INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
Vol. 16, No. 2, September 2026, pp. 360-372

Available online at:
https://ijal.upi.edu/index.php/ijal/article/view/439
https://doi.org/10.17509/3fhmm454

From lullabies to literacy: Jordanian parents' self-reported involvement in preschool children's early literacy

Ruba Fahmi Bataineh
Department of Curriculum and Methods of Instruction, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

ABSTRACT

This study provides preliminary evidence on Jordanian parents' self-reported involvement in their preschool children's early literacy. Active parental involvement in children's early literacy matters because learning begins at home and extends into formal schooling and later life. This study examined the extent of Jordanian parents' engagement in their preschool children's early literacy and whether involvement varies by parent age, academic qualification, interest in reading, number of children in the family, and daily reading time. Because involvement was measured through parental self-report rather than direct observation of parent–child literacy interactions or assessment of children's literacy outcomes, the findings reflect parents' reported practices and perceptions. Using a descriptive survey design, a validated parental involvement questionnaire was administered to 708 parents of preschool boys and girls selected through purposeful sampling from kindergartens in the northern Jordanian governorates of Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, and Mafraq. The findings suggest moderate to high parental involvement, with statistically significant differences related to parental interest in reading, family size, and time spent reading, whereas parent age and academic qualification showed no significant differences. These findings describe Jordanian parents' reported early literacy practices and the demographic and reading-related characteristics associated with those practices.

Keywords: Jordan; literacy development; parental involvement; preschool children; reading

Received:	**Revised:**
12 February 2026	22 July 2026
Accepted:	**Published:**
22 July 2026	24 September 2026

How to cite (in APA style):
Bataineh, R. F. (2026). From lullabies to literacy: Jordanian parents' self-reported involvement in preschool children's early literacy. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 16*(2), 360-372. https://doi.org/10.17509/3fhmm454

INTRODUCTION

Literacy development, an inherent social process in a child's life, has recently attracted considerable attention (Neuman, 2000). As the home is the child's first learning environment (Anderson, 2000; Hawes & Plourde, 2005), active parental involvement, in terms of providing literacy materials and practices, is positively linked to his/her school readiness (Ansari & Gershoff, 2015; Hindman & Morrison, 2011; Pianta, 2002) and, subsequently, chances at success in school and later life (Epstein et al., 2009). Parental involvement continues to be key to academic success after school entry, as it helps not only in promoting the child's acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes but also in fostering the child's self-concept as a potentially worthy productive individual (Anderson, 2000; Boonk et al., 2018; Hawes & Plourde, 2005; Joo et al., 2020; Reynolds & Temple, 2019). Findings of longitudinal research on family involvement in school and children's literacy in kindergarten through upper grades (e.g., Dearing et al., 2006; Englund et al., 2004; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002) suggest that differences in levels of parental involvement between and within families are significant predictors of children's literacy skills, so much so that enhanced parent involvement during primary education catalyzes literacy growth. From a social-practice perspective, literacy extends beyond acquiring technical reading and writing skills to include the socially and culturally situated ways people use literacy in everyday life (Street, 1984, 2003). This perspective is especially relevant to the present study because many early literacy experiences occur within ordinary family interactions in the home.

Early literacy development begins long before children enter formal schooling and is shaped by the

Email: rubab@yu.edu.jo

quality of the linguistic and literacy experiences they encounter within their families. Parents are children's first teachers, introducing them to language, print, storytelling, and shared reading through everyday interactions that lay the foundation for later reading and writing achievement. Consequently, parental involvement has long been recognized as one of the most influential factors affecting children's academic success, particularly during preschool years.

Early theoretical models conceptualized parental involvement as a multidimensional construct encompassing communication with schools, support for learning at home, educational expectations, and participation in school activities (Epstein, 2001, 2009). Building upon this perspective, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014) distinguished between informal literacy experiences, such as shared storybook reading, and formal literacy activities involving direct instruction in letters, sounds, and words. Their findings showed that these forms of parental involvement contribute complementarily to children's literacy development. More recently, Boonk et al. (2018), synthesizing evidence from numerous international studies, confirmed that parental engagement remains one of the strongest predictors of children's educational achievement, emphasizing the enduring importance of family involvement across educational contexts.

While these foundational studies established the importance of parental involvement, contemporary research has increasingly adopted the broader construct of the Home Literacy Environment (HLE) to explain children's early literacy development. Rather than focusing solely on parents' participation in school-related activities or the availability of books within the home, the HLE encompasses literacy materials, parents' literacy beliefs, shared reading practices, storytelling, language-rich conversations, environmental print, and children's opportunities to participate in authentic literacy experiences during everyday family life. Niklas et al. (2016) further demonstrated that interventions designed to strengthen home learning environments can improve young children's language and early learning outcomes, suggesting that family literacy practices are amenable to educational support rather than fixed family characteristics.

Evidence supporting the importance of the Home Literacy Environment has continued to accumulate across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Investigating children learning languages with varying degrees of orthographic consistency, Inoue et al. (2020) demonstrated that supportive home literacy environments consistently facilitate early literacy development regardless of differences in writing systems. Their findings suggest that responsive parent–child literacy interactions contribute to children's literacy acquisition in ways that transcend linguistic and orthographic differences.

Subsequent research has shifted attention from the quantity of literacy resources available in the home to the quality of literacy interactions between parents and children. Li and Doyle (2022) argued that contextual parental support, including shared reading, meaningful conversations, questioning, explanation, encouragement, and collaborative meaning-making, provides richer opportunities for language and literacy development than passive exposure to books alone. From this perspective, literacy develops through sustained social interaction in which children actively construct meaning with more knowledgeable family members. Similar conclusions have been reported by Georgiou et al. (2021), who found that the quality of home literacy interactions was more strongly associated with children's language and literacy development than the mere frequency of literacy activities. Together, these findings suggest that meaningful parent–child engagement defines effective home literacy environments.

The importance of these interactions has been further reinforced by Nag et al. (2024), whose meta-analysis of studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries found consistent positive associations between supportive home learning environments and children's language and literacy outcomes despite considerable socioeconomic and cultural diversity. Their findings show that effective family literacy practices are not confined to affluent contexts but offer a broadly applicable mechanism for supporting children's early development across different educational systems.

Recent studies have also demonstrated that home literacy environments are far more diverse than previously assumed. Rather than representing a single continuum of parental involvement, Bosire et al. (2026b) identified distinct profiles of home learning environments characterized by different combinations of literacy activities, each associated with variation in children's language, literacy, and early mathematical development. Building on these findings, Bosire et al. (2026a) reported that positive educator–parent relationships indirectly enhance children's language and literacy skills by encouraging richer literacy experiences at home. These studies emphasize that children's early literacy is strengthened when families and educational institutions work collaboratively to support meaningful learning experiences beyond the classroom.

Contemporary scholarship has likewise emphasized that literacy should be understood within children's broader cultural and social experiences. Hayes et al. (2025) argue that literacy emerges through participation in everyday family practices, where storytelling, shared reading, conversations, environmental print, and jointly

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

constructed experiences become authentic literacy events rather than isolated instructional activities. This perspective reflects an important shift from viewing literacy as a discrete set of technical skills toward understanding it as a socially situated practice embedded within family life. Similar perspectives have increasingly informed international educational policy. UNESCO (2026) emphasizes that meaningful learning begins within families and communities and advocates stronger partnerships between homes and educational institutions as part of a broader social contract for education. Likewise, the OECD (2021) identifies parental engagement as a key contributor to children's learning and well-being, particularly after the educational disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

This conceptualization is consistent with Street's (1984, 2003) theory of literacy as a social practice, which challenges autonomous models of literacy by arguing that reading and writing acquire meaning only within specific social and cultural contexts. From this perspective, literacy extends beyond decoding written text to include participation in culturally meaningful interactions through which children construct knowledge, negotiate meaning, and develop literate identities. Accordingly, family literacy encompasses not only explicit teaching but also the everyday conversations, shared experiences, storytelling traditions, and literacy-related routines through which children gradually become members of literate communities.

Street's (1984, 2003) perspective therefore provides an appropriate theoretical lens for understanding parents' reported engagement in preschool children's early literacy development. This conceptualization also aligns with the Home Literacy Model advanced by Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014), who showed that both the continuity and quality of home literacy experiences predict children's later vocabulary and reading development, reinforcing the importance of examining naturally occurring literacy practices within the family environment.

Recent longitudinal evidence has further reinforced the home literacy environment's central role in early reading development. Using data from 9,312 preschool children, Li et al. (2026) showed that the home literacy environment is a key proximal factor that not only directly supports children's reading development but also mediates and moderates the influence of broader contextual factors, including socioeconomic status and individual psychological characteristics. Their findings further indicated that home literacy practices, together with supportive school environments and positive approaches to learning, can mitigate early reading challenges, underscoring the importance of sustained literacy experiences within and beyond the home.

Although international evidence consistently demonstrates the importance of supportive home literacy environments, considerably less research has examined parental involvement in early literacy development within Jordan and the wider Arab region. Existing studies in these contexts remain comparatively limited in both scope and number and have often focused on isolated literacy practices rather than examining parental involvement as a multidimensional construct encompassing shared reading, literacy beliefs, language interactions, and home learning experiences. Consequently, contextually grounded research is needed to explore how Jordanian parents support preschool children's early literacy development within their sociocultural environment.

Against this background, the present study examines Jordanian parents' self-reported involvement in supporting preschool children's early literacy. By extending contemporary Home Literacy Environment research to an underrepresented Arab context, the study contributes to the international literature on family literacy while providing evidence that may inform early childhood policy, parent education, and home–school partnerships in Jordan. Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following research questions.

This study aims to examine the extent of Jordanian parents' self-reported involvement in their preschool children's early literacy and whether reported involvement differs by parent age, academic qualification, number of children in the family, parental interest in reading, and daily reading time. More specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions.

1. What do Jordanian parents want most for their children?
2. To what extent do Jordanian parents report involvement in their preschool children's early literacy?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = .05$) in the respondents' self-reported involvement that may be attributed to parents' age, academic qualification, and number of children in the family?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = .05$) in the respondents' self-reported involvement, which may be attributed to parents' interest in reading and daily reading time?

The study is significant in three respects. First, it provides evidence from a comparatively large sample on parents' reported engagement in preschool literacy practices in a Jordanian context where such evidence remains limited. Second, it

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

examines both demographic characteristics and reading-related variables, thereby distinguishing relatively fixed background variables from potentially modifiable practices such as parents' interest in reading and the time they devote to reading. Third, the findings may help early childhood educators and policymakers identify areas where parents already report substantial involvement and where more focused guidance, resources, or home–school support may be needed. The study does not directly measure children's literacy attainment; instead, it provides a descriptive basis for subsequent research linking reported parental practices with independently assessed child outcomes.

METHOD

The study used a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. This design was selected because the purpose was to describe parents' reported literacy-related involvement at a single point in time and to examine whether reported involvement differed across selected demographic and reading-related variables. No intervention was administered, and no direct measures of children's literacy achievement were collected. Data were obtained through a 30-item parental involvement questionnaire administered to parents of preschool boys and girls enrolled in kindergartens in the four northern Jordanian governorates of Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, and Mafraq.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling from kindergartens in Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, and Mafraq because these governorates constitute Jordan's northern region, where the researcher had institutional access to participating kindergartens. Selection therefore focused on accessibility and institutional cooperation rather than literacy achievement or other educational indicators.

The questionnaire comprised three parts: demographic data (viz., parent age, academic qualification, and number of children in the family); literacy-related data (viz., parents' interest in reading and daily reading time); and parents' self-reported involvement in literacy-related activities. Seven hundred and eight parents responded to the questionnaire. Of the 708 respondents, 509 (72%) were mothers. Questionnaires were distributed through participating kindergartens, which provided paper copies to parents. Completed questionnaires were returned to the kindergartens and subsequently collected by the researcher. Participating parents had preschool-aged children aged 36 to 66 months. The study did not include respondent gender as an analytical variable because it focused on overall patterns of parental involvement rather than gender differences.

The questionnaire items were developed from the parental-involvement and home-literacy literature and were designed to represent common practices through which parents may support preschool children's early literacy, such as shared reading, storytelling, alphabet instruction, verbal interaction, provision of print materials, and engagement with literacy-related media and activities. The initial version of the instrument was reviewed by specialists in early childhood education, literacy, curriculum and instruction, and educational measurement to evaluate the content clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and cultural appropriateness of the items. Their comments were used to revise ambiguous wording, eliminate overlap, and improve alignment between the items and the construct of home-based parental literacy involvement. The revised questionnaire was then piloted with parents who were comparable to, but not included in, the main study sample to confirm that the instructions, response categories, and individual items were readily understood. The internal consistency of the 30-item involvement scale was examined using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.927, indicating high reliability for the sample. Because the questionnaire was intended to describe reported parental practices rather than diagnose literacy ability, evidence of content validity and internal consistency was considered appropriate for the purposes of the present study.

The study complied with the ethical guidelines for research involving human participants at the researcher's university. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Table 1 presents the respondents' demographic characteristics by parent age, academic qualification, and number of children in the family. As shown in Table 1, the sample was concentrated in the 31–40-year age group, which accounted for 75.99% of respondents. Reading-related variables (viz., parental interest in reading and daily reading time) were also categorized using predetermined cut-off scores. Table 2 presents respondents' reported interest in reading and the time they spent reading each day.

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

Table 1
Sample Demographics

Variable		n	%*
Parent's Age (in years)	20-30	103	14.5
	31-40	538	76.0
	41 and above	67	9.5
	Total	708	100.0
Qualification	College Diploma or less	14	2.0
	Bachelor's Degree	603	85.2
	Master's Degree	65	9.2
	Doctorate Degree	26	3.7
	Total	708	100.0
Children in Family	One	95	13.4
	Two	375	53.0
	Three	205	29.0
	Four or more	33	4.7
	Total	708	100.0

Table 2
Parent Reading-Related Characteristics

Variable		n	%*
Interest in Reading	High	**192**	**27.1**
	Moderate	**433**	**61.2**
	Low	**83**	**11.7**
	Non-existent	**0**	**0.0**
	Total	**708**	**100**
Daily Reading Time	0-less than 1 Hour	**181**	**25.6**
	1-3 Hours	**450**	**63.7**
	More than 3 Hours	**77**	**10.9**
	Total	**708**	**100.0**

As shown in Table 1, Most respondents held an undergraduate degree, and families with two children constituted the largest family-size category. The distribution indicates that the findings primarily reflect relatively well-educated parents in early or middle adulthood and should therefore not be assumed to represent all Jordanian parents uniformly.

The distribution in Table 2 shows substantial variation in both interest in reading and daily reading time. We included these variables in subsequent analyses because, unlike age or academic qualification, they reflect reading-related dispositions and behaviors that may be more directly associated with home literacy practices.

The third part of the questionnaire comprised 30 literacy-related practices. Parents indicated how frequently they engaged in each practice using a three-point scale (always, sometimes, never), scored 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Higher scores therefore indicated higher levels of self-reported parental involvement.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. A three-way analysis of Variance was used to determine whether statistically significant differences existed (at $\alpha = .05$) between the means of parents' self-reported involvement in their preschool children's early literacy and the demographic variables of parent age, parent academic qualification, and number of children in the family. Two-Way Analysis of Variance was used to determine whether statistically significant differences existed (at $\alpha = .05$) between the means of the parents' self-reported involvement in their preschool children's early literacy and the two reading-related variables (viz., parental interest in reading and daily reading time).

We calculated frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations as appropriate to describe the responses. Item-level means were used to rank the 30 literacy-related practices and classify reported involvement according to the predetermined scale intervals. Frequencies and percentages were also used when they more clearly described the distribution of responses. Inferential analyses were then conducted to examine differences in the overall involvement score across the demographic and reading-related variables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented according to the four research questions. Because the data were based on parental self-report, the results represent parents' perceptions and reported practices rather than independently observed behavior or measured changes in children's literacy performance.

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

When asked what they want most in life for their child/children, parents reported good education, wealth, career success, and happiness as the top aspirations, at about 90, 80, 73, and 70 percent, respectively. Parents also reported other aspirations with smaller percentages, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Frequencies and Percentages of Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Future

No.	Response	n	%
1.	Good Education	659	90.3
2.	Wealth	566	79.9
3.	Career Success	520	73.4
4.	Happiness	496	70.1
5.	Being a Good Person/Citizen	369	52.1
6.	Good Marriage/Family	304	42.9
7.	Fear of God	232	32.8

Education's prominence as the most frequently reported aspiration suggests respondents viewed it as a central aspiration for their children. Respondents also frequently selected wealth, career success, and happiness, but these aspirations should not be treated as automatic consequences of education. Instead, respondents may have seen education as one possible pathway to better occupational opportunities and economic security. Previous research has shown an association between educational attainment and later earnings (Tamborini et al., 2015), although career success and happiness are multidimensional outcomes influenced by numerous personal, social, and economic factors. The results therefore indicate a perceived connection among these aspirations rather than a direct or inevitable causal sequence.

This result is especially relevant given research identifying parental aspirations as one component of parental involvement associated with children's academic motivation and achievement (Jeynes, 2007; Wentzel, 1998). Expectations do not automatically produce academic success. Their influence may operate through the learning opportunities parents provide, the value they communicate about education, the encouragement and feedback they offer, and the persistence they promote when children encounter difficulty. In the preschool years, such expectations may be reflected in parents' decisions to read with children, provide literacy materials, teach letters and words, and maintain routines that support learning. The present study did not directly test these mediating processes, but the prominence of educational aspirations provides useful contextual evidence for interpreting respondents' reported literacy practices.

To answer the second research question, we interpreted the item and overall means using the proportional scale shown in Table 4. The three-point response scale was divided into equal intervals to distinguish low, moderate, and high levels of reported involvement.

In this model, means in the lowest interval were interpreted as low involvement, those in the middle interval as moderate involvement, and those in the highest interval as high involvement. These categories are descriptive classifications of parental reports and should not be interpreted as externally validated performance standards.

Table 4
The Statistical Model

Level	Mean
Low	1.00-1.66
Moderate	1.67-2.33
High	2.34-3.00

The parents' responses to the third part of the questionnaire were analyzed according to the statistical model. The rank order, means, standard deviations, and levels of parental involvement in the literacy-related activities are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5 shows predominantly moderate to overall high levels of parental involvement in the thirty literacy-related activities in the questionnaire relative to the statistical model. Overall, respondents reported moderate involvement in their children's literacy. The pattern varied across activities. Parents reported stronger involvement in practices closely associated with school preparation and direct instruction, including helping with schoolwork, teaching the alphabet, and teaching morals and manners. By contrast, lower means were reported for activities involving newspapers, trips, and shared Internet use. This contrast suggests that many respondents may conceptualize parental involvement primarily as direct teaching and supervision rather than as the broader creation of literacy opportunities through everyday experiences, print exposure, and guided engagement with digital or community resources.

The respondents were reportedly most involved in helping their children with schoolwork, followed by teaching the alphabet and teaching morals and manners, with means of 2.69, 2.67, and 2.60 and standard deviations of 0.53, 0.54, and 0.60, respectively. On the other hand, parents were, albeit moderately so, reportedly least involved in reading the newspaper with their children, followed by taking their children on trips and surfing the Internet with their children, with means of 1.60, 1.57, and 1.43 and standard deviations of 0.70, 0.66, and 0.58,

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

respectively. That parents are most involved in helping their children with schoolwork is not only understandable but also consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997), especially in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic when school closures forced parents to assume responsibility for their children's continued learning (Khalid & Singal, 2023; Penna et al., 2023; Ribeiro et al., 2021).

Table 5

Rank Order, Means and Standard Deviations of Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's Early Literacy (in Descending Order) with n = 708

Item No.	Rank	Item	Mean	SD	
24	1	Helping child with schoolwork	2.69	0.53	High
6	2	Teaching child the alphabet	2.67	0.54	High
22	3	Teaching child morals and manners	2.60	0.60	High
7	4	Teaching child numbers	2.51	0.61	High
16	5	Coloring	2.46	0.63	High
1	6	Reading with child	2.43	0.61	High
20	7	Telling child stories	2.42	0.66	High
12	8	Teaching child about the world around us	2.39	0.62	High
10	9	Teaching child simple life skills	2.38	0.72	High
15	10	Talking to child about different things	2.36	0.72	High
21	11	Watching television with child	2.36	0.67	High
23	12	Reading signs (e.g., shop, road) with child	2.34	0.66	High
13	13	Counting with child	2.33	0.72	Moderate
25	14	Playing with child	2.32	0.67	Moderate
2	15	Reading to child	2.30	0.67	Moderate
9	16	Teaching child shapes	2.29	0.77	Moderate
11	17	Teaching child to express his/her feelings	2.28	0.76	Moderate
26	18	Helping child get ready for school	2.27	0.69	Moderate
28	19	Playing sports with child	2.25	0.65	Moderate
29	20	Singing with child	2.24	0.77	Moderate
8	21	Teaching child to pronounce letters	2.24	0.65	Moderate
3	22	Reading books with child	2.23	0.63	Moderate
5	23	Teaching child to pronounce words	2.21	0.68	Moderate
27	24	Watching videos/movies with child	2.20	0.78	Moderate
14	25	Teaching child to be independent	2.17	0.66	Moderate
17	26	Doing arts and crafts with child	2.16	0.66	Moderate
18	27	Playing videogames with child	1.88	0.66	Moderate
19	28	Surfing the Internet with child	1.60	0.70	Low
30	29	Taking child on trips	1.57	0.66	Low
4	30	Reading the newspaper with child	1.43	0.58	Low
		Overall	**2.25**	**0.24**	**Moderate**

The relatively low ratings for reading newspapers, taking trips, and surfing the Internet with children also warrant attention. Newspaper reading may be perceived as developmentally inappropriate for preschool children or may reflect declining household use of printed newspapers. Trips may be regarded primarily as recreational rather than as opportunities for oral-language and vocabulary development, particularly when parents are not explicitly encouraged to connect outings with conversation, labels, signs, stories, or follow-up reading. Similarly, low levels of shared Internet use may reflect parental concerns about screen exposure, limited access to age-appropriate digital content, or a tendency to allow children to use digital devices independently rather than jointly. These findings suggest a need to broaden parents' understanding of early literacy beyond formal teaching. Parent-guidance programs could demonstrate how ordinary outings, environmental print, storytelling, shared digital activities, and discussion of everyday experiences can support vocabulary, comprehension, and emergent literacy.

Consistent with recent evidence from Jordan, parental support increasingly extends beyond homework assistance to include digitally mediated communication and informal learning practices within everyday family life (Bataineh et al., 2026). Likewise, developmentally appropriate multimodal resources, including digital imagery, can enrich young children's language experiences when integrated into meaningful parent–child interaction (AlAli et al., 2025).

To answer the third research question, which sought to determine whether or not there are statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = .05$) in the respondents' self-reported involvement which may be attributed to parents' age and academic qualification, and number of children in the family, means and standard deviations of the parents' responses were calculated. Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations of the overall parental-involvement scores across the categories of

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

parent age, academic qualification, and number of children in the family.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's early literacy per the Variables of Parent Age, Qualification, and Number of Children in Family

Variable		Mean	SD	n
Parent's Age/years	20-30	2.24	0.243	103
	31-40	2.25	0.238	538
	41- and above	2.25	0.261	67
Qualification	College Diploma or less	2.33	0.246	14
	Bachelor's Degree	2.26	0.236	603
	Master's Degree	2.22	0.278	65
	Ph.D. Degree	2.23	0.249	26
Children in Family	One	2.23	0.256	95
	Two	2.28	0.224	375
	Three	2.23	0.257	205
	Four or more	2.15	0.245	33
	Total	**2.25**	**0.241**	**708**

The descriptive results in Table 6 show some variation among the group means, particularly across family-size categories. A three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), shown in Table 7, was conducted to determine whether these observed differences were statistically significant. As shown in Table 7, neither parent age nor academic qualification was significantly associated with the overall self-reported involvement score. The number of children in the family, however, produced a statistically significant main effect. This result indicates that reported involvement varied across family-size categories, although it does not establish that family size itself caused the difference. The effect size was modest, indicating that family size explained only a limited proportion of the variation in reported parental involvement. To determine which groups differed significantly, Fisher's LSD post-hoc test was conducted (Table 8).

Table 7

Three-Way ANOVA of the Effect of Parent Age, Qualification, and Number of Children in Family on Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's Early Literacy

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Age	0.008	2	0.004	0.070	0.933
Qualification	0.136	3	0.045	0.787	0.501
Children in Family	0.642	3	0.214	3.726	0.011
Error	40.164	699	0.057		
Corrected Total	40.991	707			

Table 8

Pairwise Post-hoc Test for Multiple Comparisons of the Effect of Number of Children in Family on Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's Early Literacy (Between Subjects)

Children in Family (I)	Children in Family (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	Sig.
One	Two	-0.04	0.028	0.128
	Three	0.00	0.030	0.928
	Four or more	0.09	0.048	0.079
Two	One	0.04	0.028	0.128
	Three	0.04(*)	0.021	0.032
	Four or more	0.13(*)	0.044	0.004
Three	One	0.00	0.030	0.928
	Two	-0.04(*)	0.021	0.032
	Four or more	0.08	0.045	0.067
Four or more	One	-0.09	0.048	0.079
	Two	-0.13(*)	0.044	0.004
	Three	-0.08	0.045	0.067

** Significant at α = .05*

Table 8 shows statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = .05$) between *two children in family* on one hand and *three* and *four or more children in the family* on the other, in favor of the former (viz., *two children in family).*

Parents with two children reported higher involvement than parents with three children or four or more children. One possible explanation is that parental time, attention, and material resources become more widely distributed as family size

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

increases. This interpretation is consistent with resource-dilution accounts, but it remains tentative because the study did not measure household income, employment demands, children's ages, birth order, or the availability of support from other family members. Family size should therefore be understood as an associated contextual variable rather than a direct causal determinant of parental involvement.

To answer the fourth research question, which sought to determine whether or not there are statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = .05$) in the respondents' self-reported involvement which may be attributed to parent interest in reading and daily reading time, means and standard deviations of the parents' responses were calculated. Table 9 presents the means and standard deviations of parental-involvement scores according to parents' reported interest in reading and daily reading time.

The descriptive means suggest greater involvement among parents who reported stronger interest in reading and more time devoted to reading. In Table 10, a two-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether these differences were statistically significant.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's Early Literacy per the Variables of Parent Interest in Reading and Daily Reading Time

Variable		Mean	SD	n
Interest in Reading	High	1.91	0.101	23
	Moderate	2.08	0.206	177
	Low	2.33	0.212	508
Daily Reading Time	0-less than 1 Hour	1.91	0.101	23
	1-3 Hours	2.09	0.207	189

Table 10

Two-Way ANOVA of the Effect of Parent Interest in Reading and Daily Reading Time on Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's Early Literacy

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Interest in Reading	0.675	2	0.338	6.174	0.002
Daily Reading Time	1.793	2	0.896	16.394	0.000
Error	38.442	703	0.055		
Corrected Total	40.991	707			

The analysis indicates that parental interest in reading was significantly associated with reported involvement. This result is consistent with the expectation that parents who value and enjoy reading are more likely to model reading behavior, provide literacy materials, and engage children in literacy-related interaction. The analysis also identified a significant effect for daily reading time. Fisher's LSD post-hoc test was then conducted to determine which groups differed significantly (Tables 11 and 12).

Table 11

Pairwise Post-Hoc Test for Multiple Comparisons of the Effect of Parent Interest in Reading on Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's Early Literacy (between Subjects)

Interest in Reading (I)	Interest in Reading (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	Sig.
High	Moderate	0.05(*)	0.020	0.008
	Low	0.11(*)	0.031	0.000
Moderate	High	-0.05(*)	0.020	0.008
	Low	0.05	0.028	0.055
Low	High	-0.11(*)	0.031	0.000
	Moderate	-0.05	0.028	0.055

**Significant at 0.05*

Table 12

Pairwise Post-Hoc Test for Multiple Comparisons of the Effect of Parent Daily Reading Time on Parents' Self-Reported Involvement in Children's Early Literacy (between Subjects)

Daily Reading Time (I)	Daily Reading Time (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	SE	Sig.
0-less than 1 Hour	1-3 Hours	-0.05	0.021	0.026
	More than 3 Hours	-0.19(*)	0.032	0.000
1-3 Hours	0-less than 1 Hour	0.05	0.021	0.026
	More than 3 Hours	-0.14(*)	0.029	0.000
More than 3 Hours	0-less than 1 Hour	0.19(*)	0.032	0.000

**Significant at 0.05*

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

Table 11 shows statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = .05$) between *high interest in reading* on one hand and *low and moderate interest in reading* on the other, in favor of the former (viz., *high interest in reading).* Similarly, statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = .05$), which can be attributed to daily *reading time* ($F= 16.394$, $P < .001$) are found. Fisher's LSD post-hoc test for multiple comparisons was conducted to determine who these differences are in favor of.

The post-hoc comparisons indicate that parents with high interest in reading reported greater involvement than those with low or moderate interest. The absence of a significant distinction between the low- and moderate-interest groups may suggest that only a comparatively strong orientation toward reading is reflected consistently in home literacy practices.

Table 12 shows statistically significant differences in the means of the parents' self-reported involvement in their children's early literacy as related to parent daily reading time between *more than three Hours* on one hand and both *less than one hour* and *one to three hours* on the other, in favor of *more than three hours* of daily reading time.

Parents who reported reading for more than three hours daily also reported greater involvement than those reading for shorter periods. This association should be interpreted cautiously because daily reading time was self-reported and may reflect broader factors such as occupational demands, leisure time, access to reading materials, or an established reading identity. Nevertheless, the finding reinforces the practical importance of parents' own reading habits as part of the home literacy environment.

Overall, the findings reveal statistically significant differences which can be attributed to parental interest in reading, number of children in family, and time spent reading, but none could be attributed to parent age and academic qualifications. This is not only understandable but also consistent with previous research findings. These findings are theoretically plausible because a literacy-rich home environment may strengthen children's awareness of print, language, and the social purposes of reading, all of which contribute to emergent literacy development (Mol et al., 2009). Two- to six-year-old children are exposed to written language long before school entry as they come in contact with street and shop signs, children's books, and other informal reading material, which research associates with the development of basic oral and written skills (Mol & Bus, 2011; Piasta et al., 2012).

The current findings are in line with those of previous research (e.g., Maralani, 2008; Mustapha et al., 2019; Steelman et al., 2002) which report a significant negative association between educational attainment and number of children in family (aka., family/sibship size). Children with fewer brothers and sisters are often reported to perform better academically than those with more siblings, possibly because parents in smaller families may have greater opportunity to devote time and attention to literacy-related interactions.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the study relied exclusively on parental self-report, making the responses vulnerable to recall error, subjective interpretation, and social-desirability bias. Second, the cross-sectional design identifies associations but cannot establish causal relationships between parental characteristics, reading habits, family size, and involvement. Third, purposeful sampling from kindergartens in four northern governorates limits the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the findings to all Jordanian families. Fourth, the study did not include direct observations of parent–child interaction, teachers' or children's reports, or independent measures of children's early literacy. Finally, potentially relevant factors such as child age and gender, parental employment, household income, access to literacy materials, and the quality rather than merely the frequency of literacy interaction were not included. Accordingly, the present findings should be interpreted as describing reported parental practices rather than objectively verified literacy behaviours or children's literacy achievement. Future studies should use multi-informant, observational, longitudinal, or mixed-method designs and link parental practices with direct assessments of children's emergent literacy.

CONCLUSION

This study examined Jordanian parents' self-reported involvement in their preschool children's early literacy and the extent to which reported involvement differed according to selected demographic and reading-related variables. The findings suggest an overall moderate level of involvement, with comparatively high engagement in direct teaching and school-oriented practices and lower engagement in some experiential, print-based, and digital activities. Parent age and academic qualification were not significantly associated with involvement, whereas family size, interest in reading, and daily reading time were associated with significant differences. These findings contribute to the growing literature on home literacy environments by providing one of the few large-scale descriptions of Jordanian parents' reported literacy practices during the preschool years.

Previous research has consistently identified parental involvement as an important component of children's early literacy and educational

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

development (Anderson, 2000; Hawes & Plourde, 2005; Joo et al., 2020; Reynolds & Temple, 2019). Evidence abounds for its enduring effects on future educational success (e.g., Englund et al., 2004), as it potentially increases learning time, fosters motivation, and increases expectations for achievement and success (e.g., Reynolds & Temple, 2019).

The findings have practical implications for early childhood institutions and family-literacy initiatives. Kindergartens may provide parents with concise, culturally appropriate guidance emphasizing that early literacy extends beyond teaching letters or completing schoolwork. Shared storytelling, everyday conversations, environmental print, library visits, purposeful outings, and carefully selected digital resources can support vocabulary, comprehension, print awareness, motivation, higher-order thinking, and meaningful language engagement (Bataineh et al., 2025). These practices may be reinforced through purposeful home–school digital communication, provided that technology complements rather than replaces parent–child literacy interactions (Bataineh et al., 2026). Particular support may be beneficial for larger families and for parents with limited interest in or time for reading. Such support should avoid deficit-oriented assumptions and instead promote flexible, low-cost literacy practices that can be integrated into everyday family life.

Because the study measured reported involvement rather than observed practices or children's literacy outcomes, the findings should be viewed as a descriptive foundation for further research rather than as evidence that the reported activities directly caused literacy gains.

AI USE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Generative artificial intelligence (ChatGPT, OpenAI) was used to assist with editing to improve the clarity and readability of the manuscript. The author reviewed and approved all suggested revisions and take full responsibility for the content of the article.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Scientific Ethics Committee at Author's Affiliation. The consent of all participants was obtained prior to their participation in this study.

REFERENCES

AlAli, R., Al-Barakat, A., Bataineh, R. F., & Alqatawna, M. (2025). From pixels to prose: Teachers' views on the power of digital imagery in early language development. *Forum for Linguistic Studies, 7*(2), 160–173. https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i2.8186

Anderson, S. A. (2000). How parental involvement makes a difference in reading achievement. *Reading Improvement, 37*(2), 61-86. https://www.proquest.com/openview/c3e982fe41f6d024bf52af7f70a4cca5/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2030479

Ansari, A., & Gershoff, E.T. (2015). Parent involvement in head start and children's development: Indirect effects through parenting. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 78*(2), 562-579. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12266

Bataineh, R. F., Bataineh, R. F., Al-Barakat, A. A., & AlAli, R. M. (2026). WhatsApp as a mediational infrastructure: Informal parental involvement and pedagogical drift in Jordanian primary education. *Digital Education Review, 48*, 157–172. https://doi.org/10.1344/der.2026.48.157-173

Bataineh, R. F., Kadhim, A. M., AlAli, R. M., Kanaan, E. M., Al-Barakat, A. A., Abdullatif, A. K. A., Zaher, A. M., & Aboud, Y. Z. (2025). Nurturing young minds: SWOM-based reading as a catalyst for reflective thinking in early childhood. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 24*(7), 1000-1019. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.7.47

Boonk, L., Gijselaers, H.J.M., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educational Research Review*, *24*(1), 10-30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2018.02.001

Bosire, J. P. O., Jeffries, J. B., Napoli, A. R., & Palermo, F. (2026a). Bridging home and school: How educator-parent relationships shape home learning environment and children's early language and literacy skills. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 76*, 208–216. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2026.03.008

Bosire, J. P. O., Jeffries, J. B., Napoli, A. R., & Palermo, F. (2026b). Profiles of home learning environment activities: Exploring family variability and links to early language, literacy, and math skills. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 105*, Article 101979. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2026.101979

Dearing, E., Kreider, H., Simpkins, S., & Weiss, H.B. (2006). Family involvement in school and low-income children's literacy: Longitudinal associations between and within families. *Journal of Educational Psychology,*

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

98(4), 653-664. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.98.4.653

Englund, M.M., Luckner, A.E., Whaley, G.J.L., & Egeland, B. (2004). Children's achievement in early elementary school: Longitudinal effects of parental involvement, expectations, and quality of assistance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 96*(4), 723-730. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.96.4.723

Epstein, J. (2001). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*. Westview.

Epstein, J.L. (2009). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action (*Third Edition). Corwin Press.

Epstein, J.L., Sanders, M.G., Salinas, K.C., Jansorn, N.R., Van Voorhis, F.L., Martin, C.S., Thomas, B.G., Greenfield, M.D., Hutchins, D.J., & Williams, K.J. (2009). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (Third Edition). Corwin Press.

Georgiou, G. K., Inoue, T., & Parrila, R. (2021). Developmental relations between home literacy environment, reading interest, and reading skills: Evidence from a 3-year longitudinal study. *Child Development, 92*(5), 2053–2068. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13589

Hawes, C.A., & Plourde, L.A. (2005). Parental involvement and its influence on the reading achievement of 6th grade students. *Reading Improvement, 42*(1), 47-57. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ711793

Hayes, C., Murnan, R. & Bequette, S. (2025). Family, culture, and literacy: Unlocking the power of home for early literacy achievement. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 54*(3), 1971–1981. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-025-01986-9

Hindman, A.H., & Morrison, F.J. (2011). Family involvement and educator outreach in Head Start: Nature, extent, and contributions to early literacy skills. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(3). 359–386. https://doi.org/10.1086/657651

Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H.M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research, 67*(1), 3-42. https://doi.org/10.2307/1170618

Inoue, T., Manolitsis, G., de Jong, P. F., Landerl, K., Parrila, R., & Georgiou, G. K. (2020). Home literacy environment and early literacy development across languages varying in orthographic consistency. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, Article 1923. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01923

Jeynes, W.H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education, 42*(1), 82-110. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085906293818

Joo, Y. S., Magnuson, K., Duncan, G. J., Schindler, H. S., Yoshikawa, H., & Ziol-Guest, K. M. (2019). What works in early Childhood Education Programs?: A meta–analysis of preschool enhancement programs. *Early Education and Development*, *31*(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2019.1624146

Khalid, A., & Singal, N. (2023). Parents as partners in education during COVID-19-related school closures in England: Challenges and opportunities identified by parents with Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. *Journal of Family Studies,* 29(4), 1822-1846. https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2022.2098804

Li, L., & Doyle, A. (2022). Contextual support in the home for children's early literacy development. *Berkeley Review of Education, 11*(1), 41–73. https://doi.org/10.5070/b811145300

Li, P., Yan, Z., Xu, L., Wang, R., Li, D., & Ye, Y. (2026). Overcoming early reading challenges: The crucial roles of home literacy environment, school environment, and approaches to learning. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 96*(1), 475–495. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.70032

Maralani, V. (2008). The changing relationship between family size and educational attainment over the course of socioeconomic development: Evidence from Indonesia. *Demography, 45*(3), 693-717. https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0013

Mol, S.E., & Bus, A.G. (2011). To read or not to read: A meta-analysis of print exposure from infancy to early adulthood. *Psychological bulletin*, *137*(2), 267-296. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021890

Mol, S.E., Bus, A.G., & de Jong, M.T. (2009). Interactive book reading in early education: A tool to stimulate print knowledge as well as oral language. *Review of Educational Research*, *79*(2), 979-1007. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654309332561

Mustapha, M. A., Wali, Y. S., & Abulfathi, F. A. (2019). Impact family size on children's literacy development in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Borno State, Nigeria. *imanager's Journal on Educational Psychology, 13*(1), 24-28. https://doi.org/10.26634/jpsy.13.1.15023

Nag, S., Vagh, S. B., Dulay, K. M., Snowling, M. J., Donolato, E., & Melby-Lervåg, M. (2024). Home learning environments and children's language and literacy skills: A meta-analytic review of studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries. *Psychological*

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468

Bulletin, 150(2), 132–153. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000417

Neuman, S.B. (2000). How can we enable all children to achieve? *Scholastic Early Childhood Today, 15*(1), 21-24.

Niklas, F., Cohrssen, C., & Tayler, C. (2016). Improving Preschoolers' Numerical Abilities by Enhancing the Home Numeracy Environment. *Early Education and Development*, *27*(3), 372–383. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2015.1076676

OECD. (2021). *The state of school education: One year into the COVID pandemic*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/201dde84-en

Penna, A.L., de Aquino, C.M., Pinheiro, M.S.N. *et al.* (2023). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternal mental health, early childhood development, and parental practices: A global scoping review. *BMC Public Health, 23*(1), Article 388. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15003-4

Pianta, R. (2002). School readiness: A focus on children, families, communities, and schools. *The Informed Educators*. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/ERIC-ED463882/pdf/ERIC-ED463882.pdf

Piasta, S.B., Justice, L.M., McGinty, A.S., & Kaderavek, J.N. (2012). Increasing young children's contact with print during shared reading: Longitudinal effects on literacy achievement. *Child Development*, *83*(3), 810-820. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01754.x

Reynolds, A.J., & Temple, J.A. (2019). *Sustaining Early Childhood Learning Gains: Program, School, and Family Influences*. Cambridge University Press.

Ribeiro, L.M., Cunha, R.S., Silva, M.C.A.e., Carvalho, M., & Vital, M.L. (2021). Parental involvement during pandemic times: Challenges and opportunities. *Education Sciences, 11*(6), 302. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11060302

Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, *73*(2), 445-460. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00417

Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2014). Continuity and change in the home literacy environment as predictors of growth in vocabulary and reading. *Child Development, 85*(4), 1552–1568. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12222

Steelman, L. C., Powell, B., Werum, R., & Carter, S. (2002). Reconsidering the effects of sibling configuration: Recent advances and challenges. *Annual Review of Sociology, 28*(1), 243–269. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.111301.093304

Street, B. V. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Street, B. V. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 5*(2), 77–91. https://doi.org/10.52214/cice.v5i2.11369

Tamborini, C.R., Kim, C., & Sakamoto, A. (2015). Education and lifetime earnings in the United States. *Demography*, *52*(4), 1383-1407. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-015-0407-0

UNESCO. (2026). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/reimagining-our-futures-together-new-social-contract-education

Wentzel, K.R. (1998). Parents' aspirations for children's educational attainments: Relations to parental beliefs and social address variables. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 44*(1), 20-37.

Copyright © 2026, *author*, e-ISSN: 2502-6747, p-ISSN: 2301-9468