

Perceptions of Urban Parents of Their Roles in the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–5 Years in Dhaka

By

Tamanna Afrose

ID: 23255003

A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in Early Childhood Development**

Brac Institute of Educational Development

Brac University

August 2026

© 2026. Tamanna Afrose

All rights reserved.

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing a degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Tamanna Afrose

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tamanna Afrose", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Tamanna Afrose

ID: 23255003

Approval

The thesis/project titled “Perceptions of Urban Parents of Their Roles in the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–5 Years in Dhaka” submitted by

1. Tamanna Afrose

ID: 23255003

of Summer, 2026 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Msc on Early Childhood Development in August 2026.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:

(Member)

Areefa Zafar

Senior Program Manager and Faculty

BRAC IED, BRAC University

Program Coordinator:

(Member)

Ferdousi Khanom

Senior Lecturer, ECD Academic Program

Brac Institute of Educational Development

External Expert Examiner:

(Member)

Brac University

Dr. Dilruba Sultana
Senior Lecturer, MEd. Department
BRAC Institute of Educational Development

Departmental Head (Chair)

Dr. Erum Marium
Executive Director Brac Institute of Educational Development

Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Perceptions of Urban Parents of Their Roles in the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–5 Years in Dhaka

Student name: Tamanna Afrose

1. Source of population

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)

- a) Physical risk to the subjects (no)
- b) Social risk (no)
- c) Psychological risk to subjects (no)
- d) discomfort to subjects (no)
- e) Invasion of privacy (no)

3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)

- a) Nature and purpose of the study (yes)
- b) Procedures to be followed (yes)
- c) Physical risk (N/A)
- d) Sensitive questions (yes)
- e) Benefits to be derived (yes)
- f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (yes)
- g) Confidential handling of data (yes)
- h) Compensation and/ treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (yes)

4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)

- a) from study participants (yes)
- b) from parents or guardian (N/A)
- c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

- a) Proposal (yes)
- b) Consent Form (yes)

c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (yes)

Ethical Review Committee:

Authorized by:

(chair/co-chair/other)

Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Abstract

Parents play a vital role in children's learning and development during the early years (Black et al., 2017; Jeong et al., 2021). Parents' beliefs and perceptions can shape the learning experiences and activities they provide for young children; therefore, understanding these perceptions is important for strengthening parenting support and promoting children's development (Fisher et al., 2008; Jeong et al., 2021). Research conducted in Bangladesh has demonstrated the importance of the home environment, parental stimulation, and caregiving experiences for young children's development (Hamadani et al., 2010); This study addresses the gap by examining the experiences, beliefs, and everyday practices of urban parents in Dhaka.

A qualitative research approach was adopted. Data were collected through two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with mothers and fathers separately and four In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with parents of children aged 3–5 years. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes.

The findings show that parents perceive themselves as the primary contributors to their children's overall development. They emphasized their roles in nurturing moral values, emotional well-being, communication, social skills, independence, and early learning through quality time, responsive communication, storytelling, play, and a supportive home environment. Parents also acknowledged the positive role of preschool in children's social and school readiness.

However, participants identified challenges such as work-related time constraints, children's increasing use of digital devices, limited parent–child interaction, and the need for greater knowledge of positive parenting practices. The study concludes greater access to evidence-based parenting resources are needed to enhance children's holistic development in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Parents' perception; Parenting; Parenting knowledge; Parenting practice; Child development; Positive parenting.

Table of Content

Table of Content

Chapter-One: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1.3 Purpose of the Study

1.4 Significance of the Study

1.5 Research Questions

1.7 Operational Definitions

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Early Childhood Development

2.2 Play-Based Learning in Early Childhood

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Play and Child Development

2.4 Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory

2.5 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

2.6 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

2.7 Parents' Perceptions of Play-Based Learning

2.8 Parents' Role in Supporting Children's Learning and Development

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach and Design

3.2 Research Site

3.3 Research Participants

3.4 Sampling Procedure

3.5 Data Collection Methods

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Pilot Testing of the Research Instruments

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

3.7 Data Analysis

3.8 Ethical Considerations

3.9 Validity and Reliability

3.10 Limitations of the Study

Chapter- FOUR : Result and discussion

4.1 Results

4.2 Demographic Information of the Participants

4.3 Findings

Theme 1: Parents' Understanding of Children's Learning and Development

Parents' understanding of child learning

Parents' understanding of child development

Parents' perceptions of the role of play in children's learning and development

Parents' understanding of their role in children's learning and development

The complementary roles of mothers and fathers

The contribution of grandparents, siblings, and extended family

Parents' perceptions of the role of schools and teachers

Theme 2: Parents' Practices to Support Children's Learning and Development

Spending quality time and engaging in everyday interactions

Encouraging learning through play and everyday activities

Encouraging independence through participation in household activities

Using positive encouragement and appreciation to build confidence

Using everyday resources and family interactions as learning opportunities

Managing screen time while using technology for learning

Theme 3: Factors Influencing Parents' Support for Children's Learning and Development

Balancing work responsibilities and parenting

Financial constraints and the cost of raising children

Family support as a facilitator of children's learning and development

Urban living conditions, limited living space, and safety concerns

Challenges related to children's screen time and digital technology

Parents' expectations from schools, teachers, and government

Conclusion

Recommendations

Reference

Appendix: A

Appendix: B

Appendix: C

Consent Form for Participation in Research (In-Depth Interview)

Consent Form for Participation in Research (Focus Group Discussion)

List of Acronyms

ECD- Early Childhood of Development

IDI- In Depth Interview

FGD- Focused Group Discussion

LMIC- Low and Middle Income Countries

Chapter-One: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Research consistently shows that the quality of interactions within the home and the extent of parental engagement during age 3-5 years are directly associated with school readiness and later academic and social outcomes (Britto et al., 2017). Children whose parents are actively involved in their early learning demonstrate stronger language development, improved social competence, and reduced behavioral problems at school entry (Claussen et al., 2021). This evidence positions parents as central partners in early childhood learning ecosystems. Many parents, particularly in urban contexts, lack consistent guidance on how to support play-based learning, language-rich routines, and socio-emotional development within the home. (UNICEF (2018). *Learning through play: Strengthening learning through play in early childhood education programmes.*)

The human brain develops most rapidly in the first five years, with about 90% of growth occurring before formal schooling begins (Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2020). In low- and middle-income countries, an estimated 250 million children are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential due to poverty, malnutrition, and limited early stimulation (Gromada, Richardson, & Rees, 2020). Investments in early childhood development (ECD), particularly those that strengthen the capacity of parents, are recognized as yielding significant long-term benefits—improving educational achievement, labor market participation, and social well-being (Heckman, 2011).

Research consistently underscores the critical role of parental involvement in the development of children aged 3–5. At this stage, children are building foundational cognitive, social, and emotional skills, and parents’ engagement significantly shapes these outcomes. International frameworks, such as the OECD’s *Starting Strong* series, emphasize that parental engagement should extend beyond formal school meetings to include consistent two-way communication with educators, guidance on effective parent–child interactions at home, and meaningful opportunities to participate in children’s early learning experiences (OECD, 2020).

Empirical evidence also highlights the effectiveness of structured parenting programs in strengthening this role. For example, the Triple P–Positive Parenting Program and the Incredible

Years program have demonstrated success in fostering positive parenting practices, reducing behavioral difficulties, and enhancing children's social-emotional competence across diverse cultural contexts (Sanders et al., 2014; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2018). Such findings affirm that well-supported parents are better equipped to provide stimulating and nurturing environments that produce long-term developmental benefits.

While pre-primary education coverage has expanded through government and non-government collaboration (Islam, 2016), structured parental involvement remains relatively limited. Existing engagement practices are often confined to brief sessions or general awareness-raising activities, which do not equip caregivers with sustained, practical skills to support play-based learning, language development, and socio-emotional growth within the home environment (Källebo, 2020). Importantly, this gap extends beyond the pre-primary years, as foundational development begins from birth and continues across the early childhood period. The limited integration of parenting support across the 0–5 age continuum suggests a critical need to embed responsive caregiving and home-based learning strategies more systematically within early childhood development frameworks, in order to maximize developmental outcomes.

Given this backdrop, it is important to examine how parents themselves perceive their roles in supporting their children's learning and development. Parents are widely regarded as the first educators in a child's life, and their understanding of responsibilities, challenges, and contributions plays a direct role in shaping children's developmental outcomes (Epstein, 2011; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2015). This study seeks to explore the perceptions of parents with children aged 3–5 years regarding their role in fostering learning and development. By centering parents' voices, the research aims to generate insights that can inform strategies for strengthening the home learning environment and reinforcing parent–school partnerships in Bangladesh.6tyb

1.2 Statement of the problem

The period between 3 and 5 years of age is widely recognized as a critical stage in children's learning and development. During these years, children rapidly develop foundational language,

cognitive, social-emotional, and self-regulation skills that prepare them for formal schooling and influence their later educational and life outcomes (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; OECD, 2020). Research shows that children aged 3–5 learn primarily through everyday interactions, play, communication, and responsive relationships with adults, particularly their parents (Britto et al., 2017). As children begin to explore their environment, communicate more effectively, and develop independence during this stage, parents play a crucial role in shaping learning experiences and supporting overall development. (Britto et al., 2017; Black et al., 2017). Evidence suggests that the quality of parental engagement during the preschool years is one of the strongest predictors of children's school readiness, socio-emotional competence, and long-term developmental outcomes (Claussen et al., 2021; Heckman, 2006).

At the same time, evidence indicates that negative disciplinary practices remain widespread. Physical punishment and harsh verbal reprimands are still used by many Bangladeshi parents as methods of child discipline, despite growing awareness of their harmful effects (Rahman et al., 2022).

Despite the importance of parental involvement during the ages of 3–5 years, parental engagement in Bangladesh remains inconsistent and often receives limited attention within early childhood development initiatives. Existing parent engagement practices are frequently limited to occasional meetings, awareness sessions, or informal communication with educational institutions, providing few opportunities for parents to develop practical skills to support children's learning and development at home (Källebo, 2020). Furthermore, many parents continue to perceive learning as primarily the responsibility of schools, rather than recognizing their own role as active contributors to their children's development during the preschool years (Aboud et al., 2013). This gap between parental responsibility and parental practice may reduce children's opportunities for learning and stimulation at a stage when development is particularly sensitive to environmental influences.

The challenges are especially pronounced among urban families. Although urban areas provide relatively greater access to preschools, childcare services, and educational resources, many low- and middle-income parents face demanding work schedules, economic pressures, and limited social support systems (Islam & Nasreen, 2015). These constraints often reduce the amount of

quality time parents can spend engaging with their children in learning-related activities. In addition, socio-economic disparities influence the availability of learning materials, play opportunities, and enriching experiences within the home environment. Families with greater resources may be able to provide books, educational toys, and structured learning opportunities, whereas less advantaged families may struggle to offer similar support (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Consequently, differences in parental engagement and access to resources during the ages of 3–5 years may contribute to developmental inequalities even before children enter primary school.

Although existing literature highlights the importance of parental involvement in early childhood, there is limited evidence on how urban low- and middle-income parents in Bangladesh themselves perceive their role in supporting the learning and development of children aged 3–5 years. Understanding parents' perspectives, practices, and challenges during this specific developmental period is essential for designing responsive parenting support initiatives and strengthening the home learning environment. Therefore, this study seeks to explore urban parents' perceptions of their roles in supporting the learning and development of children aged 3–5 years and to identify the factors that influence their ability to fulfill these roles effectively.

The global development agenda further underscores the urgency of addressing this gap. Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for inclusive and equitable quality education, beginning with early childhood, while SDG 3 emphasizes the importance of early nurturing for health and well-being, and SDG 10 highlights the reduction of inequalities in access to learning opportunities (United Nations, 2015). Evidence suggests that parents are central to providing nurturing care, responsive caregiving, and early learning opportunities during the preschool years. Therefore, achieving equitable early childhood development outcomes and broader educational goals remains challenging without adequately supporting parents in their caregiving role (Britto et al., 2017; Black et al., 2017; OECD, 2020).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The early childhood period (0–5 years) was widely recognised as a critical window for laying the foundations of lifelong learning, behaviour, and health outcomes (UNICEF, 2018; Britto et al., 2017).

However, evidence from low- and middle-income contexts, including Bangladesh, indicated that although access to early childhood education had improved, many families continued to lack structured guidance and support to effectively engage in home-based learning activities, resulting in uneven developmental opportunities (World Bank, 2018; BANBEIS, 2021). The specific objective of this study was to explore the perceptions of low- and middle-income urban parents of children aged 3–5 years regarding their role in supporting their children’s learning and development in Dhaka city. Research suggested that parents and primary caregivers played a central role in providing nurturing care, stimulation, and learning opportunities that supported young children’s overall development (Britto et al., 2017).

The early childhood period, particularly between the ages of 3 and 5 years, was widely recognised as a critical stage for establishing the foundations of lifelong learning, behaviour, and well-being (Britto et al., 2017; UNICEF, 2018). During this period, children rapidly developed cognitive, language, social-emotional, and self-regulation skills that were essential for school readiness and later success in life (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). However, evidence from low- and middle-income contexts, including Bangladesh, suggested that many families continued to face barriers in providing consistent learning and developmental support within the home environment, resulting in unequal opportunities for young children (World Bank, 2018). This study also explored how parents supported their children through everyday interactions and caregiving practices, as well as the challenges they faced in fulfilling these responsibilities.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Early childhood is a critical period for children's overall development, as experiences during the first years of life lay the foundation for future learning, health, behaviour, and well-being (Britto et al., 2017; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). During this stage, play is recognized as one of the most effective means through which children develop cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical competencies. International evidence suggests that play-based learning supports children's curiosity, creativity, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and self-regulation, making it an essential component of quality early childhood development (UNICEF, 2018; World Health Organization [WHO], UNICEF, & World Bank Group, 2018).

In Bangladesh, the importance of early childhood development and play-based learning has been reflected in national policies and curriculum frameworks, including the National Education Policy (2010), the Operational Framework for Pre-primary Education (2008), and the National

Curriculum Framework for Pre-primary Education, which promote developmentally appropriate and play-based approaches to children's learning (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education [MoPME], 2008; National Curriculum and Textbook Board [NCTB], 2021). Despite these initiatives, relatively little research has explored how parents, particularly those living in urban low-income communities, perceive play and its contribution to their children's development. Since parents are children's first educators and primary caregivers, their beliefs and everyday practices significantly influence children's opportunities to engage in meaningful play and learning (Britto et al., 2017).

Families living in urban low-income communities often face multiple challenges, including financial hardship, limited living space, long working hours, and inadequate access to safe recreational environments (Evans, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2011). These circumstances may affect both the quantity and quality of play experiences available to young children (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005; Ferguson et al., 2013). Exploring parents' perceptions within these contexts is therefore important for understanding how socioeconomic realities shape parenting practices and children's developmental opportunities (Walker et al., 2011; Black et al., 2017).

The findings of this study will contribute to the existing literature on early childhood development in Bangladesh by providing an in-depth understanding of how parents perceive play-based learning, how they support their children's development through everyday activities, and the challenges they encounter in doing so. The study will also provide evidence that may assist policymakers, educators, development practitioners, and organizations in designing family-centred interventions and parenting support programmes that are responsive to the needs and lived experiences of urban low-income families.

Furthermore, this study contributes to broader national and global efforts to promote children's holistic development. By generating evidence on parents' perspectives regarding play-based learning, the study supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, SDG 3 on promoting good health and well-being, and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities (United Nations, 2015). Ultimately, the study emphasizes that strengthening children's development requires not only quality early childhood

education services but also empowering families to create nurturing, stimulating, and play-rich environments where young children can learn and thrive.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What understanding do parents have about their roles in their children's development and learning?
2. How do parents currently engage with their children in everyday developmental and learning activities?
3. Which factors influence parents' support for their children's learning and development?

1.7 Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions are used:

Early Childhood

Early childhood refers to the developmental period from birth to eight years of age. However, this study specifically focuses on children aged **3–5 years**, corresponding to the preschool years (UNESCO, 2022).

Play-Based Learning

Play-based learning refers to a child-centred approach in which children learn knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours through meaningful, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate play experiences (Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

Parental Perception

Parental perception refers to parents' beliefs, understanding, opinions, experiences, and interpretations regarding children's learning, development, and the role of play in early childhood. (Fisher et al., 2008).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The early years involve major changes in children's abilities, and experiences during this period can influence developmental pathways extending into later childhood (Black et al., 2017; Britto et al., 2017). Research indicates that children's development is shaped not only by biological characteristics but also by the quality of their interactions with parents, caregivers, and the environments in which they grow (Britto et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2011).

When learning is embedded within play, children can explore ideas and practise cognitive, physical, social, and emotional abilities through active participation (Yogman et al., 2018; Pyle & Danniels, 2017). Through play, children explore their surroundings, communicate ideas, solve problems, interact with others, and develop new knowledge and skills through meaningful experiences (Weisberg et al., 2013; Lillard et al., 2013).

Parents play an important role in creating learning opportunities, encouraging exploration, supporting play, and promoting children's overall development (Britto et al., 2017; Jeong et al., 2021). Parents' beliefs about play can influence the activities they provide, their involvement in children's play, and the extent to which they prioritise play or more formal academic activities (Fisher et al., 2008). These perceptions are especially important in economically disadvantaged urban settings, where financial constraints, limited living space, and restricted access to safe recreational environments may reduce children's opportunities for play and learning (Evans, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2011).

This chapter reviews the literature on early childhood development, play-based learning, parental perceptions, and parents' roles in supporting children's development. It also examines factors influencing parents' ability to facilitate play-based learning in urban low-income communities in Bangladesh and identifies the research gap that underpins the present study.

2.1 Early Childhood Development

Early childhood is a critical period of development during which children acquire the foundational skills that influence their future learning, health, behaviour, and well-being.

Research shows that children's development is shaped not only by biological factors but also by the quality of interactions with parents, caregivers, and their environment (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Britto et al., 2017).

Play-based learning is widely recognised as an effective approach to supporting children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. Through play, children explore, communicate, solve problems, and construct knowledge in meaningful and enjoyable ways, making play a key component of quality early childhood development (UNICEF, 2018).

Within the home, parents can support early learning by interacting with children, encouraging exploration, responding to their interests, and participating in shared activities (Britto et al., 2017; Jeong et al., 2021). Their beliefs about play influence the extent to which they encourage exploration, participate in play activities, or prioritise academic learning (Fisher et al., 2008). These perceptions are particularly important in urban low-income communities, where limited household resources, constrained living environments, and restricted access to safe play spaces may reduce children's opportunities for learning and development (Evans, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2011).

This chapter reviews the literature on early childhood development, play-based learning, parental perceptions, and parents' roles in supporting children's development. It also examines factors influencing parents' ability to facilitate play-based learning in urban low-income communities in Bangladesh and identifies the research gap that underpins the present study.

2.2 Play-Based Learning in Early Childhood

Young children frequently use play to investigate their surroundings, test ideas, develop relationships, and practise new abilities (Ginsburg, 2007; Yogman et al., 2018). Contemporary research views play as more than a leisure activity because it provides opportunities for children to construct knowledge, develop relationships, solve problems, and practise emerging skills

(Lillard et al., 2013; Weisberg et al., 2013). Through playful experiences, children communicate, explore possibilities, use creativity, and develop understandings based on their everyday experiences (Pyle & Danniels, 2017; Yogman et al., 2018).

Play-based learning generally involves experiences in which children are actively engaged, have opportunities to make choices and explore ideas, and learn through meaningful interactions with people, materials, and their environment (Pyle & Danniels, 2017; Weisberg et al., 2013).

Compared with highly teacher-directed instruction, guided and child-centred forms of play allow children greater opportunities to investigate, question, imagine, and discover while adults provide appropriate support when necessary (Fisher et al., 2013; Weisberg et al., 2013).

Research indicates that play contributes to several areas of children's development. Playful activities can strengthen problem-solving, reasoning, symbolic thinking, and other cognitive abilities (Lillard et al., 2013; Ramani & Siegler, 2008). Storytelling, pretend play, and social interaction during play can support language and early literacy development (Nicolopoulou et al., 2015), while cooperative and imaginative play provides opportunities for children to practise communication, emotional regulation, negotiation, and social understanding (Lillard et al., 2013; Yogman et al., 2018). Physically active play can additionally contribute to children's motor development and broader physical well-being (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998).

Different forms of play may provide different kinds of developmental opportunities. Physical play is particularly relevant to children's movement and motor development (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998), while constructive and problem-solving games can promote reasoning and cognitive skills (Ramani & Siegler, 2008). Pretend play provides opportunities for imagination, symbolic representation, language, and social interaction (Lillard et al., 2013), whereas games involving rules can encourage children to practise cooperation, self-regulation, and problem-solving (Yogman et al., 2018).

Play-based learning also occurs within everyday family life rather than only in formal educational settings. Shared activities such as storytelling, reading, conversation, drawing, singing, and simple games can provide meaningful learning experiences when parents actively interact with their children (Mol et al., 2008; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Responsive parent–child interactions and developmentally stimulating activities are associated with positive

cognitive, language, and socio-emotional outcomes during early childhood (Britto et al., 2017; Jeong et al., 2021).

Despite these benefits, children's opportunities for play can be affected by environmental and socioeconomic conditions. Poverty, overcrowding, limited household resources, and restricted access to safe and stimulating environments may reduce opportunities for active exploration and play (Evans, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2013). Parents' own beliefs about play are also important because these beliefs can influence whether they encourage playful exploration or place greater emphasis on structured academic activities (Fisher et al., 2008). Understanding parents' perceptions is therefore important for explaining the kinds of learning and play experiences they provide for children at home.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Play and Child Development

Different developmental theories offer distinct explanations of how play, interaction, and experience contribute to children's learning (Lillard et al., 2013; Weisberg et al., 2013).

Although these theories differ in their explanations of children's development, they generally recognise children as active participants in learning whose knowledge develops through exploration, social interaction, and engagement with their surrounding environment (DeVries, 2000; Tudge et al., 2009).

The present study draws primarily on Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory because these perspectives offer complementary explanations of children's active learning, the importance of social interaction and adult support, and the influence of family and broader environmental contexts on development (DeVries, 2000; Tudge et al., 2009).

2.4 Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory

From a Piagetian perspective, children actively develop understanding as they interact with objects, situations, and experiences in their surroundings (DeVries, 2000; Lourenço & Machado, 1996).

Piaget proposed that children's ways of reasoning change as development progresses, with increasingly complex forms of understanding emerging over time (Lourenço & Machado, 1996; DeVries, 2000).

Children aged three to five years fall within the preoperational period, during which symbolic representation, language, imagination, and pretend play become increasingly important features of cognitive development (Fein, 1981; Lillard et al., 2013).

From a Piagetian perspective, play contributes to cognitive development by allowing children to represent, reorganize, and make sense of their experiences (DeVries, 2000; Fein, 1981).

During pretend play, children reproduce familiar experiences, take on different roles, and use one object or action symbolically to represent another (Fein, 1981; Lillard et al., 2013).

Such activities provide opportunities for children to practise symbolic thinking, experiment with ideas, and develop their understanding of everyday experiences (Lillard et al., 2013; Nicolopoulou, 1993).

From a Piagetian perspective, children develop understanding through active exploration and direct engagement with objects and events rather than simply receiving information passively from adults (DeVries, 2000; Lourenço & Machado, 1996).

Parents can therefore support learning by providing stimulating environments that encourage children to explore, investigate, and make discoveries while allowing them an appropriate degree of independence (DeVries, 2000).

When children manipulate objects, ask questions, experiment with possibilities, and attempt to solve problems during play, they actively construct and reorganize their understanding of the world (Nicolopoulou, 1993; Lillard et al., 2013).

Although Piaget's theory has had considerable influence on understandings of children's cognitive development, it has been criticised for giving comparatively less attention to the roles of social interaction, language, and cultural context than sociocultural approaches to development (Nicolopoulou, 1993; DeVries, 2000).

Contemporary research suggests that children's learning can be supported not only through independent exploration but also through appropriately guided interactions with adults and other social partners (Fisher et al., 2013; Wood et al., 1976).

Responsive parent–child interaction and adult guidance can provide children with opportunities to develop language, solve problems, and acquire skills that may be difficult to achieve independently (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001; Fisher et al., 2013).

2.5 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

From a sociocultural perspective, learning develops through children's participation in interactions with more knowledgeable people within their social and cultural environment (DeVries, 2000; Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993). From a sociocultural perspective, children develop knowledge through interactions with more knowledgeable social partners, including parents, caregivers, teachers, and peers (Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993; Nicolopoulou, 1993). This perspective treats learning as socially situated, with children's thinking developing through participation in culturally meaningful activities and relationships (Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993; DeVries, 2000). The Zone of Proximal Development describes tasks that exceed what a child can currently manage alone but can be accomplished with appropriate assistance from a more capable partner (DeVries, 2000; Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993). Within such supported learning situations, adults can provide temporary assistance that is gradually reduced as children develop greater competence and independence, a process commonly described as scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976).

Play is particularly important within a sociocultural perspective because it creates opportunities for children to practise behaviours, roles, and abilities that extend beyond their immediate level of functioning (Nicolopoulou, 1993; Elias & Berk, 2002). During imaginative and sociodramatic play, children communicate with others, negotiate roles and rules, solve problems, and practise regulating their own behaviour (Elias & Berk, 2002; Nicolopoulou, 1993). Such experiences can contribute to the development of self-regulation, language, social understanding, and more complex forms of thinking (Elias & Berk, 2002; Nicolopoulou, 1993). This perspective also highlights the important role parents can play in children's learning through responsive interaction and appropriate guidance (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001; Weisberg et al., 2013).

Rather than only providing toys or materials, parents can support learning by engaging children in conversation, responding to their communication, asking questions, encouraging exploration, and providing assistance during problem-solving activities (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001; Weisberg et al., 2013). Responsive parent–child interactions can create meaningful learning opportunities that contribute to children’s language and cognitive development within everyday family activities (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001). Vygotskian theory is particularly relevant to the present study because it emphasizes that children’s learning occurs within social relationships and culturally shaped experiences (Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993; Nicolopoulou, 1993). Parents’ beliefs about play may therefore influence both the opportunities they provide for children and the ways in which they participate in and support children’s playful learning experiences (Fisher et al., 2008).

2.6 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective considers children's development within a network of relationships and environments operating at different levels around the child (Tudge et al., 2009; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Within this perspective, development emerges through continuing exchanges between the child and the social and environmental contexts surrounding everyday life (Tudge et al., 2009; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The theory describes several interconnected environmental systems that influence development (Tudge et al., 2009; Neal & Neal, 2013). The microsystem includes children's immediate environments and relationships, such as the home, family, school, and peer settings (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Neal & Neal, 2013). Because the family belongs to the child's immediate environment, everyday parenting practices and parent–child exchanges can have direct implications for children's developmental experiences (Conger et al., 2010; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001).

The mesosystem refers to connections between children's different immediate settings, including relationships between families and educational institutions (Tudge et al., 2009; Neal & Neal, 2013). Positive family-school involvement and communication can support children's learning and educational development, particularly among children from economically disadvantaged families (Dearing et al., 2006). Bronfenbrenner's term is the exosystem, which includes settings in which children may not participate directly but which can still influence their development,

such as parents' workplaces, neighbourhood conditions, and community resources (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). Employment pressures, economic hardship, neighbourhood disadvantage, and limited access to safe and stimulating environments can affect family processes and the opportunities available for children's learning and play (Conger et al., 2010; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Ferguson et al., 2013). The macrosystem encompasses broader cultural values, social norms, economic structures, and beliefs that influence children's development and the practices of families and institutions surrounding them (Tudge et al., 2009; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). For example, parents' cultural and educational beliefs can influence whether they regard play as an important learning experience or place greater emphasis on structured academic activities (Fisher et al., 2008). The chronosystem recognizes the importance of time and change in development, including changes within individuals, families, communities, and wider social environments across the life course (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). Bronfenbrenner's theory is particularly relevant to the present study because families living in economically disadvantaged urban environments may experience interconnected socioeconomic and environmental constraints that influence parenting and children's developmental opportunities (Evans, 2004; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Poverty, crowded or inadequate housing, neighbourhood disadvantage, and restricted access to safe recreational environments can combine to shape children's opportunities for exploration, play, and learning (Evans, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2013).

Understanding parental perceptions therefore requires consideration not only of parents' individual beliefs and practices but also of the broader family, neighbourhood, social, and cultural contexts within which parenting occurs (Conger et al., 2010; Tudge et al., 2009).

2.7 Parents' Perceptions of Play-Based Learning

Parents' beliefs about how children learn can shape the types of activities, interactions, and learning opportunities they make available at home (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001). In this context, parental perceptions concern how parents interpret children's development and learning and how those interpretations influence their expectations and involvement (Fisher et al., 2008).

These beliefs, together with parental practices and responsiveness, contribute to the quality of the home learning environment and children's developmental opportunities (Hamadani et al., 2010; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001).

When parents consider play educationally valuable, they may place greater importance on activities such as shared reading, conversation, pretend play, games, and exploration (Fisher et al., 2008).

Regular parent-child reading, conversation, storytelling, and responsive interaction have been linked with positive developmental outcomes, particularly in language and cognition (Mol et al., 2008; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2001). Such interactions can also encourage children's active participation, exploration, and independent thinking (Weisberg et al., 2013).

Parental perceptions of play and learning can vary across cultural and socioeconomic contexts (Fisher et al., 2008; Parmar et al., 2004). Research comparing cultural groups has shown that parents may differ in the extent to which they view play as educational and in the amount of emphasis they place on structured academic learning (Parmar et al., 2004). In some families, activities directly associated with literacy, numeracy, and preparation for formal schooling may therefore be regarded as more educationally valuable than unstructured play (Fisher et al., 2008; Parmar et al., 2004).

Parents' educational and socioeconomic backgrounds can also influence the learning opportunities available to children at home (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Hamadani et al., 2010). Greater access to information, educational resources, and stimulating materials is often associated with richer home learning experiences, whereas socioeconomic disadvantage can restrict the resources and opportunities available for children's development (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Evans, 2004). Evidence from Bangladesh has similarly shown associations between family caregiving practices, stimulation in the home, socioeconomic circumstances, and young children's developmental outcomes (Hamadani et al., 2010).

Socioeconomic circumstances may further influence the extent to which parents are able to provide opportunities for play and interaction. Financial hardship, employment pressures,

crowded housing, neighbourhood disadvantage, and limited access to safe recreational environments can affect family processes and children's everyday developmental experiences (Conger et al., 2010; Evans, 2004; Ferguson et al., 2013). These constraints may limit opportunities for active and outdoor play even when parents understand the developmental importance of such experiences (Ferguson et al., 2013).

Research also suggests that parents may experience tension between valuing play and emphasizing preparation for formal schooling (Fisher et al., 2008; Parmar et al., 2004). Parents can recognise that play contributes to children's enjoyment and development while simultaneously placing considerable importance on more structured academic activities (Fisher et al., 2008). However, research on guided and playful learning indicates that appropriately supported play can itself contribute to the development of knowledge and skills relevant to later academic learning (Fisher et al., 2013; Weisberg et al., 2013). Within Bangladesh, existing research has examined areas such as parenting stimulation, caregiving practices, child development outcomes, and parenting interventions (Aboud, 2007; Hamadani et al., 2010). Comparatively less attention in this body of research has been directed specifically toward parents' own perceptions of play-based learning, particularly among families living in disadvantaged urban settings. The present study therefore addresses this research gap by examining how urban low-income parents understand play, how they balance playful and academic learning, and how their everyday socioeconomic circumstances influence the learning opportunities they provide for their children.

2.8 Parents' Role in Supporting Children's Learning and Development

Children encounter many of their earliest learning experiences within interactions and routines shared with their parents (Britto et al., 2017). Long before children enter formal schooling, they learn through interactions with parents during daily routines, conversations, household activities, storytelling, and play. These early experiences influence children's language acquisition, emotional security, cognitive development, and social competence (Britto et al., 2017).

Responsive caregiving supports development by encouraging adults to notice children's signals, respond appropriately, and provide emotional and learning support during everyday interactions (WHO, UNICEF, & World Bank Group, 2018). Responsive parents observe children's interests,

respond appropriately to their needs, encourage exploration, and provide emotional support that enables children to learn confidently (WHO, UNICEF, & World Bank Group, 2018). Such interactions strengthen secure attachment relationships while simultaneously promoting children's communication, self-regulation, and problem-solving abilities.

Play provides one of the most accessible opportunities for parents to support children's development. Shared play activities encourage meaningful conversations, strengthen parent-child relationships, and create opportunities for children to practice language, imagination, and social skills. Research suggests that even simple activities such as singing songs, reading picture books, pretending during household chores, or playing with everyday objects can significantly enhance children's developmental outcomes (Walker et al., 2011; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2020).

Developmentally supportive experiences do not depend solely on costly materials; meaningful interaction between parents and children can turn ordinary activities and objects into learning opportunities (Britto et al., 2017). Parents can create rich learning experiences by engaging children in everyday routines, asking open-ended questions, encouraging curiosity, and allowing children to participate in household activities appropriate to their age.

Nevertheless, parents' ability to support children's learning is shaped by multiple contextual factors, including parental education, household income, employment conditions, cultural expectations, and access to neighbourhood and community resources (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Conger et al., 2010; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Understanding these realities is therefore important for developing context-sensitive interventions that strengthen parents' capacity to provide stimulating, responsive, and play-based learning opportunities within their own social and economic circumstances (Aboud, 2007; Jeong et al., 2021).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory design to understand parents' perceptions of their role in the learning and development of children aged 3–5 years in urban Bangladesh. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it focuses on understanding meanings, experiences, and

interpretations from the perspective of participants rather than testing predetermined hypotheses (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). As defined by Gay et al. (2012), qualitative research seeks to explore and understand individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours in their natural context, making it particularly suitable for examining parental perceptions and caregiving practices.

Data will be collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), which allow for rich, detailed accounts of participants' experiences, practices, and challenges (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Krueger & Casey, 2015).

3.2 Research Participants

The study will focus on both father and mother having at least 1 child aged 3–5 years residing in Dhaka city and they are from low and middle socio-economic conditions. Evidence also shows that parents are the primary and most consistent source of stimulation and caregiving during these early years, making their perceptions and practices central to understanding children's developmental opportunities (UNICEF, 2018; Black et al., 2017).

Inclusion criteria:

1. Adult (≥ 18 years) parent of a 3–5-year-old child
2. Resident in Dhaka for at least 12 months

Diversity considerations:

- Mothers and fathers from both single-earner and dual-earner households
- Parents from low- and middle-income urban households

- Children aged 3–5 years enrolled in available early childhood education settings (government, NGO, or low- to middle-cost private preschools where applicable) or receiving home-based care prior to formal schooling.

Prior studies suggest that parents' understanding of their roles in children's development varies by income, occupation, and childcare setting (Nahar et al., 2019; BRAC University, 2023).

Sample size:

- **IDIs:** 4 participants (2 mothers and 2 fathers), ensuring variation in gender and socioeconomic background (low- and middle-income households).
- **FGDs:** 2 groups (one with mothers, one with fathers), each consisting of 6 participants

3.3 Participant Selection and Recruitment

A purposive sampling strategy with maximum variation will be used to recruit parents with diverse backgrounds. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are deliberately selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research purpose, rather than being randomly chosen, in order to ensure rich and information-dense data (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Participants will be identified through early childhood centers, NGOs, community networks, and local ward offices. Eligibility will be confirmed through a brief screening process to ensure alignment with the study criteria.

3.4 Research Site

To capture this contextual variation, participants will be recruited from neighborhoods such as Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, and Uttara, which reflect a range of socio-economic and childcare environments within the city.

These areas were selected to capture variation in socio-economic conditions, household structures, and childcare arrangements among urban families in Bangladesh, allowing for a comparative understanding of parental perceptions across different socio-economic contexts.

These contextual realities make Dhaka an important setting for exploring parents' perceptions of their role in supporting young children's development. The study will be conducted in Dhaka city, with a particular focus on the areas of Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, and Banani. These locations were selected to capture low and middle income urban family contexts and parenting experiences related to children's early learning and development.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

In-depth interviews (IDIs):

In-depth interviews (IDIs) are a qualitative data collection method involving one-to-one, semi-structured or unstructured conversations that allow participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and meanings in detail. This method is particularly useful for exploring complex social phenomena, as it enables the researcher to gain rich, nuanced insights into participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Focus group discussions (FGDs):

Focus group discussions (FGDs) are a qualitative data collection method in which a small group of participants engages in a guided discussion facilitated by a researcher, allowing for the exploration of shared experiences, norms, and differences in perspectives. FGDs are particularly useful for understanding collective views and social dynamics, as participants respond not only to the facilitator but also to each other's comments, generating deeper insights through interaction (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

Pilot testing:

The tools will be piloted with 1 parent outside the selected wards. Feedback will be used to refine clarity, cultural appropriateness, and timing.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

In-depth interviews (IDIs) will be conducted for approximately 60 minutes and scheduled flexibly to accommodate working parents and their availability. Focus group discussions (FGDs)

will last around 90 minutes and will be held in neutral community spaces to ensure a comfortable and non-intimidating environment for participants. Each FGD will be facilitated by the researcher to ensure accurate documentation of responses and group dynamics. With participants' informed consent, all interviews and discussions will be audio-recorded, while detailed fieldnotes will be taken to capture contextual information and relevant non-verbal cues, as recommended in qualitative research practice (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The data collection will be conducted in Bangla to ensure clarity and cultural relevance, after which all recordings will be transcribed verbatim and translated into English. To ensure translation accuracy and reliability, a subset of 10–15% of transcripts will be back-translated and cross-checked, in line with established qualitative translation validation procedures (Van Nes et al., 2010).

3.7 Data Analysis

Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which is a widely used qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is not merely a procedural technique but a flexible method that enables researchers to interpret meaning across a dataset in relation to a specific research question, rather than simply summarizing content.

In this study, transcripts will first be read repeatedly to achieve data familiarization. Initial codes will then be generated inductively from the data to capture meaningful features related to parents' experiences, beliefs, and practices regarding their children's learning and development. These codes will subsequently be organized into potential themes and sub-themes that reflect patterns of similarity and variation in parental perspectives. The emerging themes will then be reviewed and refined to ensure coherence within themes and clear distinction between them, followed by clear definition and naming of each theme to accurately represent its scope and meaning. This iterative process allows for a systematic yet flexible interpretation of qualitative data, ensuring that the analysis remains grounded in participants' lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

I will remain aware of potential bias during data collection and analysis and will take steps to maintain neutrality by using a standardized interview guide and avoiding leading questions.

Timeline																								
SL No.	Task	March'26				April'26				May'26				June'26				July'26				Aug'26		
		1st w	2nd w	3rd w	4th w	1st w	2nd w	3rd w	4th w	1st w	2nd w	3rd w	4th w	1st w	2nd w	3rd w	4th w	1st w	2nd w	3rd w	4th w	2nd w	3rd w	4th w
1	Topic Selection	█																						
2	Review of related literature		█																					
3	Research proposal development			█	█																			
4	Tool development							█	█	█	█													
5	Data Collection											█	█	█										
6	Data Analysis													█	█	█	█							
7	Report Writing																█	█	█	█				
8	Final Report submission & Dissertation																				█	█	█	█

CHAPTER FOUR : RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on data collected through four In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with parents of children aged 3–5 years living in urban communities in Dhaka.

The analysis focused on understanding parents' perceptions of play-based learning and child development, their everyday parenting practices, the opportunities they provided for children's learning through play, and the challenges they encountered while supporting their children's development.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the demographic characteristics of the participants. The second section presents the major themes and sub-themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the data. Findings are presented using participant quotations to reflect parents' experiences and perspectives. To maintain confidentiality, participants' identities have been anonymized and are referred to using participant codes throughout the chapter.

4.2 Discussion

This section discusses the findings in relation to existing literature and relevant theoretical perspectives. The discussion interprets the themes identified from the IDIs and FGDs and examines how the findings contribute to the understanding of parents' perceptions of play-based learning and child development within urban communities in Dhaka.

The discussion connects the study findings with previous research on early childhood development, parental involvement, play-based learning, and the influence of socioeconomic and environmental factors on children's learning opportunities. It also highlights similarities and differences between the present findings and existing evidence while considering the implications for family-centred interventions and early childhood development practices.

4.3 Demographic Information of the Participants

A total of **sixteen parents** participated in this study. Data were collected through **four In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)** and **two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**. The in-depth interviews included

two mothers and two fathers, allowing the researcher to explore individual experiences and personal reflections regarding play-based learning and child development. In addition, two focus group discussions were conducted separately with **six mothers and six fathers**, enabling participants to exchange experiences and discuss common parenting practices and challenges.

The participants represented families from different urban communities in Dhaka and belonged primarily to low- and middle-income households. Their occupations included homemakers, private service holders, small business owners, drivers, and other informal professions. The educational backgrounds of the participants varied, ranging from secondary education to university degrees, reflecting the diversity of educational experiences among urban parents.

The age of the participating parents ranged approximately from the late twenties to early forties. All participants had at least one child between **three and five years of age**, which was consistent with the inclusion criteria of the study. Some participants had only one child, while others had two or more children. Although the socioeconomic conditions of the families differed, all participants shared the common responsibility of raising young children during the critical years of early childhood development.

After analysing all the interviews and focus group discussions, several recurring patterns emerged regarding parents' perceptions of play-based learning and child development. Although participants came from different educational, occupational, and family backgrounds, many of their experiences and beliefs were remarkably similar. At the same time, some differences were observed in the ways mothers and fathers viewed their roles and responsibilities in supporting children's learning through play.

Thematic analysis of the data generated **nine major themes**, each representing an important aspect of parents' perceptions and practices. These themes are presented in the following sections with supporting quotations from the participants. The quotations have been translated from Bangla into English while preserving the original meaning as closely as possible. The interpretation of each theme is based on participants' narratives and supported, where appropriate, by existing literature.

4.3 Findings

The findings of this study were organized into three major themes based on the analysis of the In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), consistent with thematic analysis in which recurring patterns across qualitative data are developed into meaningful themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

Each major theme contains several sub-themes reflecting parents' perceptions regarding their roles in the learning and development of children aged 3–5 years. The use of themes and sub-themes helps organize related patterns of meaning while retaining important distinctions within the qualitative dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Findings from the IDIs and FGDs are presented together under each sub-theme to provide a more comprehensive understanding of parents' individual experiences and shared perspectives. Combining individual interviews with focus group data can enhance the richness of qualitative findings by capturing both personal accounts and collectively expressed views (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008).

Theme 1: Parents' Understanding of Children's Learning and Development

The demographic diversity of participants contributed to the breadth of the study by allowing a range of perspectives and experiences concerning children's learning and development to be represented (Palinkas et al., 2015; Robinson, 2014). Mothers and fathers described their experiences, understandings of children's learning, and the strategies they used to support their children's development. Including participants with different parental roles can help qualitative research capture variation in experiences and perspectives across the sample (Robinson, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015).

The findings obtained from the In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are presented separately below. Using both individual interviews and focus groups can provide complementary forms of qualitative data by capturing detailed personal accounts as well as perspectives generated through group interaction (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008; Kitzinger, 1995).

The demographic diversity of participants contributed to the breadth of the study by allowing a range of perspectives and experiences concerning children's learning and development to be represented (Palinkas et al., 2015; Robinson, 2014). Mothers and fathers described their

experiences, understandings of children's learning, and the strategies they used to support their children's development. Including participants with different parental roles can help qualitative research capture variation in experiences and perspectives across the sample (Robinson, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015).

The findings obtained from the In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are presented separately below. Using both individual interviews and focus groups can provide complementary forms of qualitative data by capturing detailed personal accounts as well as perspectives generated through group interaction (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008; Kitzinger, 1995).

Findings from In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)

The IDI findings showed that most participants understood children's learning and development as a holistic process involving cognitive, language, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical development. Participants particularly emphasized the importance of the early years in establishing the foundation for children's future development.

One mother explained:

"The early years are very important because this is when children start developing their habits, behaviour, and understanding of the world around them." (IDI-1, 15 May 2026)

Another participant stated:

"At this age, children are learning all the time. They learn how to speak, how to behave with others, how to express themselves, and how to do small things independently." (IDI-2, 15 May 2026)

Participants also emphasized the role of parents in creating a supportive environment in which children can explore, communicate, and ask questions. One mother explained:

"I think parents have the biggest responsibility at this age because children spend most of their time with us. The way we talk to them and respond to them affects how they learn." (IDI-3, 16 May 2026)

Another mother described the importance of responding to children's curiosity:

"My child asks many questions throughout the day. I try to answer because I think every question is part of his learning. Even when I don't know something, we try to find the answer together."

(IDI-4, 16 May 2026).

Parents' Understanding of Child Learning: IDI Findings

During the IDIs, participants described learning as something that occurs continuously through children's everyday experiences. They did not describe learning only in terms of acquiring academic knowledge such as letters, numbers, reading, or writing.

One participant stated:

"For me, learning does not only mean knowing letters and numbers. Children are learning when they talk to us, when they play, when they eat by themselves, and even when they help us with small things at home." (IDI-1, 15 May 2026)

Another mother explained:

"I don't think a three- or four-year-old child should only sit with books. There are many things they need to learn at this age, like communicating, sharing, behaving properly, and doing things independently." (IDI-2, 15 May 2026)

Participants frequently described observation and imitation as important ways through which young children learn. One mother provided an example from her everyday household routine:

"I noticed that when I finish cooking, I organize the kitchen things and put everything back in its place. My son watches me doing this. After some time, I saw that after playing, he started putting his toys back into the box. I never specifically taught him to do that. He learned by watching me." (IDI-2, 15 May 2026)

Another participant similarly described children's tendency to imitate adults:

"Children notice everything we do. Sometimes we don't even realize that they are watching us, but later we see them doing exactly the same thing." (IDI-3, 16 May 2026)

The importance participants placed on observation is consistent with research indicating that young children acquire knowledge and behaviours through observation and imitation of others (Meltzoff, 2007).

Participants also described learning as occurring through social interactions with family members and other people around the child. One participant explained:

"My child learns different things from different people. He learns something from me, something from his father, and other things from his grandparents and cousins. When he spends time with other children, he also learns how to communicate and share." (IDI-4, 16 May 2026)

Another participant described everyday family activities as opportunities for learning:

"Even when we go shopping, my child is learning. He asks about the names of things, colours, prices, and why we are buying something. These normal activities teach him many things." (IDI-1, 15 May 2026)

Participants further indicated that they preferred learning experiences that allowed children to explore rather than placing excessive pressure on them. One mother stated:

"If we force children too much, they lose interest. I prefer to let my child explore and learn slowly because then he enjoys what he is doing." (IDI-3, 16 May 2026)

Another participant explained:

"At this age, I want my child to enjoy learning. If everything becomes pressure and study, then the child may not want to learn." (IDI-4, 16 May 2026)

Overall, the IDI findings indicated that participants understood children's learning as an ongoing process occurring through observation, imitation, communication, exploration, social interaction, and participation in everyday family activities.

Findings from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The FGD findings similarly demonstrated that participants considered the early years important for children's learning and development. However, the discussions particularly emphasized

parents' roles, children's observation of adults, everyday learning experiences, and the importance of play.

One participant stated:

"The early years are the foundation of a child's future. If parents provide love, guidance, and opportunities to learn during this time, children will grow with confidence and good values." (FGD-4, 15 May 2026)

Another participant explained:

"Children start learning from home long before they go to school. They observe everything we do and learn by watching and interacting with us." (FGD-1, 15 May 2026)

Participants repeatedly described parents as children's first teachers. One participant explained:

"Parents are a child's first teachers. Before children learn anything at school, they learn from us at home—through our behaviour, the way we speak, and how we treat others. They observe everything and gradually develop those same habits and values." (FGD-3, 15 May 2026)

Another mother expressed a similar understanding:

"For me, learning is not only learning A, B, C or the alphabet. At this age, children learn new things every day from the people and environment around them. They learn how to talk to others, how to keep their belongings organized, and how to share with others." (FGD-2, 15 May 2026)

Observation and imitation were particularly prominent in the focus group discussions. One participant stated:

"To me, learning means imitation. If I put my phone aside and read a book, solve a puzzle, or play with blocks, my child does the same. Children learn the most by observing and imitating the people around them." (FGD-2, 15 May 2026)

Another participant similarly stated:

"To me, learning is not just about learning the alphabet or numbers. At this age, children learn new things every day from the people and environment around them, and I believe they learn the most by observing others." (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

Participants also discussed how their own behaviour could influence children's values and habits. One participant explained:

"If I want my child to be honest, respectful, and disciplined, I have to show those behaviours myself. I cannot only tell my child what to do because children follow what they see us doing." (FGD-3, 15 May 2026)

Another participant commented:

"Children copy our language and behaviour very quickly. If adults speak respectfully at home, children also learn to speak respectfully. If we behave badly, they can copy that too." (FGD-1, 15 May 2026)

Participants also emphasized children's curiosity and the importance of allowing them to ask questions. One mother reflected:

"When we were children, if we asked too many questions, adults would often say, 'Don't ask so many questions.' But I don't do that with my child. If he asks me something, I try to answer it patiently. If I don't know the answer, I tell him that we'll find out together. I believe asking questions is how children learn." (FGD-2, 15 May 2026)

Play was another important aspect of learning identified during the FGDs. One participant stated:

"Play is one of the best ways for children to learn. While playing, they develop communication skills, learn to solve problems, and understand how to interact with others." (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

Another participant described learning through play as an enjoyable experience:

"When children are playing, they don't feel that someone is forcing them to learn. They enjoy themselves, but at the same time they are learning many things." (FGD-4, 15 May 2026)

This understanding is consistent with research describing play-based learning as an approach through which children actively develop knowledge and skills through meaningful and engaging experiences (Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

Social interaction was also repeatedly discussed during the FGDs. One participant explained:

"When children play with cousins or other children, they have to communicate, wait for their turn, share things, and sometimes solve small problems between themselves. They learn these things naturally while they are together." (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

Another participant highlighted the contribution of extended family members:

"Grandparents, cousins, and other family members also teach children many things. Children hear different conversations and see different behaviours when they spend time with family." (FGD-1, 15 May 2026)

Everyday family routines were similarly identified as learning opportunities. One participant stated:

"Children can learn from very simple activities. When they help us arrange things, eat together with the family, go shopping, or visit relatives, they are learning behaviour, responsibility, communication, and many other things." (FGD-3, 15 May 2026)

Participants also expressed concern about forcing academic learning at an early age. One participant explained:

"If we always tell a small child to study, write, and memorize, the child can become tired of learning. They need opportunities to explore and enjoy what they are doing." (FGD-4, 15 May 2026)

Another participant stated:

"Children are naturally curious. We should give them opportunities to discover things instead of giving them instructions all the time." (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

Overall, the FGD findings showed that participants viewed children's learning as occurring through observation, imitation, play, communication, social interaction, questioning, and participation in everyday family experiences. The discussions also emphasized parents' responsibility for modelling behaviours and creating environments that encourage children's curiosity and active participation.

Parents' understanding of child development

Parents' descriptions of child development reflected an equally broad and multidimensional perspective. Rather than defining development only as physical growth or increasing age, participants consistently described it as gradual improvement across multiple domains, including cognitive, emotional, language, behavioural, social, and physical development. Most parents believed that these different aspects of development occur simultaneously and influence one another throughout early childhood.

Across both the IDIs and FGD, participants explained that development involves becoming increasingly capable of thinking independently, expressing emotions appropriately, communicating effectively, interacting positively with others, solving everyday problems, and completing age-appropriate tasks without constant assistance. Parents frequently associated development with children's growing independence and confidence rather than with measurable academic performance.

One mother described child development as a holistic process, explaining,

"To me, child development is not just about growing taller or becoming physically stronger. It also means improvements in a child's thinking, language, behaviour, self-confidence, and ability to interact with others." (IDI-2, 16 May 2026)

Many parents explained that they assess their children's development by observing behavioural changes over time. Rather than relying solely on school performance, they paid close attention to whether children became more independent, communicated more effectively, demonstrated empathy, managed emotions appropriately, and interacted confidently with peers and adults.

One mother illustrated child development through changes in her son's behaviour, explaining:

"Before, if another child took one of his toys, he would immediately start crying. But now he says, 'You play first, then I'll play later.' When I see him express himself calmly instead of crying, I feel that he is growing—not just in age, but in his behaviour, communication, and understanding."(IDI-2,16 May 2026)

Parents also considered children's increasing independence as an important indicator of healthy development. Participants mentioned several examples, including dressing independently, organizing toys after play, eating without assistance, expressing personal preferences, asking questions, making simple decisions, and completing everyday routines with minimal support. These behaviours were interpreted as evidence that children were becoming more capable and confident.

Several participants further emphasized language development. They noted that children gradually learn to express needs, describe experiences, communicate emotions, and engage in conversations more confidently. Parents believed that children's willingness to initiate conversations, introduce themselves to unfamiliar people, and communicate respectfully reflected positive developmental progress.

Social development emerged as another major concern. Many parents stated that learning to cooperate with others, share belongings, wait patiently, develop friendships, and show respect for elders were among the most valuable developmental achievements during the preschool years. They believed these social competencies would influence children's future relationships and educational experiences.

Emotional development was similarly regarded as fundamental. Participants explained that children gradually learn to recognize and regulate emotions, cope with disappointment, manage frustration, and demonstrate empathy toward others. According to several parents, helping children express emotions openly contributes to both emotional wellbeing and healthy development.

The focus group discussion reinforced these perspectives. Parents consistently argued that children's development should be evaluated by observing changes in their daily behaviour. Some

participants emphasized that children's development should be understood holistically rather than focusing exclusively on academic achievement. They believed that confidence, independence, communication skills, curiosity, kindness, discipline, and respect for others are important indicators of healthy development. One participant stated:

"I don't think development is only about doing well in studies. When my child becomes confident, speaks politely, respects others, and tries to do things independently, I feel that my child is developing well." (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

Overall, participants demonstrated a holistic understanding of child development, recognizing that children's growth encompasses much more than physical maturation or school readiness. They viewed development as a dynamic process through which children gradually become emotionally secure, socially competent, physically active, intellectually curious, behaviourally responsible, and increasingly independent through supportive relationships and meaningful everyday experiences.

Parents' perceptions of the role of play in children's learning and development

Across both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion, parents consistently described play as one of the most significant contributors to children's learning and overall development. Rather than considering play merely as a recreational activity or a way to keep children occupied, participants viewed it as a natural and effective learning process through which children acquire knowledge, develop skills, express emotions, and build relationships. Parents believed that children aged 3–5 years learn most effectively when they are actively engaged in enjoyable and meaningful play experiences. Consequently, many participants regarded play as equally important as, or even more important than, early academic instruction.

Most parents explained that children at this age are naturally curious and eager to explore their surroundings. They believed that play allows children to satisfy this curiosity by experimenting, observing, asking questions, and discovering new things independently. According to participants, children are more likely to remember and understand concepts when they learn through hands-on experiences rather than through direct instruction or memorization. As a result,

parents preferred allowing children to learn through exploration instead of placing excessive emphasis on formal teaching.

One mother clearly explained this perspective by saying,

"At this age, play is the biggest source of learning. Through play children learn many things that are difficult to teach from books." (IDI-2, 16 MAY 2026).

Participants identified numerous developmental benefits associated with play. They explained that different types of play contribute to different developmental domains, allowing children to develop cognitive, language, physical, emotional, and social skills simultaneously. Many parents believed that while academic learning could eventually be taught in school, opportunities to learn naturally through play during early childhood were unique and irreplaceable.

Several parents discussed how educational toys and creative play activities supported children's cognitive development. One mother explained that her son learned colours, numbers, shapes, and counting through playing with building blocks. She described how the activity encouraged her child to experiment, recognize patterns, compare sizes, and solve simple problems independently:

"When my son plays with building blocks, he learns many things like colours, numbers, shapes, and counting. He tries to make different objects by himself, and while doing this, he learns how things fit together. I noticed that he becomes more focused, thinks creatively, and tries to solve problems on his own." (IDI-2, 16 May 2026)

According to the participant, block play was not only an enjoyable activity but also a meaningful learning experience that supported children's concentration, creativity, and logical thinking.

Parents also believed that play develops children's ability to solve problems independently. One participant explained that when children attempt to complete puzzles, build towers, or assemble different objects, they often face small challenges that require repeated attempts before succeeding. Rather than viewing failure negatively, parents considered these moments valuable opportunities for children to develop patience, perseverance, creativity, and resilience. Several

participants observed that children naturally experimented with different solutions during play without becoming discouraged, gradually improving their confidence in solving everyday problems.

Language development also emerged as an important outcome of play. Parents explained that storytelling, pretend play, singing rhymes, and role-playing games encouraged children to communicate more confidently. During these activities, children learned new vocabulary, practised expressing their thoughts, asked questions, and developed conversational skills. Some parents mentioned that they intentionally participated in pretend games with their children because these interactions created opportunities for discussion and language development while strengthening emotional bonds within the family.

In addition to cognitive and language development, parents repeatedly highlighted the social benefits of play. They believed that playing with siblings, cousins, neighbours, and classmates teaches children valuable interpersonal skills that cannot easily be acquired through direct instruction. Participants explained that while playing with other children, young learners gradually develop the ability to cooperate, negotiate, share toys, wait patiently for their turn, and respect rules established within the game.

One mother explained that her son was initially hesitant when interacting with unfamiliar children and preferred staying close to family members. However, after participating regularly in group play activities, she observed noticeable changes in his confidence and social behaviour. She described how play helped him become more comfortable communicating with others and developing friendships:

“Before, my son was not very comfortable going near new children. He would stay close to us and did not easily talk with others. But after playing regularly with other children, I noticed a big change. Now he introduces himself, starts conversations, and tries to make friends by himself. I feel that playing with other children has helped him become more confident.” (IDI-2, 16 May 2026)

The mother viewed these changes as evidence that regular peer play supported her child’s confidence, communication skills, and social competence.

Similarly, parents noted that group play helped children understand concepts such as fairness, cooperation, empathy, and respect for others. Participants explained that when children lose games, they gradually learn to manage disappointment and accept outcomes positively. Likewise, when they win, they learn to celebrate appropriately without humiliating others. Parents believe that these everyday experiences contribute significantly to children's emotional maturity and future social adjustment.

The focus group discussion reinforced these perspectives, with participants describing play as an essential part of healthy childhood rather than simply a leisure activity. Several parents explained that children naturally develop important life skills through play, including communication, cooperation, decision-making, leadership, imagination, and self-confidence. One mother shared:

“Children learn many things while playing. They learn how to communicate with others, how to share, how to cooperate, and how to solve problems. Sometimes we try to teach children many things by explaining, but they understand better when they experience those things through playing with other children and family members.” (FGD–Mother Group, 16 May 2026)

Participants emphasized that play provided children with opportunities to practise skills in real situations, making learning more meaningful and enjoyable. (FGD–2, 16 May 2026).

Parents also discussed the contribution of play to children's physical development. Running, jumping, climbing, cycling, and outdoor games were viewed as essential activities that strengthen children's muscles, improve coordination, enhance balance, and promote overall physical health. Participants believed that physically active children were generally healthier, more energetic, and more confident than children who spent most of their time indoors.

However, despite recognizing the importance of outdoor play, many parents expressed concern that opportunities for such activities have become increasingly limited in urban settings. During the focus group discussion, participants explained that heavy traffic, crowded neighbourhoods, small apartments, and the lack of safe playgrounds significantly restrict children's opportunities for physical play. Several parents compared their children's experiences with their own childhoods, recalling that they had enjoyed large open spaces where they could run freely and

interact with neighbouring children. In contrast, they felt that today's urban children often remain indoors because parents fear accidents, traffic hazards, or other safety concerns.

One participant explained that limited access to safe outdoor spaces affected her child's opportunities to participate in physical play activities. She described how the lack of suitable space near their home made it difficult for her child to practise cycling and engage in outdoor exploration. She also expressed concern that fewer outdoor opportunities increased children's dependence on mobile phones and digital devices:

“My child wants to learn cycling, but there is no proper safe space near our home where he can practise. Because children cannot play outside freely, they sometimes spend more time on mobile phones. If there were safe places for children to play, they would be more active and engaged in different activities.” (FGD–1, 15 May 2026).

The participant viewed the availability of safe outdoor environments as an important factor influencing children's opportunities for physical activity, exploration, and play.

Several parents also expressed concern that excessive academic expectations sometimes reduce opportunities for play. They believed that some families prioritize worksheets, coaching classes, and early literacy at the expense of free play. Participants argued that this approach overlooks children's developmental needs and may increase unnecessary pressure during the preschool years. Instead, they suggested maintaining a balance between structured learning activities and sufficient opportunities for exploration and play.

Parents further explained that they intentionally incorporated play into their daily routines using resources available at home. Many reported using household materials, recycled objects, drawing, storytelling, singing, cooking activities, puzzles, and pretend games instead of relying exclusively on expensive educational toys. According to them, children's imagination and creativity were more important than the cost of the materials being used. They believed that ordinary family activities could easily become valuable learning experiences when parents actively engaged with their children.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that parents regarded play as a fundamental component of children's learning and development rather than simply a source of entertainment. Participants believed that play simultaneously promotes cognitive, language, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical development while fostering creativity, confidence, independence, and problem-solving abilities. Although parents acknowledged that urban living conditions often limit children's opportunities for active play, they consistently emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for meaningful play experiences within the home, family, school, and community.

Parents' understanding of their role in children's learning and development

Across both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion, parents consistently perceived themselves as the most influential individuals in their children's early learning and development. Participants repeatedly described parents as children's "first teachers," explaining that the foundations of children's personality, behaviour, values, communication skills, and learning habits are established within the family long before they enter formal schooling. Although parents acknowledged the important role of preschool teachers and educational institutions, they believed that learning begins at home through everyday interactions with parents and other family members.

Most participants explained that children spend a considerable portion of their early years within the family environment. Consequently, they believed that parents have the greatest opportunity to shape children's development through their daily behaviour, communication, emotional support, and guidance. Rather than viewing parenting as limited to meeting children's physical needs, participants described it as a continuous process of nurturing children's intellectual curiosity, emotional security, social competence, and moral values.

One mother explained,

"Children follow examples more than advice. That is why we try to speak politely in front of our child, spend time together, and listen carefully to what he wants to say." (IDI-2, 16 MAY, 2026).

Parents consistently emphasized that children learn more from observing adults than from listening to instructions. They believed that every action performed by parents including the way they communicate with family members, solve problems, express emotions, manage conflicts, and treat other people—becomes a learning experience for children. Several participants commented that children are highly observant and often imitate behaviours that adults perform unconsciously. Consequently, many parents reported making deliberate efforts to improve their own behaviour because they believed that children were constantly watching and learning from them.

During the focus group discussion, one participant explained that parents do not need to rely only on verbal instructions to teach children appropriate behaviour. Instead, children gradually learn values such as honesty, discipline, kindness, respect, and responsibility by observing the actions of adults around them. She highlighted that children notice even small daily behaviours, including greeting others politely, showing gratitude, apologizing after mistakes, and helping family members:

“Children do not always learn because we tell them what to do. They learn by watching us. If we speak politely, respect others, say thank you, apologize when we make mistakes, and help people around us, children also learn these behaviours. They observe everything we do, even the small things.” (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

The participant emphasized that parents’ everyday actions serve as an important source of learning for children and that demonstrating positive behaviour can be more effective than simply giving instructions. (FGD-1, 16 May 2026)

Participants also highlighted the importance of maintaining open communication with children from an early age. Many parents explained that they regularly encouraged their children to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss their daily experiences. Rather than dismissing children's curiosity, they attempted to answer questions patiently because they believed that these conversations stimulated thinking, language development, and self-confidence.

Several mothers explained that listening carefully to children was equally important as talking to them. According to participants, allowing children to express their feelings without fear helps

develop emotional security and strengthens the parent–child relationship. Parents believe that when children feel respected and understood, they become more confident in expressing ideas and seeking support whenever they encounter difficulties.

Another recurring finding was the importance parents placed on emotional support. Participants explained that children require affection, appreciation, encouragement, and reassurance to develop confidence. Many believed that children who receive emotional warmth at home become more willing to explore new experiences, communicate openly, and participate confidently in social activities.

Parents further explained that guiding children does not always require structured teaching sessions. Instead, they believed that ordinary family routines provide countless opportunities for learning. Activities such as eating together, preparing meals, arranging toys, shopping, visiting relatives, travelling, gardening, or completing household chores were described as valuable occasions for teaching responsibility, communication, cooperation, counting, colours, safety rules, and problem-solving skills. Participants therefore viewed learning as something that naturally occurs throughout everyday family life.

Many parents also discussed the importance of balancing guidance with independence. Rather than completing every task on behalf of their children, participants intentionally encouraged them to perform age-appropriate activities independently. Parents believed that allowing children to make simple decisions, organize their belongings, dress themselves, help with household responsibilities, and solve minor problems contributed to greater confidence and self-reliance. They explained that excessive parental control could limit children's opportunities to develop independence.

Convert it into a direct quotation format like this:

One participant explained that although helping children complete tasks was often quicker and easier, she intentionally encouraged her child to do simple activities independently. She believed that allowing children to complete tasks by themselves helped them develop responsibility, confidence, and practical skills. She also emphasized that making mistakes was a natural part of learning because children improved through repeated attempts and practice:

“Sometimes it is easier and faster if I do things for my child, but I try not to do that every time. I allow my child to try independently because these small activities help children become responsible. If my child makes mistakes, I do not stop them immediately because they learn by trying again and improving. I believe mistakes are also part of learning.” (IDI-1, 15 May 2026)

The participants viewed independent exploration and repeated practice as important experiences that helped children develop confidence, responsibility, and problem-solving abilities.

Parents additionally described the importance of maintaining consistency while raising children. Several participants believed that children become confused when parents provide contradictory messages or frequently change household rules. Consequently, they attempted to establish consistent expectations regarding behaviour, routines, and responsibilities while ensuring that these expectations remained appropriate for the child's age and developmental stage.

The complementary roles of mothers and fathers

Although mothers were generally identified as children's primary caregivers because they spent more time with them, participants consistently emphasized that fathers also play a vital role in children's learning and development. Parents believed that raising children should be a shared responsibility rather than the sole responsibility of mothers.

Several mothers explained that they were primarily responsible for children's daily routines, including preparing meals, helping with school-related activities, reading storybooks, supervising homework, and maintaining regular communication throughout the day. One mother described how these activities formed part of her everyday parenting routine:

“I try to maintain a regular routine with my child every day. I prepare my child for school, we have meals together, and we talk about what happened during the day. In the evening, we read books together, and before sleeping, I usually tell a bedtime story. I feel that these regular activities make my child feel secure and also help with language development, emotional wellbeing, and our bonding as a family.” (IDI-2, 15 May 2026)

Fathers, on the other hand, were described as contributing through playing with children after work, taking them outdoors during weekends, participating in recreational activities, and spending quality family time together. Participants particularly emphasized the importance of weekends for shared family activities. One participant explained:

“Weekends are very important for us because everyone is free. Sometimes we go to the park or visit relatives, and sometimes we just stay at home, cook together, play, and spend time as a family. I feel that my child learns many things from these experiences.” (FGD-2, 16 May 2026).

Working mothers acknowledged that balancing professional responsibilities with parenting was sometimes challenging. Despite these difficulties, they described intentionally setting aside time for their children after work. One working mother stated:

“Although I come home tired after work, I try not to start doing household chores immediately. I first spent some time with my child. We talk about what happened during the day, I listen to my child’s stories, we read storybooks together, and sometimes we play before bedtime. I feel that spending this time together every day strengthens our relationship and also supports my child’s overall development.” (IDI-1, 15 May 2026).

Similarly, participants explained that busy work schedules did not prevent them from deliberately protecting particular periods for family interaction. As one working parent explained:

“I may not be able to spend the whole day with my child because of my work, but when I come home, I try to give my full attention to my child. I keep the evening and weekends for talking, playing, reading, and doing things together. I think the quality of the time we spend together is more important than simply being around for many hours.” (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

Participants further explained that mothers and fathers tried to divide responsibilities according to their schedules so that children continued to receive adequate attention and emotional support.

The data also indicated that parents regarded child-rearing as a shared responsibility and valued the active involvement of both mothers and fathers.

The contribution of grandparents, siblings, and extended family

Beyond mothers and fathers, participants highlighted the significant contribution of grandparents, siblings, and other family members to children's learning and development. Parents explained that children do not learn exclusively from their parents; instead, interactions with different family members influence children's communication, behaviour, social skills, and everyday learning. One interview participant explained:

“My child learns different things from different people. He learns something from me, something from his father, and other things from his grandparents and cousins. When he spends time with other children, he also learns how to communicate and share.” (IDI-4, 16 May 2026)

Many participants described grandparents as important sources of emotional support, cultural learning, and moral guidance. They explained that grandparents spent time talking with children, telling stories, sharing family traditions, and introducing religious and cultural values. Parents believed that these everyday interactions contributed to children's emotional, language, and social development while strengthening their connection with family traditions. Your thesis data specifically report these roles of grandparents.

Similarly, older siblings were viewed as important sources of informal learning. Participants explained that younger children frequently observed and imitated their older brothers' or sisters' speech, behaviour, and everyday routines. Older siblings also helped younger children learn new vocabulary, practise school activities, complete puzzles, and participate in imaginative play. Participants further associated interactions with siblings, cousins, and other children with learning to communicate, cooperate, share, wait for turns, and resolve small disagreements. As one participant stated:

“When my child plays with cousins and other children, I see that she has to share, wait for her turn, communicate, and solve small disagreements by herself.” (FGD-2, 16 May 2026)

One interview participant explained that children observe everyone within the family rather than only their parents. She believed that respectful relationships among family members create a positive learning environment where children naturally develop empathy, kindness, and good manners (ID-2, 16 MAY, 2026).

Parents' perceptions of the role of schools and teachers

Although participants consistently described parents as children's first teachers, they also acknowledged that preschools and teachers play an important complementary role in children's development. Parents explained that schools provide opportunities for children to interact with peers, follow routines, develop discipline, and participate in structured learning activities that may not always be possible within the home environment.

Many participants believed that teachers contribute not only to children's academic learning but also to their social and emotional development. According to parents, teachers help children learn cooperation, patience, independence, communication, and respect for others while introducing them to group learning experiences.

However, participants emphasized that schools alone cannot ensure children's development. They believed that meaningful progress occurs when parents and teachers maintain regular communication and work together to support children's needs. Several participants suggested that teachers should keep parents informed about children's strengths, difficulties, and developmental progress so that learning can continue consistently at home.

Parents also expressed interest in schools organizing parenting sessions, workshops, and awareness programmes to help families better understand children's developmental needs and effective parenting practices. They believed that stronger collaboration between parents and teachers would contribute positively to children's overall learning and wellbeing.

Theme 2: Parents' Practices to Support Children's Learning and Development

While Theme 1 explored how parents understood children's learning and development, this theme focuses on the practical strategies parents adopted to nurture their children's growth in everyday life. Across both the individual interviews and the focus group discussion, participants

described a wide range of parenting practices that they believed positively influenced children's cognitive, language, physical, emotional, social, and behavioural development. Rather than relying solely on formal educational activities, parents integrated learning into their daily routines, family interactions, play experiences, and household responsibilities. Although the specific practices varied depending on parents' occupations, family structure, and available resources, participants consistently emphasized that meaningful learning occurs through regular interaction, responsive parenting, and active involvement in children's everyday lives.

Spending quality time and engaging in everyday interactions

One of the most frequently discussed parenting practices was spending quality time with children. Across both the IDIs and FGD, parents emphasized that meaningful interaction with children is one of the strongest ways to support their learning and development. Participants repeatedly stated that children require not only food, clothing, and education but also emotional connection, conversation, and active parental involvement. Many parents explained that spending uninterrupted time with children allowed them to better understand their children's interests, emotions, strengths, and developmental needs.

Some of the parents described quality time as much more than simply being physically present with children. Instead, they explained that meaningful engagement involves talking with children, listening to their experiences, answering questions, reading books together, playing games, telling stories, eating meals together, and participating in everyday family routines. According to participants, these interactions create opportunities for children to develop language, confidence, emotional security, and stronger relationships with family members.

Several mothers explained that they intentionally created opportunities for conversation throughout the day. Rather than asking only whether children had eaten or completed schoolwork, they encouraged them to describe what they had learned, whom they played with, what made them happy, and whether they experienced any difficulties. Participants believed that such conversations helped children express emotions more confidently while strengthening communication skills.

One working mother explained that- *“Although I come home tired after work, I try not to start doing household chores immediately. I first spent some time with my child. We talk about what happened during the day, I listen to my child’s stories, we read storybooks together, and sometimes we play before bedtime. I feel that spending this time together every day strengthens our relationship and also supports my child’s overall development.”* (IDI-1, 15 MAY, 2026)

Similarly, another participant said-

“I try to maintain a regular routine with my child every day. I prepare my child for school, we have meals together, and we talk about what happened during the day. In the evening, we read books together, and before sleeping, I usually tell a bedtime story. I feel that these regular activities make my child feel secure and also help with language development, emotional wellbeing, and our bonding as a family.” (IDI-2, 15 MAY, 2026)

During the focus group discussion, both working and non-working mothers acknowledged that their daily schedules differed considerably; however, they agreed that the quality of parent–child interaction was more important than the amount of time spent together. Stay-at-home mothers explained that they naturally spent more hours with their children throughout the day and therefore involved them in cooking, cleaning, gardening, shopping, and other household activities. In contrast, working mothers described deliberately protecting their evenings and weekends so that they could spend uninterrupted time with their children despite demanding work schedules. As one working mother explained:

“I may not be able to spend the whole day with my child because of my work, but when I come home, I try to give my full attention to my child. I keep the evening and weekends for talking, playing, reading, and doing things together. I think the quality of the time we spend together is more important than simply being around for many hours.” (FGD-2, 16th May, 2026)

Several participants explained that weekends held particular importance because they provided opportunities for the entire family to spend time together. Parents reported visiting parks, relatives, restaurants, or shopping centres, while others preferred staying at home to play games, cook together, watch educational programmes, or complete creative activities with their children.

According to participants, these shared experiences strengthened family relationships while exposing children to new environments and learning opportunities. As one participant explained,

“Weekends are very important for us because everyone is free. Sometimes we go to the park or visit relatives, and sometimes we just stay at home, cook together, play, and spend time as a family. I feel that my child learns many things from these experiences.” (FGD-2, 16th May, 2026)

Parents also emphasized that everyday routines themselves become valuable educational experiences when adults actively involve children. Participants described asking children to help prepare meals, organize school bags, water plants, arrange toys, or accompany parents during grocery shopping. These seemingly ordinary activities allowed children to learn vocabulary, counting, colours, decision-making, responsibility, and communication skills in authentic situations. One participant shared,

“Even simple activities can become learning opportunities. When my child helps me arrange things or comes with me for grocery shopping, I talk about colours, numbers, names of things, and what we need to buy. In this way, learning happens naturally.” (FGD-2, 16 MAY, 2026)

Another important finding was that participants consciously minimized distractions while spending time with their children. Several parents admitted that modern lifestyles often make adults busy with office work, household responsibilities, or mobile phones. Nevertheless, they believed that children benefit most when parents give them full attention during conversations and play. According to participants, even a short period of focused interaction each day could have a significant positive influence on children's emotional wellbeing and confidence. As one participant stated,

“Sometimes I am busy with work or my phone, but when I am spending time with my child, I try to keep everything aside and give full attention. Even if the time is short, I think being fully present is more important for the child.” (FGD-2, 16 MAY, 2026).

Overall, parents perceived quality time as one of the most valuable investments in children's development. They believed that consistent communication, emotional availability, and meaningful family interaction create a supportive environment in which children feel secure, valued, and motivated to learn.

Encouraging learning through play and everyday activities

Another prominent parenting practice identified across the interviews was the intentional use of play as a learning strategy. Parents consistently reported incorporating different forms of play into their daily routines because they believed that children learn most effectively when they are actively engaged and enjoying themselves. Rather than separating play from learning, participants viewed the two as inseparable components of early childhood development. One participant explained,

“For my child, play and learning are not separate. When she is playing and enjoying herself, she is also learning many things without feeling any pressure.” (IDI-1, 15 MAY 2026)

Parents explained that they encouraged children to participate in a wide variety of activities, including building blocks, puzzles, drawing, colouring, storytelling, singing rhymes, pretend play, role-playing, outdoor games, and simple science or creative activities. According to participants, each activity contributed to different aspects of children's development while maintaining children's interest and curiosity. As one mother stated,

“I give my child different activities like blocks, puzzles, drawing, colouring, and pretend play. I have noticed that each activity helps her learn something different, and she enjoys learning this way.” (IDI-2, 15 MAY 2026)

Several interview participants explained that they deliberately selected games that encouraged children to think, ask questions, and solve problems independently. One mother described giving her child building blocks and puzzles that required planning and concentration. Rather than solving the tasks herself, she encouraged her child to experiment with different solutions until reaching the correct answer. She explained,

“When my child cannot complete a puzzle immediately, I do not give the answer. I tell him to try again in another way. Sometimes he becomes frustrated, but when he finally solves it himself, he becomes very happy and confident.” (IDI-3, 16 MAY 2026)

She believed that allowing children to struggle briefly before succeeding helped develop patience, resilience, creativity, and confidence.

Parents also explained that they used storytelling as an everyday learning activity. Many reported reading picture books before bedtime or telling stories from their own childhoods, religious traditions, or everyday experiences. One participant shared,

“Before sleeping, I usually read a storybook or tell my child a story. Sometimes I tell stories from my childhood or religious stories, and then we talk about what happened and what we can learn from the story.” (IDI-4, 16 MAY 2026) They believed that storytelling enriched children's vocabulary, imagination, listening skills, and moral understanding while strengthening emotional connections between parents and children.

During the focus group discussion, several mothers explained that they regularly recited rhymes, sang songs, encouraged drawing and colouring, and organized pretend games at home because these activities supported children's creativity and language development. One mother explained, *“We sing rhymes together, draw pictures, colour, and sometimes pretend that we are teachers, doctors, or shopkeepers. My child enjoys these activities, and I can see that she learns new words and ideas while playing.”* (FGD-2, 15 May 2026) Some participants also mentioned involving children in cultural and religious stories as a way of introducing values such as honesty, kindness, gratitude, and respect. As another participant stated, *“I tell my child religious and moral stories because I want him to understand values like honesty, kindness, respect, and being thankful from an early age.”* (FGD-3, 15 MAY 2026)

Parents frequently emphasized that learning materials do not necessarily need to be expensive. One participant explained, *“I do not think we always need expensive toys to teach children. At home, I can use cups, spoons, vegetables, boxes, or paper to teach colours, numbers, shapes, and sorting.”* (FGD-1, 16 May 2026) Many participants described using simple household objects such as cups, spoons, vegetables, fruits, empty boxes, paper, or recycled materials to teach

counting, colours, shapes, sorting, measurement, and creativity. Another mother added, *“Sometimes an empty box or a few household things keep my child more interested than an expensive toy because we can use them in many different ways.”* (FGD-4, 16 May 2026) Participants believed that parental involvement and imagination were more important than purchasing costly educational toys.

Play with siblings, cousins, and neighbourhood children was also considered an essential learning experience. One participant observed, *“When my child plays with cousins and other children, I see that she has to share, wait for her turn, communicate, and solve small disagreements by herself.”* (FGD-2, 16 May 2026) Parents observed that children naturally learned sharing, cooperation, negotiation, empathy, patience, and conflict resolution while interacting with peers. Another participant explained, *“After playing regularly with other children, my child became more confident. Before, he was shy, but now he talks more and joins group activities more easily.”* (FGD-3, 16 May 2026)

Despite recognizing the educational value of play, several parents expressed concern that modern urban lifestyles provide fewer opportunities for outdoor activities than previous generations experienced. One parent reflected, *“When we were children, we had much more space and time to play outside. Now children do not have the same opportunities, especially in the city, so we have to make more effort to take them to parks or arrange activities at home.”* (FGD-1, 15 May 2026) Nevertheless, participants attempted to compensate by organizing indoor games, visiting parks during weekends whenever possible, and creating playful learning experiences within their homes.

Overall, parents viewed play not simply as entertainment but as a deliberate parenting practice through which children acquire knowledge, strengthen relationships, develop essential life skills, and build confidence. As one participant summarized, *“For me, play is not only for passing time. Children learn how to think, communicate, solve problems, share, and become confident through play.”* (FGD-4, 16 May 2026) They believed that integrating play into everyday routines creates enjoyable learning experiences while supporting children's holistic development across multiple developmental domains.

Encouraging independence through participation in household activities

Another important parenting practice identified across both the IDIs and the focus group discussion was encouraging children to participate in simple household activities. Parents believe that learning does not occur only through books or educational games; rather, everyday family routines provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop practical life skills, independence, responsibility, and confidence. Participants explained that they intentionally involved their children in age-appropriate household tasks, not because they expected them to contribute significantly to household work, but because they viewed these activities as valuable learning experiences.

Most parents reported assigning simple responsibilities according to their children's age and abilities. These included organizing toys after play, arranging books on shelves, placing dirty clothes in the laundry basket, watering plants, setting the dining table, putting dishes in the sink after meals, helping to prepare simple food items, organizing school bags, and keeping personal belongings tidy. Parents explained that these seemingly small responsibilities gradually helped children understand the importance of discipline, organization, and accountability.

One interview participant described how she encouraged her four-year-old child to return plates to the kitchen after meals, organize toys independently, and assist with folding clothes. She explained that although completing these tasks herself would be quicker, allowing her child to participate promoted independence and helped the child recognize personal responsibilities within the family. She stated,

"If my child learns these small responsibilities now, he will become independent. These are not simply helping me; these are responsibilities that belong to every member of the family." (IDI-1, 16 MAY 2026)

Parents further explained that household activities naturally support children's cognitive development. For example, while preparing meals together, children learn about colours, shapes, textures, numbers, and measurements. During grocery shopping, parents encourage children to identify fruits and vegetables, count items, compare sizes, and recognize different colours.

Similarly, arranging household items helps children develop categorization skills, sequencing abilities, and problem-solving skills.

Many participants also believed that assigning responsibilities contributes positively to children's emotional development. Completing tasks successfully gives children a sense of achievement and self-worth, while gradually increasing responsibilities strengthens confidence and decision-making abilities. Parents explained that children become proud when trusted with meaningful responsibilities and often become more willing to complete additional tasks independently.

During the focus group discussion, participants emphasized that involving children in daily routines also strengthens family relationships. Rather than viewing household work as an obligation, many parents transformed these activities into enjoyable shared experiences by talking, singing songs, or telling stories while completing tasks together. According to participants, these interactions create opportunities for learning while simultaneously strengthening emotional bonds between parents and children.

Parents consistently noted that allowing children to make mistakes during these activities is equally important. Rather than correcting every mistake immediately, participants preferred encouraging children to try repeatedly until they became more confident. They believed that learning through experience develops resilience, patience, and perseverance more effectively than constant correction.

Overall, parents perceived participation in household activities as an effective strategy for promoting independence, responsibility, confidence, practical life skills, and positive family relationships. They viewed ordinary daily routines as valuable educational experiences that prepare children for future responsibilities while supporting holistic development.

Using positive encouragement and appreciation to build confidence

Parents consistently described positive encouragement as one of the most effective approaches to supporting children's learning and development. Across both the interviews and focus group discussion, participants explained that appreciation, praise, affection, and emotional support motivated children to continue learning and trying new activities. Rather than relying primarily

on punishment or criticism, most parents preferred acknowledging children's efforts, encouraging persistence, and celebrating achievements, regardless of how small they might appear.

Participants believed that young children are highly sensitive to adults' reactions. Consequently, positive feedback helped children develop confidence, emotional security, and a willingness to explore new learning opportunities. Several parents observed that children become more enthusiastic about completing tasks when they receive appreciation for their efforts instead of being criticized for mistakes.

One mother explained that she intentionally praised her child whenever he completed a task independently. She described using encouraging expressions such as *"Very good," "Excellent,"* or *"You did it yourself!"* (IDI-2 16 MAY 2026). because she noticed that positive comments increased her child's motivation to continue practising. She recalled that after receiving praise for his handwriting, her son repeatedly practised writing because he wanted to improve further and receive similar appreciation again.

Participants also highlighted the importance of recognizing effort rather than focusing solely on achievement. Several parents explained that when children failed to complete a task successfully, they encouraged them to try again instead of expressing disappointment. They believed that emphasizing effort teaches perseverance and reduces children's fear of making mistakes.

Parents described different forms of encouragement, including verbal praise, hugs, kisses, clapping, spending extra time together, preparing favourite meals, or acknowledging children's accomplishments in front of other family members. According to participants, these expressions of appreciation strengthened children's self-esteem while reinforcing positive behaviour.

During the focus group discussion, several parents explained that children respond more positively to warmth and encouragement than to punishment. Participants believed that repeated criticism often discourages children from asking questions, trying new activities, or expressing their opinions. Consequently, they preferred explaining mistakes calmly while guiding children toward appropriate behaviour through discussion and positive reinforcement rather than fear or harsh discipline.

Parents also recognized the importance of emotional reassurance during difficult situations. When children became frustrated while completing puzzles, drawing pictures, or learning new skills, participants encouraged them to remain patient and continue trying. They believed that emotional support during challenging moments contributed to resilience, confidence, and a positive attitude toward learning.

Overall, the findings suggest that parents regarded positive encouragement not only as a strategy for improving children's behaviour but also as an important means of promoting confidence, intrinsic motivation, emotional wellbeing, and lifelong interest in learning.

Using everyday resources and family interactions as learning opportunities

Another prominent finding was that parents intentionally transformed ordinary family experiences into learning opportunities. Participants repeatedly explained that effective learning does not depend solely on expensive educational materials. Instead, they believed that creativity, communication, and active parental involvement are far more important than the availability of costly toys or learning resources.

Many parents reported using household materials such as cups, spoons, bowls, vegetables, fruits, empty containers, cardboard boxes, newspapers, coloured paper, and kitchen utensils to teach children counting, colours, shapes, measurement, sorting, and classification. Some participants described asking children to identify different vegetables while cooking, count household objects, match colours, or compare the sizes of fruits and household items. These activities enabled parents to integrate learning naturally into daily routines.

Storytelling also emerged as a frequently used learning strategy. Parents described reading storybooks before bedtime, sharing stories from their own childhood, narrating moral stories, and discussing everyday experiences with children. Participants believed that storytelling strengthened children's imagination, listening skills, vocabulary, attention span, and moral understanding while creating enjoyable opportunities for parent-child interaction.

Parents also highlighted the important contribution of siblings, grandparents, and extended family members to children's learning. Many explained that children naturally learn through interactions with brothers, sisters, cousins, and grandparents during everyday family life. Older

siblings often assisted younger children in learning new words, games, songs, and school-related activities, while grandparents introduced children to family traditions, religious practices, and cultural values.

Several participants observed that children often imitate their older siblings' behaviour, speech, and daily routines. Consequently, many parents encouraged positive interactions between siblings because they believed these relationships contributed significantly to children's social and language development.

During the focus group discussion, participants also described weekend family activities as important learning experiences. Families often visited parks, relatives, libraries, shopping centres, or community events where children encountered new environments and social situations. Parents believed that these experiences broadened children's understanding of the world while strengthening family relationships.

Overall, participants viewed learning as something embedded within everyday family life rather than restricted to formal teaching sessions. They believed that ordinary household resources, family conversations, shared experiences, and interactions with siblings and grandparents collectively provide rich opportunities for children's holistic learning and development.

Managing screen time while using technology for learning

Parents acknowledged that digital technology has become an unavoidable part of children's lives and recognized that it offers both opportunities and challenges. Across both the interviews and focus group discussion, participants demonstrated balanced views regarding technology use. Rather than rejecting digital devices completely, most parents believed that technology can contribute positively to children's learning when used purposefully, under adult supervision, and for limited periods.

Several parents explained that they occasionally allowed children to watch educational videos, alphabet songs, number games, drawing tutorials, or age-appropriate educational programmes. They believed that carefully selected digital content could support language development, introduce new concepts, stimulate curiosity, and familiarize children with technology that they would inevitably encounter in school and society.

However, despite acknowledging these potential benefits, participants consistently expressed concern regarding excessive screen exposure. Parents reported observing behavioural changes such as irritability, reduced attention span, reluctance to participate in physical play, decreased communication with family members, and increased dependence on mobile phones when children spent excessive time using digital devices.

One interview participant explained that after allowing unrestricted access to a mobile phone for several consecutive days, she noticed that her child became impatient, less cooperative, and unwilling to participate in other activities. Consequently, she established a strict daily screen-time limit of approximately fifteen minutes while ensuring that any digital content viewed was educational and supervised (IDI-1, MAY 2026).

During the focus group discussion, several parents expressed similar concerns. Participants explained that managing children's attraction to mobile phones had become increasingly difficult because digital devices were readily available within most households. They also noted that limited outdoor play spaces often resulted in children spending more time indoors, making mobile phones an attractive alternative for entertainment.

To address these challenges, parents described several strategies. Many intentionally replaced screen time with outdoor play whenever possible, family conversations, storytelling, board games, drawing, puzzles, or creative play. Others reported establishing specific household rules regarding when and how digital devices could be used. Several parents emphasized that adults themselves should model responsible technology use by avoiding excessive mobile phone use during family time.

Overall, participants sought to maintain a balance between benefiting from educational technology and protecting children from excessive screen exposure. They believed that technology should complement—not replace—parent-child interaction, active play, reading, storytelling, and real-life experiences.

Theme 3: Factors Influencing Parents' Support for Children's Learning and Development

While parents demonstrated a strong understanding of children's learning and development and described numerous practices to support their children, they also acknowledged that their

parenting experiences were shaped by various personal, family, social, and environmental factors. Across both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion, participants explained that supporting young children's development is not solely dependent on parents' knowledge or willingness. Rather, it is influenced by work responsibilities, financial circumstances, family support systems, living environments, technological changes, and the availability of community resources.

Although many participants described facing multiple challenges in raising young children, they also discussed the strategies they used to overcome these difficulties. **Balancing work responsibilities and parenting**

One of the most prominent factors influencing parents' ability to support their children's learning and development was balancing employment with parenting responsibilities. Across both the IDIs and the focus group discussion, working parents acknowledged that modern work demands often reduce the amount of time they can spend with their children. However, participants consistently emphasized that although they could not always increase the quantity of time available, they deliberately tried to improve the quality of their interactions with their children.

Working mothers described experiencing constant pressure to fulfil both professional and family responsibilities. Several participants explained that after returning home from work, they still needed to complete household chores, prepare meals, and manage other family responsibilities before spending time with their children. This often resulted in physical and emotional exhaustion. Nevertheless, parents repeatedly stated that they consciously prioritized spending meaningful time with their children despite these challenges. One working mother explained:

“Although I come home tired after work, I try not to start doing household chores immediately. I first spent some time with my child. We talk about what happened during the day, I listen to my child’s stories, we read storybooks together, and sometimes we play before bedtime. I feel that spending this time together every day strengthens our relationship and also supports my child’s overall development.”
(IDI-1, 15 MAY 2026)

One working mother further explained that after finishing her office responsibilities, she intentionally set aside time every evening to talk with her child, read storybooks, play together, and discuss the events of the day. She believed that maintaining these routines helped preserve a close relationship with her child despite her demanding work schedule.

Similarly, participants in the focus group discussion acknowledged that balancing work and parenting was particularly challenging for dual-income families. Several mothers explained that although employment was necessary to meet household expenses, it inevitably reduced opportunities to spend extended periods with their children during weekdays. As a result, many families intentionally reserved evenings and weekends for uninterrupted family interaction. One working participant stated:

“I may not be able to spend the whole day with my child because of my work, but when I come home, I try to give my full attention to my child. I keep the evening and weekends for talking, playing, reading, and doing things together. I think the quality of the time we spend together is more important than simply being around for many hours.” (FGD-2, 16 MAY 2026)

Parents frequently emphasized that children value parents’ attention more than material possessions. Consequently, participants believed that even a relatively short period of focused interaction each day could positively influence children’s emotional wellbeing and development. They therefore attempted to minimize distractions during family time by limiting work-related activities and reducing unnecessary mobile phone use while interacting with their children. One participant explained:

“Sometimes I am busy with work or my phone, but when I am spending time with my child, I try to keep everything aside and give full attention. Even if the time is short, I think being fully present is more important for the child.” (FGD-2, 16 MAY 2026)

Many participants also discussed the emotional challenges associated with working parenthood. Some mothers admitted experiencing feelings of guilt because they could not spend as much time with their children as they wished. They worried about missing important moments in their children’s lives and questioned whether their professional responsibilities affected their

children's emotional development. However, these parents also expressed confidence that maintaining warm relationships, communicating openly, and remaining emotionally available helped compensate for limited time.

Several participants explained that careful planning enabled them to balance competing responsibilities more effectively. Parents described establishing predictable daily routines, preparing household tasks in advance, and dividing responsibilities between mothers and fathers to maximize opportunities for family interaction. Weekend family activities, bedtime storytelling, shared meals, and evening conversations were frequently mentioned as strategies for maintaining close relationships despite busy schedules. One participant described the importance of weekends:

“Weekends are very important for us because everyone is free. Sometimes we go to the park or visit relatives, and sometimes we just stay at home, cook together, play, and spend time as a family. I feel that my child learns many things from these experiences.” (FGD-2, 16 MAY 2026)

Participants also emphasized that employers and workplaces could contribute positively to children's wellbeing by offering family-friendly policies. Some parents believed that flexible working arrangements, parental leave, and supportive supervisors would enable parents to spend more meaningful time with their children without compromising professional responsibilities. This point appears in your thesis as a summarized participant recommendation rather than a direct quotation, so it is safer to retain it as narrative evidence.

Overall, parents viewed employment as both a necessity and a challenge. While work provided financial security for families, it also reduced the amount of time available for direct interaction with children. Nevertheless, participants consistently demonstrated resilience by intentionally creating opportunities for meaningful parent-child engagement despite demanding professional responsibilities.

Financial constraints and the cost of raising children

Another important factor influencing parenting practices was the family's financial situation. Although participants came from different socioeconomic backgrounds, many explained that financial limitations influenced the resources, educational opportunities, and recreational experiences they could provide for their children.

Several parents explained that raising young children involved substantial financial responsibilities, including preschool tuition fees, books, educational materials, healthcare, transportation, clothing, nutritious food, and extracurricular activities. Participants acknowledged that meeting these expenses could sometimes be difficult, particularly for families with multiple children or single-income households.

However, despite these financial challenges, parents consistently emphasized that effective parenting does not depend solely on money. Many participants believed that children benefit from parents' attention, affection, communication, creativity, and involvement rather than simply from expensive toys or learning materials. This idea was reflected in one participant's explanation:

"I do not think we always need expensive toys to teach children. At home, I can use cups, spoons, vegetables, boxes, or paper to teach colours, numbers, shapes, and sorting." (FGD-1, 16 MAY 2026)

Another mother similarly explained:

"Sometimes an empty box or a few household things keep my child more interested than an expensive toy because we can use them in many different ways." (FGD-4, 16 MAY 2026)

One mother explained that although she could not always purchase everything her child requested, she tried to help her child understand the value of patience and gratitude. Rather than immediately fulfilling every desire, she believed children should gradually learn that families make decisions based on needs rather than wants. According to her, teaching children these values contributes to both emotional maturity and responsible behaviour (IDI–Mother 1).

Participants also described adopting practical strategies to overcome financial limitations. Rather than purchasing expensive educational toys, many parents creatively used everyday household materials such as paper, empty containers, cups, spoons, vegetables, fruits, cardboard boxes, and recycled materials for learning activities. They believed that creativity and parental involvement were more important than the price of educational resources.

Several parents also emphasized that public parks, community spaces, libraries, and free cultural programmes could provide valuable learning opportunities for children regardless of family income. However, participants noted that such facilities were not always easily accessible within urban communities.

Overall, while financial constraints influenced certain parenting decisions, participants consistently demonstrated resourcefulness and adaptability. They believed that love, communication, creativity, and active parental involvement could compensate for many material limitations.

Family support as a facilitator of children's learning and development

In contrast to the challenges described above, parents consistently identified support from extended family members as one of the strongest facilitators of children's learning and development. Across both the interviews and focus group discussion, participants emphasized that raising young children is rarely an individual responsibility. Instead, they described parenting as a shared family effort involving grandparents, siblings, spouses, and other relatives.

Many participants explained that grandparents play particularly important roles during early childhood. Beyond providing childcare, grandparents frequently spend time talking with children, telling stories, teaching songs and rhymes, sharing family traditions, and introducing religious and cultural values. Parents believed that these interactions enrich children's emotional, language, and social development while strengthening children's sense of identity and belonging.

One participant explained that children carefully observe the behaviour of every family member, not only their parents. Consequently, she believed that respectful relationships among adults create a positive learning environment where children naturally acquire kindness, empathy, honesty, and good manners through observation (IDI-1, 16 MAY 2026).

Parents also highlighted the contribution of siblings. Older brothers and sisters often assisted younger children in learning new vocabulary, practising school lessons, completing puzzles, and participating in imaginative play. Participants observed that younger children frequently imitate older siblings' speech, behaviour, and daily routines, making sibling relationships an important source of informal learning.

Several mothers also acknowledged the practical support provided by extended family members. For working parents, grandparents and other relatives often assisted with childcare during working hours, allowing parents to maintain employment while ensuring that children continued receiving care and supervision. One participant, who identified herself as a working single mother, explained that without the support of her parents and siblings, balancing employment and parenting would have been extremely difficult (IDI-2 MAY 16 2026).

Participants further noted that emotional support from spouses significantly influenced parenting quality. Parents believed that when mothers and fathers cooperate, divide responsibilities, and communicate effectively, children experience greater emotional stability and receive more consistent guidance.

Overall, the findings suggest that strong family support systems significantly enhance parents' ability to provide nurturing learning environments. Participants viewed extended family members not merely as caregivers but as active contributors to children's cognitive, emotional, language, social, and moral development.

Urban living conditions, limited living space, and safety concerns

Beyond work and financial responsibilities, parents frequently discussed how the urban environment influenced their ability to support their children's learning and development. Across both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussion, participants explained that living in a densely populated city presents several challenges for families with young children. Compared with previous generations, parents believed that today's children have fewer opportunities to play outdoors, interact freely with peers, and explore their surroundings independently. Participants repeatedly described limited living space, traffic congestion, environmental pollution, and safety concerns as factors that restricted children's opportunities for healthy growth and development.

Many parents compared their own childhood experiences with those of their children. They recalled growing up in neighbourhoods where children spent long hours playing outside with friends, riding bicycles, climbing trees, and participating in outdoor games. In contrast, they explained that urban children today often spend most of their time indoors because parents are concerned about traffic, strangers, pollution, and the lack of secure play areas. Participants expressed sadness that children now have fewer opportunities to experience the freedom and social interaction that characterized their own childhoods.

Several parents specifically highlighted the limited availability of safe playgrounds. They explained that although parks exist in some areas, many families do not have easy access to them, while others are overcrowded or not well maintained. As a result, parents often hesitate to allow their children to play outdoors regularly. During the focus group discussion, participants emphasized that safe and accessible playgrounds are becoming increasingly scarce in urban neighbourhoods, reducing children's opportunities for physical activity, exploration, and peer interaction (FGD–1 15th May, 2026).

Participants also discussed the challenges associated with living in small apartments. Many explained that limited indoor space restricts children's movement and reduces opportunities for active play. Running, jumping, riding bicycles, or engaging in physically active games often becomes impossible inside small homes. Consequently, children spend more time sitting, watching television, or using digital devices, which parents believe negatively affects their physical development and overall wellbeing.

One interview participant explained that although she wanted her child to spend more time outdoors, limited access to safe open spaces near her home made this difficult. She described how crowded surroundings reduced her child's opportunities to participate in physical activities such as cycling and running. She also believed that fewer outdoor play opportunities affected children's chances to interact with peers, explore independently, and develop confidence:

“I want my child to play outside more, but there is not enough safe open space near our home. Because of this, my child cannot do activities like cycling or running as much as I would like. I feel that children learn many things when they play outside,

not only physical activities but also how to mix with other children, communicate, and become confident.” (IDI-1, 15 May 2026)

The participant viewed access to safe outdoor environments as an important factor influencing children’s physical development, social interaction, and opportunities for independent exploration.

Traffic congestion was another commonly discussed concern. Parents described busy roads, reckless driving, and heavy traffic as major reasons for restricting children's independent movement outside the home. Several participants explained that even short walks required constant adult supervision because they did not feel confident allowing young children to move freely within their neighbourhoods.

Safety concerns extended beyond road traffic. Some participants mentioned worries about crime, unfamiliar people, environmental hazards, and the general lack of child-friendly public spaces. These concerns often led parents to keep children indoors, despite recognizing the developmental importance of outdoor play and exploration.

Despite these environmental limitations, many parents attempted to compensate by creating learning opportunities within the home. They organized indoor games, storytelling sessions, drawing activities, puzzles, and family playtime to ensure that children remained engaged. Others planned visits to parks or relatives' homes during weekends whenever possible, allowing children to experience outdoor play in safer environments.

Overall, participants believed that urban living has significantly changed childhood experiences. While cities provide greater educational opportunities and access to services, parents felt that limited living space, traffic congestion, safety concerns, and the shortage of child-friendly environments reduced children's opportunities for physical activity, independent exploration, and social interaction. These environmental factors therefore influenced not only children's daily experiences but also the parenting strategies adopted by families.

Challenges related to children's screen time and digital technology

Another issue that emerged consistently throughout both the interviews and focus group discussion was the growing influence of digital technology on children's lives. Parents acknowledged that mobile phones, tablets, televisions, and other digital devices have become an unavoidable part of modern childhood. Although participants recognized that technology offers valuable educational opportunities, they also expressed concern regarding excessive screen exposure and its potential impact on children's development.

Most parents adopted a balanced perspective regarding technology use. Rather than rejecting digital devices completely, they believed that technology could support children's learning when used purposefully, under parental supervision, and for limited periods. Several participants reported allowing children to watch educational cartoons, alphabet songs, number games, storytelling videos, science programmes, and other age-appropriate educational content. According to them, these resources introduced children to new concepts while supporting language development, creativity, and curiosity.

One mother explained that her child enjoyed educational videos that taught colours, numbers, and English vocabulary. She observed that these programmes sometimes introduced ideas that later became topics of discussion during family conversations. However, she emphasized that educational videos were always accompanied by parental guidance rather than replacing direct interaction with family members.

Despite recognizing these benefits, nearly all participants expressed concern about excessive dependence on digital devices. Parents reported that prolonged screen use often reduced children's interest in outdoor play, reading, drawing, creative activities, and face-to-face communication. Several participants also observed behavioural changes such as irritability, impatience, reduced concentration, and emotional distress when children spent excessive time using mobile phones.

One interview participant described allowing unrestricted mobile phone use for several days before noticing significant changes in her child's behaviour. She observed that her child became less cooperative, more easily frustrated, and increasingly reluctant to participate in other activities. As a result, she introduced a strict daily screen-time limit while ensuring that the content remained educational and age appropriate (IDI–Mother 1).

Similarly, parents participating in the focus group discussion acknowledged that controlling children's attraction to digital devices had become increasingly difficult. They explained that children often observe adults using mobile phones throughout the day, making digital devices naturally appealing. Some participants admitted that busy parents occasionally use mobile phones to occupy children while completing household responsibilities. However, they also recognized that relying too heavily on this strategy could reduce opportunities for meaningful interaction and active learning.

Participants emphasized that parents themselves should serve as positive role models regarding technology use. Several explained that children imitate adults' behaviour; therefore, if parents spend excessive time on mobile phones, children are likely to develop similar habits. Consequently, many participants intentionally avoided using mobile devices during family meals, conversations, and playtime.

To reduce children's dependence on screens, parents described various alternative activities. These included reading books together, storytelling, drawing, solving puzzles, outdoor play, board games, cooking together, gardening, and participating in household activities. Many believed that children naturally lose interest in mobile phones when provided with engaging alternatives and active parental involvement.

Overall, parents viewed technology as a useful educational resource when used appropriately but believed that excessive screen exposure poses significant challenges for children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Participants therefore emphasized the importance of maintaining a balanced approach in which technology complements rather than replaces play, communication, and family interaction.

Parents' expectations from schools, teachers, and government

In addition to discussing their own parenting practices, participants reflected on the broader support they expected from schools, communities, and government institutions. Parents consistently emphasized that promoting children's learning and development should not be viewed solely as the responsibility of individual families. Instead, they believed that schools,

teachers, community organizations, employers, and government agencies all have important roles in creating environments that support young children's healthy development.

One of the most common recommendations concerned increasing parental awareness regarding early childhood development. Several participants acknowledged that many parents continue to equate learning primarily with academic achievement and therefore place excessive emphasis on early reading, writing, and examinations. Participants believed that greater public awareness regarding children's developmental needs would help parents adopt more balanced approaches to early learning.

During the focus group discussion, parents suggested organizing parenting education programmes, workshops, seminars, and community awareness campaigns to improve parents' understanding of child development, positive parenting practices, effective communication, nutrition, play, and children's mental health. Participants believed that these programmes would be particularly beneficial for first-time parents and families with limited access to professional guidance.

Parents also highlighted the important role of teachers and schools. While they consistently described parents as children's first teachers, they believed that preschool teachers make equally valuable contributions by providing structured learning experiences, promoting social interaction, and identifying children's individual strengths and developmental needs. Participants emphasized that strong communication between parents and teachers enables both home and school to work toward common developmental goals.

Several parents suggested that schools should communicate more regularly with families regarding children's progress, behavioural changes, learning interests, and areas requiring additional support. They believed that stronger parent-teacher partnerships would help ensure consistency between children's experiences at home and school.

Another major recommendation involved improving opportunities for outdoor play. Participants repeatedly called for the development of safe, accessible, and child-friendly playgrounds within residential communities. They believed that every child should have access to secure outdoor spaces where they can run, play, explore, and interact with peers without unnecessary safety

concerns. Parents argued that increasing urbanization should not occur at the expense of children's developmental needs.

Some participants also emphasized the importance of government policies that support working families. Flexible workplace policies, improved childcare services, parental leave, and community-based early childhood programmes were identified as initiatives that could strengthen parents' ability to provide nurturing home environments.

Participants additionally recommended expanding public awareness regarding responsible technology use, positive parenting, nutrition, children's mental health, and early childhood education through television, social media, healthcare facilities, and community organizations. They believed that accessible information would empower parents to make more informed decisions regarding their children's development.

Overall, parents viewed child development as a shared societal responsibility. Although they recognized their own central role in supporting children's learning, they believed that meaningful improvements require collaboration among families, schools, communities, employers, and government institutions. According to participants, such collaborative efforts would create more supportive environments in which young children can thrive physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

Conclusion

This study explored parents' perceptions of their role in the learning and development of children aged 3–5 years. The findings demonstrate that parents possess a comprehensive understanding of early childhood learning and development and recognize themselves as the primary contributors to their children's early experiences. Parents perceive learning as a holistic and continuous process that extends beyond formal academic instruction to include children's cognitive, language, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical development. Participants consistently emphasized that children learn naturally through observation, play, communication, daily experiences, and interactions with family members. Rather than viewing development solely in terms of physical growth or school readiness, they understood it as the gradual development of children's abilities, confidence, independence, social competence, and emotional wellbeing.

These findings are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes that children's development is shaped through continuous interactions with their immediate environment, particularly the family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Similarly, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory highlights that children's learning occurs through social interaction and participation in everyday experiences with more knowledgeable individuals (Vygotsky, 1978).

The findings further indicate that parents perceive themselves as children's first and most influential teachers. Participants believed that their own behaviour, communication, and everyday interactions play a fundamental role in shaping children's learning and development. They recognized that young children closely observe and imitate the attitudes, behaviours, language, and values demonstrated by adults. Consequently, parents emphasized the importance of positive role modelling, spending quality time with children, maintaining open communication, providing emotional support, and creating opportunities for play and exploration. Participants also acknowledged that although mothers were generally more involved in children's daily routines due to spending more time with them, both mothers and fathers have complementary roles in children's upbringing. Grandparents, siblings, and other family members were also perceived as important contributors to children's learning through caregiving, guidance, storytelling, and everyday interaction. These findings support Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which explains that children acquire behaviours, attitudes, and social skills by observing and imitating significant role models within their environment (Bandura, 1977).

The study also revealed that parents intentionally adopted a variety of practices to support their children's learning and development. Participants described integrating learning into everyday family life through conversations, storytelling, shared reading, creative play, outdoor activities, and involving children in age-appropriate household responsibilities. They viewed these routine experiences as valuable opportunities for promoting language development, problem-solving abilities, independence, creativity, confidence, and social competence. Rather than relying solely on expensive educational resources, many parents demonstrated creativity by using ordinary household materials and daily family activities as learning tools. Participants further emphasized the importance of encouraging children through praise, appreciation, and emotional support, believing that positive reinforcement motivates children to explore, learn, and develop confidence. These findings align with previous research indicating that responsive caregiving,

play-based learning, and meaningful parent-child interactions contribute significantly to children's holistic development during the early years (Yoshikawa et al., 2013; UNICEF, 2018).

Although parents demonstrated considerable awareness and commitment, the findings also show that translating knowledge into practice is often influenced by multiple contextual factors. Participants described balancing work responsibilities with parenting as one of their greatest challenges. The study also found out that working parents frequently experienced time constraints and emotional pressure while attempting to fulfil both professional and family responsibilities. Financial limitations also affected families' ability to provide certain educational opportunities and recreational experiences for their children. Nevertheless, parents consistently reported adapting to these challenges by prioritizing quality interactions, making efficient use of available resources, and incorporating learning opportunities into their daily routines. These findings suggest that while parental knowledge is essential, parents' ability to implement supportive parenting practices is shaped by broader socioeconomic and contextual factors, which is consistent with previous research on parenting and early childhood development (Bornstein, 2015; Black et al., 2017). Parents consistently expressed a strong commitment to their children's wellbeing and attempted to adapt their parenting practices despite various constraints. The findings indicate that effective parenting is influenced by a combination of individual effort and broader contextual factors that either facilitate or limit parents' ability to provide supportive learning environments.

Urban living conditions emerged as another important factor influencing children's learning experiences. Parents expressed concern regarding limited living space, the shortage of safe outdoor play areas, heavy traffic, and safety issues that restricted children's opportunities for physical play and interaction with peers. Participants believed that these environmental constraints often increased children's dependence on digital devices and reduced opportunities for active exploration and social engagement. While parents acknowledged that technology could support learning when used appropriately and under adult supervision, they consistently emphasized that excessive screen time may negatively influence children's behaviour, attention, communication, and physical activity. Consequently, most participants attempted to maintain a balance by supervising children's use of digital devices while prioritizing direct interaction, play, reading, and family engagement. This finding reflects the World Health Organization's (2019)

recommendation that young children should have limited screen exposure while engaging in regular physical activity, active play, and responsive interactions with caregivers.

Despite the challenges they encountered, parents demonstrated strong commitment and resilience in supporting their children's learning and development. They consistently viewed parenting as an active and continuous responsibility requiring patience, responsiveness, and meaningful engagement. Rather than perceiving learning as something confined to classrooms or formal educational settings, participants believed that every interaction within the family environment provides opportunities for children to learn and develop. Their experiences illustrate that effective parenting depends not only on parents' knowledge and commitment but also on supportive family relationships, adequate resources, and enabling social environments. These findings reinforce the understanding that children's development is influenced by multiple interconnected systems operating within the family and the wider community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The findings also highlight that promoting children's learning and development should not rest solely on parents' shoulders. Participants emphasized the importance of collaborative support from schools, teachers, communities, employers, and government institutions. They recommended increasing parental awareness regarding child development through parenting education programmes, workshops, seminars, and community initiatives. Parents also stressed the importance of strengthening parent-teacher partnerships, improving communication between schools and families, and ensuring greater access to safe playgrounds and child-friendly public spaces. They believed that such initiatives would create more supportive environments where children could learn, play, and develop to their fullest potential. These recommendations are consistent with the Nurturing Care Framework, which emphasizes that optimal early childhood development requires coordinated efforts among families, communities, educational institutions, and governments to ensure responsive caregiving, opportunities for early learning, safety, health, and nutrition (WHO, UNICEF, & World Bank Group, 2018).

Overall, this study demonstrates that parents possess a meaningful understanding of their role in children's early learning and development and actively strive to provide nurturing, responsive, and stimulating environments despite numerous personal and contextual challenges. The findings

reinforce the importance of recognizing parents as central partners in early childhood development while simultaneously acknowledging that supportive family, educational, community, and policy environments are necessary to enable parents to fulfil this role effectively. Strengthening parenting awareness, expanding community support, promoting collaborative partnerships between families and schools, and creating child-friendly environments may contribute to improved developmental outcomes for young children and support their holistic growth during the critical early years of life. These findings further support global evidence that investing in responsive caregiving and supportive early childhood environments provides a strong foundation for children's lifelong learning, health, and wellbeing (WHO, UNICEF, & World Bank Group, 2018; Black et al., 2017). Overall, the findings demonstrate that parents understood children's learning as a lifelong and holistic process that extends well beyond academic instruction. They perceived learning as occurring naturally through observation, imitation, exploration, communication, social interaction, and participation in everyday family life. This understanding positioned the home environment as children's first and most influential learning context.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen parents' capacity to support the learning and development of young children and to create more enabling environments for early childhood development.

❖ **Strengthen parenting education programmes.** Community-based parenting education programmes, workshops, and awareness campaigns should be organized to increase parents' understanding of children's learning and holistic development. These programmes should emphasize the importance of responsive caregiving, play-based learning, positive parenting practices, effective communication, and age-appropriate developmental activities that parents can incorporate into their everyday routines.

❖ **Promote fathers' active involvement in children's learning and development.** Although both mothers and fathers recognized their shared responsibility, mothers were found to be more involved in children's daily learning activities. Future interventions should encourage greater

father engagement through parenting programmes, workplace awareness initiatives, and community activities that promote shared caregiving responsibilities.

❖ **Strengthen parent–school partnerships.** Early childhood education centres and preschools should establish regular communication with parents through meetings, workshops, and home-learning activities. Teachers can guide parents on simple play-based activities and strategies that support children's development at home, helping families extend learning beyond the classroom.

❖ **Increase access to safe play environments.** Local government authorities and relevant organizations should prioritize the development and maintenance of safe, accessible, and child-friendly playgrounds and recreational spaces within urban communities. Providing children with opportunities for outdoor play will promote their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development while reducing dependence on digital devices.

❖ **Develop community-based early childhood support programmes.** Community organizations, local government institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should introduce neighbourhood-based programmes where parents and young children can participate in play sessions, storytelling activities, parenting discussions, and child development awareness programmes. Such initiatives can strengthen social support networks among families while promoting children's learning and development.

❖ **Promote responsible use of digital technology.** Parents should be supported through awareness campaigns and practical guidance on managing children's screen time and selecting age-appropriate educational digital content. Public awareness programmes should emphasize balancing technology use with physical play, family interaction, storytelling, and other developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

❖ **Introduce family-friendly workplace policies.** Since many parents identified work commitments as a major barrier to spending time with their children, employers should consider introducing family-friendly policies such as flexible working arrangements, parental leave provisions, and supportive workplace practices that enable parents to maintain a healthy balance

between employment and family responsibilities. Child-care services can be introduced in the workplaces.

❖ **Integrate parenting support into national early childhood development policies.**

Policymakers should strengthen existing early childhood development initiatives by incorporating structured parenting education within health, education, and community services. National guidelines and programmes should focus on equipping parents with practical knowledge and skills to support children's learning and development from the earliest years.

❖ **Increase public awareness through mass media.** Television, radio, newspapers, and digital media platforms can play an important role in disseminating evidence-based information on early childhood development, positive parenting, and play-based learning. Public awareness campaigns may help challenge misconceptions that learning occurs only through formal academic activities and reinforce the developmental value of play.

❖ **Conduct further research with diverse populations.** Future studies should include parents from rural communities, different socioeconomic backgrounds, and various regions of Bangladesh to provide a broader understanding of parents' perceptions and practices. Comparative studies involving mothers, fathers, grandparents, and caregivers would further enrich understanding of family roles in children's learning and development. In addition, longitudinal research could explore how parents' perceptions and practices evolve as children grow and how these changes influence children's developmental outcomes over time.

Overall, strengthening parents' knowledge, increasing community and institutional support, and creating child-friendly environments require coordinated efforts from families, schools, communities, employers, and policymakers. Such collaborative initiatives will contribute to promoting young children's holistic learning and development and help ensure that every child has opportunities to reach their full developmental potential.

Reference

- Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1979). Infant–mother attachment. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 932–937. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.932>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice-Hall.
- Berk, L. E. (2018). *Development through the lifespan* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Black, M. M., Walker, S. P., Fernald, L. C. H., Andersen, C. T., DiGirolamo, A. M., Lu, C., McCoy, D. C., Fink, G., Shawar, Y. R., Shiffman, J., Devercelli, A. E., Wodon, Q. T., Vargas-Barón, E., & Grantham-McGregor, S. (2017). Early childhood development coming of age: Science through the life course. *The Lancet*, 389(10064), 77–90. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31389-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31389-7)
- Bornstein, M. H. (2015). Children’s parents. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science* (7th ed., Vol. 4, pp. 55–132). John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118963418.childpsy403>
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. Basic Books.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bredekamp, S. (Ed.). (1987). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.

Burdette, H. L., & Whitaker, R. C. (2005). Resurrecting free play in young children: Looking beyond fitness and fatness to attention, affiliation, and affect. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 159(1), 46–50. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpedi.159.1.46>

Bus, A. G., van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Pellegrini, A. D. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 65(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543065001001>

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2020). *Brain architecture*. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu>

Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8* (3rd ed.). National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Fisher, K. R., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R. M., & Gryfe, S. G. (2008). Conceptual split? Parents' and experts' perceptions of play in the 21st century. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 29(4), 305–316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2008.04.006>

Fisher, K. R., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Newcombe, N., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2013). Taking shape: Supporting preschoolers' acquisition of geometric knowledge through guided play. *Child Development*, 84(6), 1872–1878. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12091>

Fleer, M. (2013). *Play in the early years*. Cambridge University Press.

Frost, J. L. (2010). *A history of children's play and play environments: Toward a contemporary child-saving movement*. Routledge.

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. W. (2012). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10th ed.). Pearson.

Ginsburg, K. R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics*, 119(1), 182–191.
<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2006-2697>

Hewes, J. (2007). *Let the children play: Nature's answer to early learning*. Canadian Council on Learning.

Conger, R. D., Conger, K. J., & Martin, M. J. (2010). Socioeconomic status, family processes, and individual development. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(3), 685–704.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00725.x>

Evans, G. W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist*, 59(2), 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.59.2.77>

Hamadani, J. D., Tofail, F., Hilaly, A., Huda, S. N., Engle, P., & Grantham-McGregor, S. M. (2010). Use of family care indicators and their relationship with child development in Bangladesh. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 28(1), 23–33.

Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Bornstein, M. H., & Baumwell, L. (2001). Maternal responsiveness and children's achievement of language milestones. *Child Development*, 72(3), 748–767.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00313>

Hirsh-Pasek, K., Zosh, J. M., Golinkoff, R. M., Gray, J. H., Robb, M. B., & Kaufman, J. (2015). Putting education in “educational” apps: Lessons from the science of learning. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 16(1), 3–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100615569721>

Jensen, E. (2009). *Teaching with poverty in mind: What being poor does to kids' brains and what schools can do about it*. ASCD.

Jeong, J., Franchett, E. E., Ramos de Oliveira, C. V., Rehmani, K., & Yousafzai, A. K. (2021). Parenting interventions to promote early child development in the first three years of life: A global systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS Medicine*, 18(5), e1003602. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003602>

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Lester, S., & Russell, W. (2010). *Children's right to play: An examination of the importance of play in the lives of children worldwide*. Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Lillard, A. S., Lerner, M. D., Hopkins, E. J., Dore, R. A., Smith, E. D., & Palmquist, C. M. (2013). The impact of pretend play on children's development: A review of the evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 139(1), 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029321>

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.

Meltzoff, A. N. (2007). 'Like me': A foundation for social cognition. *Developmental Science*, 10(1), 126–134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7687.2007.00574.x>

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Mol, S. E., Bus, A. G., de Jong, M. T., & Smeets, D. J. H. (2008). Added value of dialogic parent-child book readings: A meta-analysis. *Early Education and Development*, 19(1), 7–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280701838603>

Nicolopoulou, A., Cortina, K. S., Ilgaz, H., Cates, C. B., & de Sá, A. B. (2015). Using a narrative- and play-based activity to promote low-income preschoolers' oral language, emergent literacy, and social competence. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 31*, 147–162.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.01.006>

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). *Starting strong VI: Supporting meaningful interactions in early childhood education and care*. OECD Publishing.

<https://doi.org/10.1787/f47a06ae-en>

Pellegrini, A. D., & Smith, P. K. (1998). Physical activity play: The nature and function of a neglected aspect of play. *Child Development, 69*(3), 577–598.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06226.x>

Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, dreams and imitation in childhood*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Pyle, A., & Danniels, E. (2017). A continuum of play-based learning: The role of the teacher in play-based pedagogy and the fear of hijacking play. *Early Education and Development, 28*(3), 274–289.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1220771>

Pyle, A., DeLuca, C., & Danniels, E. (2017). A scoping review of research on play-based pedagogies in kindergarten education. *Review of Education, 5*(3), 311–351.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3097>

Ramani, G. B., & Siegler, R. S. (2008). Promoting broad and stable improvements in low-income children's numerical knowledge through playing number board games. *Child Development, 79*(2), 375–394.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01131.x>

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford University Press.

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Samuelsson, I. P., & Carlsson, M. A. (2008). The playing learning child: Towards a pedagogy of early childhood. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 52*(6), 623–641.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00313830802497265>

Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J.-A. (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>

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2009). Conceptualising progression in the pedagogy of play and sustained shared thinking in early childhood education: A Vygotskian perspective. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 26(2), 77–89.

Smith, P. K. (2010). *Children and play*. Wiley-Blackwell.

UNICEF. (2017). *Early childhood development*.

<https://www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development>

UNICEF. (2018). *Early moments matter for every child*.

<https://www.unicef.org/reports/early-moments-matter>

United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2013). *General comment No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (Article 31)*. United Nations.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2015). *Rethinking education: Towards a global common good?* UNESCO.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2021). *Right to pre-primary education: A global study*. UNESCO.

Van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H., & Deeg, D. (2010). Language differences in qualitative research: Is meaning lost in translation? *European Journal of Ageing*, 7(4), 313–316.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-010-0168-y>

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Walker, S. P., Wachs, T. D., Grantham-McGregor, S., Black, M. M., Nelson, C. A., Huffman, S. L., Baker-Henningham, H., Chang, S. M., Hamadani, J. D., Lozoff, B., Gardner, J. M. M.,

Powell, C. A., Rahman, A., & Richter, L. (2011). Inequality in early childhood: Risk and protective factors for early child development. *The Lancet*, 378(9799), 1325–1338.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(11\)60555-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(11)60555-2)

Weisberg, D. S., Hirsh-Pasek, K., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2013). Guided play: Where curricular goals meet a playful pedagogy. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 7(2), 104–112.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12015>

Wood, E. (2014). Free choice and free play in early childhood education: Troubling the discourse. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 22(1), 4–18.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2013.830562>

World Health Organization. (2019). *Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241550536>

World Health Organization, United Nations Children’s Fund, & World Bank Group. (2018). *Nurturing care for early childhood development: A framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential*. World Health Organization.

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/272603>

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Yogman, M., Garner, A., Hutchinson, J., Hirsh-Pasek, K., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2018). The power of play: A pediatric role in enhancing development in young children. *Pediatrics*, 142(3), e20182058.

<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2058>

Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M. R., Espinosa, L. M., Gormley, W. T., Ludwig, J., Magnuson, K. A., Phillips, D., & Zaslow, M. J. (2013). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. Society for Research in Child Development.

Zosh, J. M., Hopkins, E. J., Jensen, H., Liu, C., Neale, D., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Solis, S. L., & Whitebread, D. (2018). Accessing the inaccessible: Redefining play as a spectrum. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1124. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01124>

Appendix: A

Participants Demographic Information:

IDI:

Participant SL	Age	Academic Qualification	Profession	Children	Sex
1	33	Masters	Office in a Private Bank	1 Boy (4 years)	Female
2	30	HSC	Hometutor	2 Girl (5 years, 3 years)	Female
3	39	Graduate	Business	1 girl (3.5 years)	Male
4	36	SSC	Van Driver	1 boy (4 years 7 months)	Male

Group Discussion with Mothers:

Participant SL	Age	Academic Qualification	Profession	Children	Sex
1	32	HSC	Private Teacher	1boy (3 years 7 month)	Female
2	37	Graduate	Online Business	1boy (3 years)	Female
3	38	Class 8	Housewife	2 boys(7	Female

				years 3 months, 4 years 5 months)	
4	22	Graduate	Private Job Holder	1 boy(4 years 7 months)	Female
5	35	MSc	Govt Job Holder	1boy(4 years) 1 girl(2 months)	Female
6	32	MSc	Teacher	1boy(3 years 7months)	Female

Group Discussion with Fathers:

Participant SL	Age	Academic Qualification	Profession	Children	Sex
1	40	Graduate	Private Job	1 Boy (3 years 7 month)	Male
2	36	Graduate	Private Job	1Girl (4 years)	Male
3	28	Madrasa Educated	Small Business	1 boys(3 years 5 months)	Male
4	44	SSC	Security	1 boy(4 years 7	Male

			guard in a Bank	months)	
5	35	HSC	Business	2 girls (3 years and 5 years)	Male
6	32	MSc	Business	1boy(3 years 7months)	Male

Appendix: B

Questionnaire:

IDI:

In your opinion, what does “learning” mean for children aged 3–5 years? Can you provide an example of this?

What does “child development” mean to you?

Do you think play can help children for their development and learning? What kinds of things do children learn through play?

In your opinion, how can play contribute to children’s development?

How do you think parents contribute to their children’s learning and development?

Which aspects of child development do you consider most important? Why do you consider these aspects important?

(For example: language, behaviour, social skills, emotions, problem-solving, play)

What role can families play in children’s learning and development?

What role can schools play in children’s learning and development?

How do you know whether your child is learning and developing well?

What behaviours or changes help you understand this? Can you give an example?

Have your own childhood experiences influenced the way you raise or teach your child? How? Which childhood experiences have influenced you the most?

Are there any practices that you would like to do similarly or differently with your own child?

How do you usually spend time with your child on a daily basis? Do you think your time spent with him helps in his/her learning and development?

What types of activities do you do most often with your child (such as storytelling, playing, reading books, singing, or drawing)?

How do you encourage your child when they learn something new? Can you share a recent example?

Do you involve your child in small household tasks? How?

What kinds of tasks do you involve them in?

What benefits do you think your child gains from participating in these activities?

Does your child watch things on mobile? Do you see any benefits or disadvantages from their use?

In your opinion, is there any difference between the roles of mothers and fathers? If yes, what kind of differences?

How are responsibilities divided within your family?

What challenges do you face in spending time with or teaching your child? Can you provide an example?

In your opinion, how do these challenges affect your child's learning or development?

Do work demands or economic circumstances affect the time you spend with your child? How do they affect it?

How do you balance work responsibilities and time with your child?

Does the urban environment (such as housing conditions, safe play spaces, or traffic) have any impact on your child's learning and development? Which factor has the greatest impact?

Do you experience any pressure or expectations from family members or society regarding parenting that can affect your child's development and learning? What kind of pressure or expectations do you experience?

How do you think these challenges can be addressed?

Group Discussion:

In your opinion, how do children aged 3–5 years generally learn?

What do you think are the most important aspects of learning at this age?

What do you mean by “child development” or “growing well”?

What changes help you understand that a child is developing well?

How do you see the role of parents in supporting children’s learning and development?

Who else in the family plays a role in children’s learning and development?

How do you view the roles of family and school in supporting children’s learning and development?

How do you usually spend time with your children?

What types of activities do you most often do with your children (e.g., playing, storytelling, reading books, drawing)?

How do you encourage your child when they learn something new?

Do you involve your child in small household tasks? If yes, what types of tasks?

In your opinion, how does play support children’s learning and development?

What role do mobile phones or television play in children’s learning and development?

Do work-related busyness or financial pressures affect the time you spend with your children?
How?

What challenges do you face in supporting your children’s learning and development?

How does the urban environment (e.g., lack of safe play space, traffic, limited housing space) affect children’s development?

What kind of support (from schools, community, or government) would help parents better support children’s learning and development?

Appendix: C

Bangla Questionnaire:

IDI:

১. আপনার মতে ৩-৫ বছর বয়সী শিশুদের ক্ষেত্রে “শেখা” বলতে কী বোঝায়? এ বিষয়ে কি আপনি একটি উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন?
২. আপনার কাছে “শিশুর বিকাশ” বলতে কী বোঝায়?
৩. আপনি কি মনে করেন খেলাধুলা শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে সাহায্য করতে পারে? খেলাধুলার মাধ্যমে শিশুরা কী কী শিখতে পারে?
৪. আপনার মতে খেলাধুলা কীভাবে শিশুদের বিকাশে অবদান রাখে?
৫. আপনার মতে বাবা-মা কীভাবে সন্তানের শেখা ও বিকাশে ভূমিকা রাখেন?
৬. শিশুর বিকাশের কোন কোন দিককে আপনি সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ মনে করেন? কেন?
(যেমন: ভাষা, আচরণ, সামাজিক দক্ষতা, আবেগ, সমস্যা সমাধান, খেলাধুলা)
৭. পরিবারের সদস্যরা শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে কী ধরনের ভূমিকা পালন করতে পারে?
৮. স্কুল শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে কী ধরনের ভূমিকা পালন করতে পারে?
৯. আপনি কীভাবে বুঝতে পারেন যে আপনার সন্তান ভালোভাবে শিখছে ও বিকাশ করছে?
১০. কোন আচরণ বা পরিবর্তন দেখে আপনি এটি বুঝতে পারেন? এ বিষয়ে কি কোনো উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন?
১১. আপনার নিজের ছোটবেলার অভিজ্ঞতা কি আপনার সন্তানকে বড় করা বা শেখানোর ক্ষেত্রে প্রভাব ফেলেছে? কীভাবে?
১২. আপনার শৈশবের কোন অভিজ্ঞতাগুলো সবচেয়ে বেশি প্রভাব ফেলেছে?
১৩. এমন কোনো বিষয় আছে কি যা আপনি আপনার সন্তানের ক্ষেত্রে একইভাবে বা ভিন্নভাবে করতে চান?
১৪. আপনি সাধারণত প্রতিদিন কীভাবে আপনার সন্তানের সাথে সময় কাটান? আপনার মতে এই সময় কি সন্তানের শেখা ও বিকাশে সাহায্য করে?
১৫. আপনি আপনার সন্তানের সাথে সাধারণত কী ধরনের কাজ বেশি করেন? (যেমন গল্প বলা, খেলাধুলা, বই পড়া, গান করা, ছবি আঁকা ইত্যাদি)

১৬. আপনার সন্তান যখন নতুন কিছু শেখে, তখন আপনি কীভাবে তাকে উৎসাহ দেন? কোনো সাম্প্রতিক উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন?
১৭. আপনি কি আপনার সন্তানকে ঘরের ছোটখাটো কাজে যুক্ত করেন? কীভাবে?
১৮. আপনি সাধারণত কী ধরনের কাজে তাকে যুক্ত করেন?
১৯. এসব কাজে অংশগ্রহণের মাধ্যমে আপনার সন্তানের কী উপকার হয় বলে আপনি মনে করেন?
২০. আপনার সন্তান কি মোবাইলে কিছু দেখে? এর ব্যবহারে আপনি কি কোনো উপকার বা অসুবিধা লক্ষ্য করেন?
২১. আপনার মতে মা ও বাবার ভূমিকার মধ্যে কি কোনো পার্থক্য আছে? থাকলে কী ধরনের পার্থক্য?
২২. আপনার পরিবারে দায়িত্বগুলো কীভাবে ভাগ করা হয়েছে?
২৩. সন্তানকে সময় দেওয়া বা শেখানোর ক্ষেত্রে আপনি কী কী চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হন? কোনো উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন?
২৪. আপনার মতে এই চ্যালেঞ্জগুলো আপনার সন্তানের শেখা বা বিকাশে কীভাবে প্রভাব ফেলে?
২৫. কাজের চাপ বা অর্থনৈতিক পরিস্থিতি কি সন্তানের সাথে আপনার সময় কাটানোর ওপর প্রভাব ফেলে? কীভাবে প্রভাব ফেলে?
২৬. আপনি কীভাবে কাজের দায়িত্ব এবং সন্তানের জন্য সময়ের মধ্যে ভারসাম্য বজায় রাখেন?
২৭. শহরের পরিবেশ (যেমন বাসার অবস্থা, নিরাপদ খেলার জায়গা, যানজট) কি আপনার সন্তানের শেখা ও বিকাশে কোনো প্রভাব ফেলে? কোন বিষয়টি সবচেয়ে বেশি প্রভাব ফেলে?
২৮. পরিবার বা সমাজ থেকে সন্তান লালন-পালন নিয়ে কোনো চাপ বা প্রত্যাশা অনুভব করেন কি? কী ধরনের চাপ বা প্রত্যাশা?
২৯. আপনার মতে এই চ্যালেঞ্জগুলো কীভাবে সমাধান করা যেতে পারে?

Focus Group Discussion

1. আপনার মতে ৩-৫ বছর বয়সী শিশুরা সাধারণত কীভাবে শেখে?

2. এই বয়সে শেখার ক্ষেত্রে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়গুলো কী কী?
3. “শিশুর বিকাশ” বা “ভালোভাবে বড় হওয়া” বলতে আপনি কী বোঝেন?
4. কোন পরিবর্তনগুলো দেখে আপনি বুঝতে পারেন যে একটি শিশু ভালোভাবে বিকাশ করছে?
5. শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে বাবা-মায়ের ভূমিকা আপনি কীভাবে দেখেন?
6. পরিবারে আর কারা শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে ভূমিকা রাখে?
7. শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে পরিবার ও স্কুলের ভূমিকা আপনি কীভাবে দেখেন?
8. আপনি সাধারণত সন্তানদের সঙ্গে কীভাবে সময় কাটান?
9. সন্তানদের সঙ্গে আপনি কোন ধরনের কাজ বেশি করেন (যেমন খেলাধুলা, গল্প বলা, বই পড়া, ছবি আঁকা ইত্যাদি)?
10. আপনার সন্তান নতুন কিছু শিখলে আপনি কীভাবে তাকে উৎসাহ দেন?
11. আপনি কি সন্তানকে ঘরের ছোটখাটো কাজে যুক্ত করেন? করলে কী ধরনের কাজে যুক্ত করেন?
12. আপনার মতে খেলাধুলা শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে কীভাবে সাহায্য করে?
13. মোবাইল ফোন বা টেলিভিশন শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে কী ভূমিকা রাখে?
14. কাজের ব্যস্ততা বা আর্থিক চাপ কি সন্তানদের সঙ্গে সময় কাটানোকে প্রভাবিত করে? কীভাবে?
15. শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে সহায়তা করতে গিয়ে আপনি কী কী চ্যালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হন?
16. শহরের পরিবেশ (যেমন নিরাপদ খেলার জায়গার অভাব, যানজট, বাসার জায়গার সীমাবদ্ধতা) শিশুদের বিকাশে কী প্রভাব ফেলে?
17. স্কুল, কমিউনিটি বা সরকারের পক্ষ থেকে কী ধরনের সহায়তা থাকলে বাবা-মায়েরা শিশুদের শেখা ও বিকাশে আরও ভালোভাবে সাহায্য করতে পারবেন?

Appendix: D

Consent Form for Participation in Research (In-Depth Interview)

Research Title:

Perceptions of Urban Parents of Their Roles in the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–5 Years in Dhaka

Researcher:

Tamanna Afrose

MSc in Early Childhood Development (ECD)

BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University

Supervisor:**Areefa Zafar**

Senior Program Manager and Faculty

BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University

Purpose of the Research

I am conducting this research as part of the requirements for completing my Master of Science (MSc) degree in Early Childhood Development at BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of urban parents regarding their roles in supporting the learning and development of children aged 3–5 years. The study aims to understand parents' knowledge, experiences, everyday practices, and challenges related to supporting their children's development and learning within the home environment.

Your experiences and opinions are valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of how parents support young children and what kinds of support may be needed for families in urban Bangladesh.

Expectations from You

If you agree to participate, you will be expected to share your perceptions, experiences, and practices regarding your role in supporting the learning and development of your child aged 3–5 years. You will also be asked to discuss the challenges you face in fulfilling this role and your views on how parents can be better supported in promoting children's learning and development.

The in-depth interview may take approximately 45–60 minutes, depending on your responses. With your permission, I will audio-record the interview for the purpose of accurate data collection.

Risks

There is no risk or negative consequence to you for participating in this research.

Benefits of the Research

It is hoped that parents, educators, policymakers, and organizations working in early childhood development may benefit directly or indirectly in the future if the findings of this study are used to inform parenting support programs, policies, or interventions aimed at improving the learning and development of young children.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any point without facing any repercussions. You may also choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.

Confidentiality Assurance

All information collected from you will remain strictly confidential. The data will be stored securely, and any identifying information will be removed to ensure privacy. Your name will not appear in any report, publication, or presentation resulting from this research.

Future Use of Information

Some of the data gathered during this research may be preserved for future research. If such data is shared with other researchers, it will be done in a way that maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all participants.

Thank you for your cooperation and valuable participation. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you for your reference. If you have any questions or would like further information about this research, please feel free to contact: Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University, Niketan Housing Society, Gulshan-1, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Phone: 8824180, 9881265 (Ext. 2127).

Consent

I have read and understood the information provided about this research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any reason and without any negative consequences. I also understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Furthermore, I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's Signature/Thumb Impression: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: Tamanna Afrose

Date: _____

Consent Form for Participation in Research (Focus Group Discussion)

Research Title:

Perceptions of Urban Parents of Their Roles in the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–5 Years in Dhaka

Researcher:

Tamanna Afrose

MSc in Early Childhood Development (ECD)

BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University

Supervisor:**Areefa Zafar**

Senior Program Manager and Faculty, BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University

Purpose of the Research

I am conducting this research as part of the requirements for completing my Master of Science (MSc) degree in Early Childhood Development at BRAC Institute of Educational Development (BRAC IED), BRAC University.

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of urban parents regarding their roles in supporting the learning and development of children aged 3–5 years. The study aims to understand parents' knowledge, experiences, everyday practices, and challenges related to supporting their children's development and learning within the home environment.

Your experiences and opinions are valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of how parents support young children and what kinds of support may be needed for families in urban Bangladesh.

Expectations from You

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to take part in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with other parents of children aged 3–5 years. During the discussion, you will be encouraged to share your perceptions, experiences, and practices regarding your role in supporting your child's learning and development. You will also be asked to discuss the challenges parents face and the types of support that may help families better promote children's learning and development.

The Focus Group Discussion may take approximately **60–90 minutes**, depending on the discussion. With your permission, I will audio-record the discussion for the purpose of accurate data collection.

Risks

There is no risk or negative consequence to you for participating in this research.

Benefits of the Research

It is hoped that parents, educators, policymakers, and organizations working in early childhood development may benefit directly or indirectly in the future if the findings of this study are used to inform parenting support programs, policies, or interventions aimed at improving the learning and development of young children.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any point without facing any repercussions. You may also choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.

Confidentiality Assurance

All information collected from you will remain strictly confidential. The data will be stored securely, and any identifying information will be removed to ensure privacy. Your name will not appear in any report, publication, or presentation resulting from this research.

As this is a group discussion, participants will be requested to respect the privacy of other participants and not share information discussed during the session outside the group. However, complete confidentiality of information shared by other participants cannot be guaranteed.

Future Use of Information

Some of the data gathered during this research may be preserved for future research. If such data is shared with other researchers, it will be done in a way that maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all participants.

Thank you for your cooperation and valuable participation. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you for your reference. If you have any questions or would like further information

about this research, please feel free to contact: Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University, Niketan Housing Society, Gulshan-1, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Phone: 8824180, 9881265 (Ext. 2127).

Consent

I have read and understood the information provided about this research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without providing any reason and without any negative consequences. I also understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Furthermore, I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's Signature/Thumb Impression: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: Tamanna Afrose

Date: _____