

Parental Engagement with Their Preschoolers' Cognitive Development Prior to Their Kindergarten Admission: Sharjah-Based Case Study

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Abstract : In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), preschoolers can enroll in kindergarten after completing four years old by August 31 of their admission year. This study aims to better understand how Sharjah-based parents' engagement with preschoolers contributes to their phonological awareness, literacy development, and print knowledge before their kindergarten admission considering cognitive development is addressed in the UAE national child care standards. More specifically, it will discuss the importance of cognitive development activities to preschoolers, the rationale behind defining the admission age to kindergarten and compare and benchmark the policy to other countries. To achieve this study's objectives, an online survey was conducted and distributed. Respondents were asked 13 dichotomous questions related to activities that promote the preschooler's linguistics literacy and cognitive development. The results suggested parents' emphasis on phonological awareness, followed by developing their print knowledge. However, the majority of the surveyed parents did not engage in literacy development with their preschoolers. On this basis, it is clear parents' awareness should occur by introducing various activities such as book reading, that there is a need to introduce and encourage parents to various activities such as reading a printed book and drawings to keep up with their children's cognitive development. The survey results suggested an emphasis on phonological awareness, followed by developing their print knowledge. However, the majority of the surveyed parents did not engage in literacy development with their preschoolers. On this basis, parental awareness of the importance of preschoolers' cognitive development should be developed and engage the parents in understanding their preschooler's cognitive development before entering kindergarten.

Keywords : preschoolers, cognitive development, parental engagement, Sharjah-based case study

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020