needs
	Development and Individual Characteristics
	Information-Related Needs
METHOD-INDEPENDENT NEEDS	Teacher-family interaction based on collaborative, coordinated, and immediate communication
	Informing families about effective communication with their children
	Informing families about motivating, reinforcing, and rewarding children
	Providing education to families about areas of development, stages, and characteristics
	Educating parents about individual differences and their reflections on the early reading and writing process
	Informing families about the early reading and writing method and process
	Informing families about the timing of transition to free reading and expectations from children
	Participating in meetings and evaluations regarding the implementation and planning of the process
	Informing families about letter-number forms and legible writing
	Informing families about taking a position on reading and writing
Informing families about book selection and developing a habit of reading books	
Informing families about fluent reading skills	
Informing families about comprehension skills	
Supporting families with game-based reading and writing activities	
Supporting families in providing authentic-based reading and writing activities	
Supporting the development of families' reading comprehension skills	
Families supporting the development of fluent reading skills	
Families supporting the development of phonemic awareness	
Families supporting the development of phonemic awareness	
Families modelling reading behaviour	
Supporting the development of fine motor skills	
Families providing support for free and regular drawing activities	
Families providing support for legible writing	
Families supporting the appropriate use of punctuation marks	
Supporting families in developing dictation skills	
Supporting families in developing text writing skills	
Families modelling writing	
Providing feedback and corrections on families' reading and writing performance	
Families' assessment of their reading and writing performance	