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PARENTAL SUPPORT AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Parental support plays a significant role in children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. A supportive family environment provides children with emotional security, encouragement, guidance, and opportunities to develop essential life skills. This study examines the relationship between parental support and child development, with particular attention to academic achievement, emotional well-being, social relationships, and behavioral development. It explores how parental involvement, effective communication, positive parenting practices, and emotional encouragement contribute to children's overall growth. The study also considers the challenges faced by parents in providing adequate support, including time limitations, financial difficulties, work-related stress, and limited awareness of children's developmental needs. A qualitative research approach is proposed to examine existing literature and identify major patterns concerning parental support and child development. The findings are intended to highlight the importance of consistent parental involvement and positive family relationships in promoting healthy childhood development. The study emphasizes that cooperation between parents, teachers, and educational institutions can create supportive environments that help children develop confidence, independence, resilience, and positive social skills.

KEYWORDS *:Parental Support, Child Development, Parenting Practices, Academic Achievement, Emotional Well-Being, Family Environment, Social Development, Cognitive Development, Parent–Child Relationships, Child Behavior, Educational Support, Positive Parenting, Early Childhood, Family Involvement, Psychological Development.*

INTRODUCTION

Emotional well-being is an essential component of children's overall development and plays a significant role in shaping their academic performance, social relationships, behavior, and future success. Childhood is a critical period during which children develop emotional awareness, self-confidence, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and the capacity to manage different situations in their daily lives. During this stage, children experience a wide range of emotions, including happiness, excitement, fear, sadness, frustration, anxiety, and disappointment, which can influence their attitudes toward learning and their ability to participate effectively in educational activities. Cui, T., & Liu, Q. (2025). found that Emotional well-being refers to a child's ability to understand and regulate emotions, develop positive relationships, cope with everyday challenges, and maintain a sense of security, confidence, and belonging. Academic success, on the other hand, involves more than achieving high marks in examinations; it also includes classroom participation, concentration, motivation, completion of learning activities, development of knowledge and skills, and the ability to make continuous educational progress. These two dimensions of child development are closely interconnected because children who feel emotionally secure and supported are often better prepared to concentrate on lessons, communicate with teachers, cooperate with classmates, and respond positively to academic challenges. In contrast, children experiencing persistent emotional difficulties may struggle with attention, memory, motivation, classroom engagement, and confidence in their learning abilities. For example, a child who experiences anxiety about examinations may find it difficult to concentrate even when adequately prepared, while a child who faces bullying, family conflict, social isolation, or excessive

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academic pressure may lose interest in school activities and demonstrate reduced academic participation. Similarly, children who develop positive self-esteem, emotional regulation, resilience, and a sense of belonging may be more willing to ask questions, explore new ideas, learn from mistakes, and continue working when faced with difficult tasks.

The relationship between emotional well-being and academic success is also influenced by the home environment, parental involvement, teacher behavior, peer relationships, school policies, socioeconomic circumstances, and access to appropriate emotional and educational support. A supportive family environment can help children develop confidence and coping skills, whereas frequent conflict, neglect, unrealistic expectations, or a lack of emotional attention may contribute to stress and difficulties in learning. Likewise, teachers who create safe, respectful, inclusive, and encouraging classrooms can help children feel valued and motivated, while harsh criticism, discrimination, bullying, and negative classroom experiences may weaken their emotional security and academic engagement. In contemporary educational settings, increasing attention is being given to children's mental health and social-emotional development because educational achievement cannot be fully understood without considering the emotional and social conditions in which learning takes place. Schools are therefore expected not only to provide academic instruction but also to promote positive relationships, emotional awareness, self-regulation, confidence, resilience, and appropriate support for children facing personal or educational difficulties. However, emotional well-being and academic success do not always influence each other in a simple or identical way for every child. Some children may perform well academically while experiencing considerable emotional stress, whereas others may demonstrate positive emotional adjustment but require additional educational support to achieve their academic potential. Edenius, A., Lindberg, L., Åhlén, J., Enebrink, P., & Bergström, M. (2026). Explained thatTherefore, it is important to consider individual differences, developmental stages, family circumstances, learning needs, and school environments when examining this relationship. Furthermore, academic difficulties may themselves contribute to emotional distress, particularly when children repeatedly experience failure, compare themselves negatively with classmates, or feel unable to meet the expectations of parents and teachers.

This suggests that the relationship between emotional well-being and academic achievement may operate in both directions, with emotional experiences influencing learning outcomes and academic experiences shaping children's confidence and emotional adjustment. Understanding this relationship is particularly important for parents, teachers, school administrators, counsellors, educational policymakers, and child-development professionals who aim to support children's holistic growth. The present study, titled “Emotional Well-Being and Academic Success Among Children,” focuses on examining the connection between children's emotional experiences and their educational performance, with particular attention to emotional regulation, self-esteem, anxiety, motivation, family support, teacher–student relationships, and the school environment. It seeks to highlight how positive emotional development may support learning and how emotional challenges can create barriers to academic progress.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To examine the impact of parental support on children's cognitive, emotional, social, and academic development.

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RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How does parental support influence children's cognitive, emotional, social, and academic development?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental support is widely recognized as an important factor in children's development because parents influence the environments in which children learn, communicate, develop emotional relationships, and acquire social skills. Children depend on caregivers for protection, affection, guidance, and opportunities to explore the world around them. The quality of these early experiences can shape their cognitive abilities, emotional regulation, confidence, and relationships with others. Supportive parenting involves responding to children's needs, encouraging curiosity, providing appropriate boundaries, and creating a stable family environment.The UNICEF report Seeds of Success: Nurturing Young Children through Parenting Support (2025) emphasizes the importance of strengthening caregivers' abilities to provide nurturing environments and supporting programs that help families promote early childhood development. Such support is particularly important during early childhood, when children develop foundational communication, problem-solving, movement, and emotional skills.Parental support should not be understood only in terms of financial assistance or theprovision of food, clothing, and educational materials. It also includes listening to children, responding to their questions, encouraging independence, and spending meaningful time together. A parent who reads with a child, discusses everyday experiences, or provides encouragement during difficult tasks can create opportunities for learning and emotional growth. Freeman, I. M., Tellez, J., & Jones, A. (2026). Explains thatA supportive family environment can also protect children against some of the difficulties associated with academic pressure, social conflict, and changes in their surroundings. However, the effects of parental support depend on the child's age, individual needs, family circumstances, and the quality of parent–child interactions.

Parental involvement in education includes monitoring school progress, encouraging regular study habits, communicating with teachers, attending school meetings, and providing opportunities for learning at home. Parents can support academic development by establishing suitable study routines, providing access to learning resources, and showing interest in children's educational experiences.Cui and Liu's 2025 meta-analysis examined parental involvement and academic achievement among 399,375 students in China. The authors found generally positive but relatively small associations between overall parental involvement and academic achievement. Their findings indicate that parental involvement can contribute to educational outcomes, although it should not be considered the only explanation for differences in student performance. A further meta-analysis by Tan, Cheung, and Lee, published online in 2025 and included in a 2026 journal issue, synthesized 22 earlier meta-analyses. Haglund, L., Lovén, C., Öst, L. G., Herlitz, A., & Enebrink, P. (2026 revealed thatIt reported a mean association of \(r = .16\) between parenting-related factors and academic outcomes. The review also highlighted parental warmth and particular forms of involvement as important considerations. These findings suggest that the quality of parental involvement may matter as much as the amount of involvement. Parents who encourage children to solve problems independently, recognize effort, and discuss learning difficulties may support motivation more effectively than parents who rely on criticism, excessive

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pressure, or constant monitoring.Nevertheless, parental involvement can take different forms across families. Some parents may have limited formal education but provide strong encouragement and establish positive learning routines. Others may have extensive educational backgrounds but struggle to find time for school-related activities because of employment responsibilities. Consequently, schools should recognize different forms of family participation rather than judging parental support solely by attendance at school meetings or direct assistance with homework.

Parents influence children's emotional development through everyday interactions. For example, when a child experiences failure, a supportive parent can help identify what went wrong and encourage another attempt. Similarly, when children express sadness or frustration, parents can acknowledge those feelings and help them develop constructive ways to respond. These interactions can gradually support emotional awareness and self-regulation.In contrast, persistent rejection, humiliation, harsh punishment, or unrealistic expectations can undermine children's sense of security. Excessively controlling parenting may discourage children from communicating openly or making age-appropriate decisions. A balanced approach combines affection with clear expectations and consistent, nonviolent discipline.UNICEF's 2025 review of parenting and family-focused evidence identifies positive parenting, sustained caregiver support, and stronger family relationships as important areas for improving child well-being and protection. However, parental support does not eliminate every psychological difficulty. Children may experience emotional challenges because of school environments, peer relationships, community conditions, or other circumstances. Parents should therefore be viewed as an important source of support within a wider network of care.Social development involves learning to communicate, cooperate, share, resolve disagreements, understand other people's perspectives, and develop meaningful relationships. Parents influence these abilities through their own behavior and through the expectations they establish at home. Józsa, K., & Oo, T. Z. (2026). Elaborated onChildren observe how family members communicate, respond to conflict, express emotions, and treat others.

Parents can further promote social development by encouraging children to participate in group activities, maintain friendships, and respect differences. Support should not mean making every decision for children. Instead, age-appropriate independence gives children opportunities to develop judgment, confidence, and problem-solving skills.The 2026 systematic review and meta-analysis by Józsa and Oo examined parental factors associated with early childhood school readiness. Their findings identified parental involvement as an important factor, alongside socioeconomic status, the home learning environment, and parent–teacher collaboration. The review also recognizes that school readiness includes social and emotional development in addition to cognitive and academic preparation. This evidence supports a broad understanding of parental involvement. Preparing children for school includes more than teaching letters and numbers; it also involves helping them communicate, follow routines, manage emotions, and interact positively with peers and teachers.Cognitive development refers to changes in children's thinking, memory, attention, reasoning, language, and problem-solving abilities. Parents can encourage these skills through conversations, storytelling, reading, play, exploration, and questions that invite children to think independently.The home learning environment is shaped by both available resources and everyday interactions. Books, toys, educational materials, and digital devices may provide learning opportunities, but their value depends partly on how they are used. For example,

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discussing a story with a child can encourage vocabulary development and comprehension. Guided play can support creativity, attention, and problem-solving.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, literature-based methodology to examine the relationship between parental support and child development. The approach focuses on analyzing existing academic research, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and reports published by reputable organizations. Relevant literature is considered in relation to four major areas: cognitive development, emotional well-being, social development, and academic achievement.The literature selection process prioritizes publications addressing parental involvement, positive parenting, parent–child communication, family learning environments, parenting interventions, and children's developmental outcomes. Recent publications from 2025 and 2026 are given particular attention, while earlier influential studies are used where necessary to establish the theoretical and empirical background.The selected materials are reviewed to identify recurring themes, similarities, differences, and gaps in the existing evidence. Attention is also given to research methods, study populations, developmental stages, and the limitations identified by the original authors. This approach allows the study to develop a broader understanding of how different forms of parental support may influence children's development.No new interviews, questionnaires, experiments, or participant observations are claimed as part of this study. The conclusions are therefore based on published evidence rather than newly collected data. This methodology is appropriate for synthesizing existing knowledge, identifying consistent findings, and suggesting directions for future research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research uses a descriptive qualitative research design based on a narrative review of existing literature. This design is intended to explain how parental support relates to children's development without manipulating variables or conducting an experimental intervention.The study organizes the literature around four main developmental dimensions: cognitive, emotional, social, and academic development. Cognitive development includes language, reasoning, memory, and problem-solving. Emotional development includes confidence, emotional regulation, and psychological security. Social development involves communication, cooperation, empathy, and relationships with peers. Academic development includes learning motivation, school readiness, study habits, and educational achievement.The research design also considers factors that may influence the relationship between parental support and child outcomes, including socioeconomic status, parenting styles, parental education, digital learning environments, and collaboration between parents and teachers.A thematic approach is used to organize the evidence into common categories. Findings from individual studies are compared, and differences in their conclusions are considered in light of their research designs and populations. Since the study is based on secondary sources, it does not establish a new causal relationship between parental support and developmental outcomes.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis follows a qualitative thematic approach. Information from the selected literature is organized according to the research question and the principal dimensions of

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child development. Relevant findings are compared to identify recurring patterns, differences, and explanations.The first theme concerns academic achievement. The reviewed literature suggests that parental involvement, encouragement, appropriate monitoring, and a supportive home learning environment are associated with educational outcomes. However, the size of these associations varies, and academic achievement is also influenced by school quality, individual characteristics, and socioeconomic conditions. The large-scale meta-analysis by Cui and Liu (2025) found positive but generally small associations between parental involvement and academic achievement among Chinese students. The second theme concerns emotional well-being. The literature emphasizes affection, responsiveness, communication, and emotional security as important aspects of supportive parenting. Parents who respond constructively to children's feelings may help them develop emotional awareness and coping skills. Evidence reviewed by UNICEF also emphasizes positive parenting and sustained support for caregivers as important components of child well-being. The third theme concerns cognitive and language development. Shared reading, storytelling, guided play, and conversations can provide opportunities for children to develop language and reasoning skills. Earlier global evidence on parenting interventions found improvements across several developmental outcomes, including cognition and language, although effects varied across programs and settings. The fourth theme concerns social development and behavior.

FINDINGS

The review identifies several major findings regarding parental support and child development.First, parental support appears to be an important factor associated with children's overall development. Emotional responsiveness, educational encouragement, communication, and appropriate supervision contribute to the conditions in which children learn and grow.Second, parental involvement is associated with academic achievement, but its effects should not be overstated. Recent meta-analytic evidence indicates that the relationship can be positive while remaining relatively small. Academic outcomes are shaped by multiple influences, including educational resources, school environments, and individual differences. Third, emotional support is an important dimension of positive parenting. Children benefit from relationships in which they can communicate their concerns, receive reassurance, and learn to manage difficult emotions. Supportive discipline and respectful communication are therefore important considerations in child well-being.Fourth, parental support can encourage cognitive development through activities such as shared reading, guided play, and meaningful conversation. The evidence on parenting interventions indicates benefits across several early developmental domains, although program quality and context matter.Fifth, social development is supported by positive parent–child interactions and opportunities for children to develop independence. Parents can encourage empathy, cooperation, responsibility, and respectful communication by modeling these behaviors in daily life.Sixth, socioeconomic circumstances influence the opportunities available to families.

CONCLUSION

Parental support plays an important role in creating an environment that promotes children's cognitive, emotional, social, and academic development. Through affection, communication, encouragement, appropriate discipline, and educational involvement, parents can help children develop confidence, independence, resilience, and positive learning habits.

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Supportive family relationships can also provide children with a sense of security and opportunities to develop healthy relationships with others.The literature reviewed in this study suggests that the quality of parental involvement is particularly important. Providing children with guidance while respecting their growing independence may be more beneficial than relying on excessive control, criticism, or academic pressure. Parents can contribute to development through everyday activities such as reading together, discussing school experiences, establishing routines, and responding sensitively to children's needs.However, parental support does not operate independently of other influences. Household resources, parental stress, school quality, community conditions, and access to educational services can shape children's experiences. Therefore, supporting children requires cooperation between families, teachers, schools, and relevant community organizations.The study concludes that positive parental support should be encouraged through accessible parenting education, effective communication between schools and families, and services that respond to the needs of diverse households. Future empirical research could examine these relationships in specific age groups and cultural settings, including Pakistan, using interviews, questionnaires, or longitudinal studies. Such research would help clarify how different forms of support relate to developmental outcomes across childhood.

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