

DEVELOPING LITERACY SKILLS OF EARLY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN WITHIN THE FAMILY

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Annotation: This article discusses the importance, methods, and parental role in developing literacy skills in early school-age children within the family environment. The concept of literacy is thoroughly explained, with a focus on the significance of a supportive home learning environment and parental responsibility.

Keywords: Literacy, early school age, family, child upbringing, reading skills, parental role, learning environment.

The literacy level of early school-age children is directly influenced not only by the school learning process but also by the family environment. A child begins to develop primary literacy skills within the family. The family provides the first insights into language, oral speech, listening, reading, and writing. Therefore, special attention must be paid to enhancing literacy within the family. This article explores methods of developing literacy in children at home, the role of the family, and the responsibilities of parents.

Early school age includes children between the ages of 6 and 10. During this period, children's curiosity, mental activity, memory, attention, and thinking develop rapidly. Children at this age are open to new experiences, tend to imitate, and are highly observant. It is crucial to strengthen the foundations of literacy during this time. A child's attitude toward reading is heavily influenced by the atmosphere in the family. If parents read books, children tend to imitate them. At this age, visual and auditory learning methods are especially effective.

Literacy is the ability to read, write, construct speech, and express thoughts clearly. It consists of the following components:

- **Phonemic awareness:** identifying and recognizing sounds in words.
- **Graphic literacy:** recognizing letters and writing them correctly.
- **Lexical literacy:** developing vocabulary.
- **Text comprehension skills:** understanding, analyzing, and retelling the text.

The family plays a key role in forming all these components. It is the child's first social environment. If reading books, asking and answering questions, and learning together are common practices at home, the child is more likely to develop literacy skills. According to research, children who read with their parents for 15–20 minutes a day demonstrate significantly higher reading speed and comprehension.

Important factors in the family learning environment include:

- Parents' positive attitude and patience
- Availability of age-appropriate books at home
- Parents serving as role models (e.g., reading books, speaking literately)
- Encouraging the child (through praise or small rewards)

The role of parents in developing a child's literacy at home is invaluable. Reading books together, asking questions, and discussing answers expand the child's vocabulary and thinking skills. Reading and explaining fairy tales helps children understand word meanings more deeply. Parents can organize small writing activities, such as encouraging children to keep a journal with entries like "What did I do today?" This helps develop both writing and structured thinking.

Games also play a key role in developing literacy, such as:

- Word riddles
 - Creating words from letters
- These activities increase interest and turn learning into a joyful process.

The family's influence on literacy development includes forming the child's moral, spiritual, and cultural perspective. Children raised in families where reading and writing are valued generally become literate more quickly. For example, a family tradition of evening reading sessions motivates the child to read and expands their vocabulary.

Practical steps include:

- **Regular reading:** At least 15 minutes a day of reading together, including stories and age-appropriate articles.
- **Q&A sessions:** Asking comprehension questions like, "Why did the character do that?" or "Did you like the story?"
- **Vocabulary development:** Learning 1–2 new words a day and using them in sentences.
- **Writing tasks:** Writing short stories or daily journals based on their life or drawings.
- **Creative assignments:** Memorizing poems, writing short stories, and inventing scenarios from images enhance cognitive skills.

Today, digital resources can also support literacy. Age-appropriate interactive games, mobile apps, and audiobooks are useful tools—but should be used under supervision and in moderation.

Key responsibilities of parents:

- Encourage literacy development.
- Support the learning process patiently.
- Cooperate with teachers and the school.
- Provide access to books and educational materials.
- Recognize and motivate the child's achievements consistently.

Literacy development is one of the most crucial tasks of childhood. The family serves as the strongest and most influential environment in this process. When parents support their child's first steps in reading and writing, they lay the foundation for future academic success. A child who loves to read and can express their thoughts clearly becomes an active and successful member of society.

During early school age, the nervous system continues to develop, and mental processes like memory and attention strengthen. According to psychologists, literacy skills formed between ages 6–10 leave a lasting impression and benefit the child throughout life. Literacy is not only knowledge but an essential skill for success. Daily and consistent efforts at home are critical to a child's progress. Parents are a child's first teachers.

Major reforms in the education sector are underway in our country. Recently, in a video conference, the President of Uzbekistan emphasized the importance of education, particularly school education. He noted that the Third Renaissance begins at the school threshold, highlighting the central role of effective communication in education.

Children entering primary school often lack fully developed communication skills. Improving communication in this phase also fosters moral values. During early school years, children's social behavior changes significantly. They begin to communicate with purpose. This is influenced by both the teacher's active role and peer interactions.

There are different levels of communicative ability among early school-age students: from hyper-communicative (talkative) to shy or unengaged students who hesitate to participate. Most communication skills are shaped in the family and preschool years. For instance, a child who learns to greet others and express gratitude at home will bring these skills into the classroom. However, adapting to school social dynamics and interacting with peers often occurs gradually.

Some children may feel shy about speaking up in front of classmates but express themselves freely at home. These behaviors are part of the adjustment process.

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