



Teacher and Family Cooperation in Fostering Life Skills in Preschool Children

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Abstract: This study explores the critical collaboration between families and teachers in fostering life skills among preschool children, highlighting the significance of strong communication and joint efforts in shaping a child's foundational skills for future development. Employing a qualitative descriptive analysis method, the study gathered insights from 16 preschool teachers and 16 parents via semi-structured interviews. Results revealed that frequent and diverse communication via face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, or digital platforms significantly enhances children's life skill acquisition by bridging school and home environments. Parents and teachers emphasized skills like critical thinking, social adaptation, self-care, and creative problem-solving, though some participants limited life skills to daily tasks, indicating a gap in broader conceptual understanding. The study underscores the crucial role of synchronized family involvement in solidifying life skills through both classroom and home practices. Teachers noted that active parental participation improved children's self-confidence, responsibility, and emotional development, while collaborative events reinforced these gains. Recommendations include expanding awareness of life skills education, enhancing communication frameworks, providing resource materials, and implementing professional development programs for teachers. These findings advocate for integrated, culturally responsive approaches to school-family partnerships, emphasizing the shared responsibility of educators and parents in equipping children with holistic developmental skills.

Keyword: Early Childhood Life Skills

Introduction

Preschool education is a period of development and training covering the time from the birth of an individual up until primary education, playing a very important role in the future of children. It is a period where physical, psychomotor, social-emotional, cognitive, and lingual development is largely completed and the personality is shaped via training provided by the family and the school (Aral, Kandır, and Yaşar, 2000). Since it is one of the most critical times of life, training provided to children at these ages leave permanent traces. Any knowledge, skills, and habits provided to children during this time have the power to shape their social and emotional life, as well as their future educational life.

The preschool period is the beginning of the education life and is of significant importance to an individual (Senemoğlu, 2012). Therefore, the skills that we want children to acquire during this period will holistically support their development. During the preschool period, many skills that are vital for physical, emotional, social, cognitive and language development are provided to children. One of them is life skills. UNESCO (2008) defined “life skills” as psycho-social skills that can be learned and applied, such as self-awareness, problem-solving, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills. The purpose of life skills training is to ensure that children are equipped to succeed in all areas later in their lives and to effectively overcome challenges and difficulties that may face them. Training offered in the early years of life has a positive impact on their later years. With this in mind, starting life skills education at an early age will strengthen the foundation of children, as well as provide them a solid basis for the higher-level life skills they will acquire later in life (Hanbury, 2008; WHO, 1997).

In the early period, family is one of the most important elements affecting children's lives. Being a vital element in child development, parents are influential on children's life starting from before they were born and throughout their lives. The nature of the bond established between a child and the parent in the preschool period determines the kind of person the child will become in the future. Parents are the first teachers of children and they provide them various opportunities to learn by exploring within the daily life, interacting with their surroundings, and demonstrating their observations through imitation (Gürşimşek, 2002). Furthermore, family is the first place where children acquire the basic skills to help them adapt to society. That is why it is very important that families support the development of children and provide them with the best possible education.

Even though family is highly influential on the development of children, it is not the only element. Another important system affecting both families and children is the school. Cooperation to be established between families and schools will support children's healthy development in a multifaceted way. By leveraging this cooperation, the parent and the teacher follow up and support the child's development together and help consolidate the learned information and share responsibilities (Sucuka and Kimmet, 2003). Positive communication between the teacher and the parents will also reflect positively on the child. Active participation of families in educational both enriches educational programs and at the same time supports the development of children and families (Gürşimşek, 2002).

Studies have shown that family participation programs have positive effects on child development in educational practices (Şahin and Turla, 1996; Seçkin ve Koç, 1997; Can Yaşar, 2001; Temel, 2001; Gürşimşek, 2003). Studies have also noted that families also receive some benefits from their active participation in educational practices (Henderson, 1987; Lontos 1992; Epstein, 1992; cited, Gürşimşek, 2003). The cooperation between the school and the family helps families to develop a positive attitude towards the school by allowing them to understand the purpose of education and education programs and how they are implemented. Parents, who take measures to support and enhance the learning of their children improve their individual development and academic success (Kağıtçıbaşı, Bekman, and Sunar; 1993).

School education has an important role in providing life skills to children (Murthy, 2016). In addition to life skills acquired in the family, it is quite important that schools also include methods and practices that support life skills in their curricula. It is very important that teachers include practices that support children's life skills in the classroom, and parents also engage in activities that support and reinforce children's life skills at home. For this reason, teachers should constantly cooperate with families and follow the development of children. Efforts towards including parents in education clearly show the important role parents play in the education of children.

With this in mind, the purpose of this study was to establish a scientific perspective on this issue by identifying the views of educators and parents on how they establish cooperation in providing children with life skills.

Method

Research Model

The descriptive analysis method, which is a qualitative research method, was employed in this study where the provision of life skills to preschool children is analyzed in the context of the cooperation between educators and families. The descriptive analysis method consists of four stages, namely creating a framework for descriptive analysis,

processing the data according to the thematic framework, identifying the findings, and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). The descriptive analysis method was preferred as it offers the researchers the possibility to determine the themes in advance and organize and interpret the data according to these themes.

Study Group

The study group consists of 16 preschool teachers working in public and private preschools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in various provinces across Turkey and 16 parents, whose children attend these schools. The purposeful sampling method was preferred to determine the teachers and families in the study group. "Demographic information about the educational background of parents" and "demographic information about the professional experience of teachers" in the study group are shown in tables below (See *Table 1 and Table 2*).

Table 1.

Information about the educational background of parents in the study group.

Educational Background			
Primary School Graduate	High School Graduate	Bachelor's Degree	Master's or Doctorate Degree
		Parent 1	
	Parent 6	Parent 3	Parent 2
	Parent 11	Parent 5	Parent 4
	Parent 12	Parent 7	
Parent 10	Parent 13	Parent 8	
		Parent 9	
		Parent 14	
		Parent 15	
		Parent 16	

Table 2.

Information about the professional experience of teachers in the study group.

Professional Experience			
1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 years and more
Teacher 2	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 1
Teacher 3	Teacher 16	Teacher 8	Teacher 11
Teacher 6		Teacher 15	Teacher 14
Teacher 7			
Teacher 9			
Teacher 10			
Teacher 12			
Teacher 13			

Data Collection and Ethics Procedure

Semi-structured interview forms were developed in order to determine how parents and teachers cooperate with each other for the life skills education of children in pre-school, the activities performed by teachers for family involvement within the scope of life skills education, the recommendations of families for family involvement activities, and the contribution of this cooperation to the life skills education of children. In order to collect data, two forms that were developed by the researchers were used, namely "The Interview Form to Evaluate the Views of Parents on Educator-Family Cooperation in Providing Life Skills Education to Children in the Preschool Period" and "The Interview Form to Evaluate the Views of Teachers on Educator-Family Cooperation in Providing Life Skills Education to Children in the Preschool Period." Both forms contain open-

ended questions aimed at determining the opinions of parents and teachers. The items in the interview forms are provided in *Table 3*.

Table 3.

Interview form items for parents and teachers

Parent Interview Form Items	Teacher Interview Form Items
1. How do you communicate with your child's teacher to improve your child's life skills?	1. How do you communicate with the families of children in your classroom in supporting their life skills?
2. What kind of recommendations can you offer on the involvement of families in activities that improve your child's life skills?	2. What kind of activities do you perform for involving families in activities that support the life skills of the children in your classroom?
3. How do you think that your cooperation with your child's teacher contributes to the acquisition of life skills?	3. How do you think that your cooperation with the families of children in your classroom contributes to the acquisition of life skills?

Parents and teachers who voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview were handed out interview forms to give them the opportunity to write their thoughts as they wished and were asked to answer the items on the form. Before they filled out the forms, parents and teachers were given information about the study and the fact that the information they would provide would not be used for any other purpose other than this study and that their personal information would be kept confidential.

Analysis of Data

After the completion of the interviews, the data obtained were transferred to the electronic environment. All data were analyzed by taking into account the principles of descriptive analysis technique, a qualitative data analysis method (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). A total of six themes were created, three for teachers and three for parents, to guide the breakdown of the data obtained from the interview forms and writing of the findings. When developing the themes, attention was paid to make sure that they are relevant to the purpose of the research and inclusive of the data. The responses of teachers and parents to the questions were organized and interpreted to group them under the themes developed in line with the research content within the framework of the principles of descriptive analysis technique. The themes are specified one by one under the findings section and arranged so that the findings related to a specific theme are listed under that theme. In line with the subject integrity, the findings were reflected in the form of direct quotations using code names. The obtained data were analyzed independently to come to final conclusions.

Validity and Reliability

To improve the validity of the study, the research items were first sent to experts for their opinion. The items were sent to three independent experts experienced in qualitative research and preschool education and the items were reviewed in line with their views. In addition, in order to further improve the validity of the research, the peer reading method employed and a scientist, who had never been involved in the research process and is working in the field of qualitative research and preschool education, was asked for opinions. The purpose here is to gain a different perspective by looking at the impact the research has on people who are not involved with it (Creswell, 2014).

The (a) transcription reliability and the (b) coding reliability were analyzed to ensure the reliability of the research. 25% of the transcribed data were transcribed by a field expert to make a comparison. In addition, all the data in the research were coded again by an expert not involved in the writing of the research, as a result of which coding reliability

was achieved. As a result of the reliability analyses, the coding reliability was found to be 93%. Codes that were not agreed upon were not included in the research.

Findings

- **Findings of the Interviews Held with Parents**

Theme 1: Ways for Parents to Communicate with Teachers in Supporting Life Skills

Parent 6, parent 7, and parent 12 stated that they communicated with teachers face-to-face or through the phone to support the life skills of their children. Parent 7 said, *"Throughout the term, we exchange ideas during PTA meetings, on the phone, or face-to-face."* Parent 12 said, *"We talk face-to-face or through the WhatsApp group created by the teacher."*

Parent 5 and parent 16 stated that they were in frequent contact with the teachers to support the life skills of their children and that they focused on topics that their children were interested in and liked. Parent 5 said, *"I prefer to be in constant communication. I get information about what my child likes to do more and focus on that area."*

Parent 3 and parent 16 stated communicating with teachers during PTA meetings so as to support the life skills of their children.

With regard to his opinion on the topic, *parent 16 said, "I often communicate the topics my child is interested in and excited for to the teacher so that we can evaluate the fields of interest and skills of my child from the perspective of the teacher. I ensured communication this way during school meetings or family involvement activities."* Regarding the topic, parent 3 said, *"I participate in parent-teacher meetings. I get information about my child's education and development at school and give information to the teacher about my child's situation at home."*

Parent 11 and parent 13 stated that they could not communicate enough with the teacher to support the life skills of their children. On that issue, parent 11 said, *"I cannot communicate enough. I do not have the time."*

Parent 9 stated that he communicated with the teacher in order to support the life skills of his child, in order to consolidate the activities carried out in the classroom at home. Parent 9 said, *"I try to learn more about the activities my child does with the teacher so that I can repeat them at home. I hope that this is useful for his personal development."*

In order to support the life skills of their children, parent 10 and parent 15 stated that they establish contact with the teacher when there is a problem with their children. Parent 10 said, *"We exchange information when we have problems. Otherwise, the teacher supports us."* Parent 15 said, *"When he makes mistakes, errors, or has fears, we share this with his teacher, jointly decide what we need to act and what we need to say, and act accordingly."*

Parent 2 stated communicating with the teacher often to support the life and self care skills of his/her child. On the issue, parent 2 said, *"I ask the teacher to regularly support the activities my child should be doing by himself but having difficulty to do so at home."*

Parent 4 stated that he met with the teacher daily to support his child's life skills, and parent 8 stated that he was in contact once a week.

Regarding the subject, parent 4 said that she meets with the teacher daily to get information and guidance about the courses and activities that are appropriate for her child at school and in the classroom to support the life skills. Parent 4 said, *"I meet with the teacher on the daily to follow the correctness of his actions at school. I contact the teacher to get information and guidance about the courses or other activities available to him at the school."*

Parent 1 and parent 8 stated that they receive information about the development of their children from the teacher in order to support the life skills of their children and move forward accordingly. Parent 1 said, *"First, I get information from the teacher about the development of my child, think about what I need to do, and move forward accordingly."* Parent 8 said, *"Once a week, I talk to the teacher about the activities and get information about his cognitive and physical development. His negative behavior in and out of school are observed and technical support is received, if necessary."*

Parent 14 said that he communicated face to face with the teacher in order to support the life skills of his child by telling the teacher about his child's behavior, reactions, skills, and the games he plays. Parent 14 said, *"I introduce my child to his teacher by telling the teacher about his behavior and reactions in the family, the games he plays, and the things he is skilled at. I leave the rest to the discretion of the teacher. Because if he gets to know my child, he will be able to improve his/her skills much better."*

Theme 2: Recommendations on the Involvement of Parents to Support Life Skills

Parent 6 and parent 11 provided recommendations on the involvement of families in supporting the life skills of children, while they mostly offered suggestions for supporting their daily life skills. On the issue, parent 6 said, *"Activities may be performed on thanking, not buying harmful food, spending money, etc."* Parent 11 said, *"Daily life skills can be given more weight."*

With regard to the efforts to involve families to support the life skills of children, parent 8 and parent 9 offered recommendations on performing game-related activities. On the issue, parent 9 recommended that *"various game-related activities be performed"*.

With regard to supporting the life skills of children, parent 2 and parent 8 offered recommendations for supporting both daily life skills and motor skills. Parent 2 offered recommendations on *"plating flowers, folding clothes, baking cookies, squeezing oranges, getting dressed, hanging clothes, buttoning, and emptying cups"*. Parent 8 offered recommendations saying, *"We can play games involving the child. We can include them in household chores (cleaning tables, dusting, etc.). Or play games that are appropriate to their age and that will improve their motor skills (puzzle, passing beads on a rope, etc.)"*.

Parent 12 did not offer a recommendation on involving parents to support the life skills of children.

Parent 1 and parent 16 offered recommendations for supporting the daily life skills and self-care skills to involve families in supporting the life skills of children. Parent 1 offered a recommendation saying, *"After identifying the necessary skills based on the age group, I think it is appropriate to engage in life support activities such as picking up toys, making the bed, eating on one's own, and brushing the teeth without help."* Parent 16 said, *"As a mother of a preschooler, in my first activity, I was involved in activities that contribute to the fine/gross motor development and healthy eating such as baking cookies and fermenting yoghurt. In the second activity, I attracted the attention of children on self-care skills and its importance by telling them a story on microbes and hand-washing. We can perform such activities."*

Parent 7 and parent 14 presented recommendations for supporting the social, mental and motor skills of their children in family involvement activities in order to support their life skills. Parent 7 said, *"Activities that require collaboration and problem-solving can be performed with family. Like puzzles, painting, and solving riddles, etc."* Parent 14 said, *Trust-themed stories, hand-mind games that build skill, and examples of behavior can be provided by the family."*

With regard to the activities that involve families to support the life skills of children, parent 3, parent 13, parent 10, parent 14, and parent 15 recommended that the school and families be more in cooperation and be more informed through meetings, face-to-face meetings or phone calls, training sessions, weekend activities, and home reports. Parent 3 said, *"Reports can be sent home, information can be provided on the phone, or training sessions can be delivered."* Parent 13 said, *"We can have PTA meetings more often. Or have more occasions to bring the school and families together."* Parent 10 said, *"There could be no education without families. Therefore, teachers should support families."* Parent 14 said, *"To involve families, we can organize activities during the weekends, or get together in nature or indoors."* Parent 15 recommended that *meetings be held more often and that observations about children be shared more often through individual meetings"*.

In order to support the life skills of children, parent 4 and parent 5 recommended to take part in family involvement activities with their children. Parent 4 said, *"In activities to be done together, children can also be given a task and guided to perform this task."* Parent 5 recommended to *"take part in activities together"*.

Theme 3: The Contribution of the Cooperation with Teachers to the Life-Skills Acquisition of Children from the Perspective of Parents

Parent 7, parent 8, and parent 14 stated that their cooperation with the teacher contributes to their children's acquisition of life skills in the field of social skills. Parent 7 said, *"His self-confidence will improve and he will acquire life skills more easily."* Parent 8 said, *"It has a positive impact. The teacher has a lot to do in making a child more self-confident who can express himself comfortably."*

Parent 2 and parent 6 stated that their collaboration with the teacher contributed to the acquisition of their children's life skills in the areas of self-care skills and social skills. Regarding the topic, parent 2 said, *"Performing activities that require self-care skills when playing games support development. I think that cleaning up the classroom or helping out the teacher contributes to responsibilities."* Parent 6 said, *"Of course, it has had major contributions. In school, he/she learned to share, regularly brush his/her teeth, engage in activities, and be responsible."*

Regarding the subject, parent 12 stated that their cooperation with the teacher contributed to the acquisition of their child's life skills in the areas of self-care skills and language skills. Parent 12 said, *"We communicate better with him. He sleeps and eats much better, more regularly. He can better communicate with and talk to his friends."*

Parent 3, parent 9 and parent 15 stated that their cooperation with teachers contributed to their children's life skills acquisition in the areas of cognitive skills and social skills. Parent 3 said, *"He can better adjust to social life and improve his academic success."* Parent 9 said, *"I think that it can improve his self-confidence and success."* Parent 15, *"The child can better understand what should and should not be done. He will be aware of his responsibilities and make more effort to fulfill them."*

Parent 1, parent 11 and parent 13 stated that their cooperation with the teacher had positive contributions to their children's life skills acquisition. Parent 13 said, *"I think it has had a positive contribution."*

Parent 10 stated that their cooperation with the teacher has contributed and supported the child's acquisition of life skills. Parent 10 said, *"I think it has improved my child."*

Regarding the subject, parent 5 stated that their cooperation with the teacher has positive contributions to their child's life skills acquisition, while at the same time stating that the cooperation they have established with the teacher will have positive effects on the child. Parent 5 said, *"Of course, it will have a positive contribution. The fact that the child loves and respects his teacher and sees that the teacher is in communication with the family will have a positive effect on the child."*

Parent 4, one of the parents who participated in the interview, stated that the contributions of the collaboration with the teacher to her child's acquisition of life skills were the holistic observations made with the teacher and reaching a joint decision as a result of these observations. Parent 4 said, *"As a family, we may not be able to define each and every aspect of our child. Same goes for the teacher. By way of cooperation, all skills and shortcomings of the child can be defined and the child can be guided accordingly."*

Parent 16 stated that their cooperation with the teacher had positive contributions to their child's life skills acquisition, while at the same time stating that the joint decisions they made with the teacher helped their child understand and focus on the fact that the truth has not changed in life. Parent 16 said, *"It has had a positive contribution. Our common behavior with his teacher in his first social status, except for his status next to his parents, created a very clear situation with regard to principles. It was beneficial for him to focus on seeing that there are things that are common at home and at school, knowing that there are absolute truths for a disciplined life."*

In general, it is safe to say that parents who participated in the interview stated that their cooperation with the teacher had a positive contribution to their children's life skills acquisition.

- **Findings of Interviews with Teachers**

Theme 1: Teachers' Styles of Communication with Families to Support Children's Life Skills

Teacher 13 and teacher 15 stated that they communicate with families face to face or by phone in order to support the life skills of children. Teacher 13 said, *"I communicate with families face-to-face or by phone, telling them about the skills that children can or should develop, and inform them about the activities that can be performed."* Teacher 15 gave information on the types of communication he uses and said, *"I talk to them individually. I inform them via WhatsApp. I make calls."*

Regarding the subject, teacher 16 stated that he provided face-to-face communication with families in order to support the life skills of children. Teacher 16 said, *"I prefer meeting face-to-face. I give recommendations on activities that could be done at home that support skills."*

Teacher 12 and teacher 14 stated that they provided communication by holding bilateral meetings and parent meetings with families in order to support children's life skills. Teacher 12 said, *"I try to convey what life skills are, how they are acquired and what they can do to support these skills face-to-face in my meetings with parents."* Teacher 14 said, *"I ask parents for help in consolidating and supporting the educational program I implement at school at home and hold parent meetings and bilateral meetings."*

Teacher 3, teacher 4 and teacher 10 stated that they constantly communicate with families in order to support the life skills of children.

Regarding the subject, teacher 4 stated that she constantly communicates with families in order to support the life skills of children, ensuring communication by taking part in various activities at home and at school. Teacher 4 said, *"I am in constant contact with families. We perform various activities at home and at school to support life skills."*

Teacher 10 stated that she constantly communicates with families in order to support the life skills of children, gives weekly feedback, schedules her meetings to an earlier time if necessary, or holds them more frequently. Teacher 10 said, *"I do my best to remain in contact with families. I give them weekly feedback. If there is an unusual situation, I schedule my meetings to an earlier time or hold them more frequently. I provide necessary information and make sure that they understand and implement it."*

Teacher 3 stated that she constantly communicates with families in order to support the life skills of children, participates in family involvement efforts, and ensures communication by meeting with parents, when necessary. Teacher 3 said, *"I meet with parents frequently. We involve families in some activities. When necessary, I meet with parents individually and tell them that separate actions need to be taken."*

Teacher 8 stated that she communicates with families by giving various homework assignments to support the life skills of children. Parent 8 said, *"I make sure that parents support children through homework assignments."*

Regarding the subject, teacher 1 and teacher 5 stated that they communicate by organizing family involvement activities to support the life skills of children. Parent 5 said, *"I hold activities that involve families."*

Teacher 1 stated that she was in touch with parents by organizing family involvement activities, sending activity pages, and making suggestions at parent meetings to support the life skills of children. Teacher 1 said, *"We hold family involvement activities. We send worksheets and ask them to support their children. We explain in detail at parent meetings how they can focus on the objects around them in their home and turn them into activities."*

Teacher 2, teacher 6, teacher 7, teacher 9 and teacher 11 stated that they communicate with families to support children's life skills by explaining the importance of supporting life skills education and offering recommendations on what they can do at home. Teacher 11 said, *"I tell parents that their children can eat by themselves, put on and take off their clothes, pick up their toys in their rooms, do their homework by themselves and that they can ask for their children's help for chores (cooking and baking) or for minor repair works."* Teacher 9 said, *"I focus on daily life skills. I start with self-care activities in the first weeks of school and work towards their internalization. At a PTA meetings, I tell parents that I want these activities to become the responsibility of children and turn into a habit (washing hands, brushing teeth, nail care, combing hair, dressing, wearing shoes, cleaning the classroom, cleaning tables, sweeping floors, etc). I explain in detail that supporting children's daily life skills, especially in the classroom as well as at home, will contribute greatly. The parents also support me."*

Regarding the subject, Teacher 7 stated that she communicated with families in order to support the life skills of children by explaining the importance of supporting life skills education in a constructive and positive way and by reminding them via newsletters and other communication tools from time to time. Teacher 7 said, *"I inform families on how important life skills are for the development of children and how they can impact their lives, and in doing so, I try to express it in a constructive and positive way. I bring these issues up from time to time through newsletters or other channels of communication."*

Teacher 6 stated that he communicated with families by telling them how to communicate with their children, giving them recommendations on what they can do to improve the skills of their children, and informing them about the importance of supporting the skills taught at school to improve the life skills of children. Teacher 6 said, *"In order to support the life skills of children, I advise families to listen to their children attentively. This will enable children to feel relaxed and acknowledged. I also ask them to give children responsibility at home on things they can do to support their self-confidence. I also note the importance of giving children the opportunity to solve the problems they may face in everyday life. I underline the importance of allowing children to perform self-care by themselves. I do these things at school, and I tell them that these things should be supported at home to further consolidate the education."*

Teacher 2 stated that in order to support the life skills of children, she communicated with families by discussing with them about the skills their children can and cannot do, and talking about what they can do to support these skills. Teacher 2 said, *"I get together with families to talk about what their children can and cannot do, I have them repeat the skills they can do, and support the ones they cannot do. I want them to repeat the same activities at home."*

Theme 2: Activities and Methods Used in Life Skills by Teachers for Family Involvement

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 1 stated that she carries out projects and delivers training seminars. Teacher 1 said, *"We carry out projects. We give project instructions and ask them to carry them out at home. We sometimes ask them to demonstrate them in school. We deliver training seminars to help them cope with problems."*

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 9 stated that he sends newsletters to families and invites families to class activities. Teacher 9 said, *"I send newsletters about giving the child responsibilities for household chores. For example, tasks such as setting the table for dinner belong to children at home. In the case of family participation in the classroom, usually, mothers come, and the children are tasked to help out their mothers. And they do."*

Regarding the subject, teacher 16 stated that she gives out homework assignments while specifying the activities related to life skills and the methods they use within the scope of family involvement. Teacher 16 said, *"To complement the activities we do in the classroom, I give homework assignments to be done with families. Then, I ask these homeworks to be brought back to school."*

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 6 stated that she gives a lot of weight to role-play and takes time for parents to read books after role-playing. Teacher 6 said, *"I give a lot of weight to role-playing with families in the classroom. I think that role-playing supports all areas of development of children, but also further supports their social and emotional development. I also allow parents to read books after role-playing."*

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 10 stated that he performs briefing, family involvement activities, and hand-in-hand participation. Teacher 10 said, *"I hold briefings, family involvement activities, and hand-in-hand participation. Hand-in-hand participation is a method I use to understand children much better through empathy."*

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 5 said that he gives parents a topic about which they are asked to do a presentation with their children in the classroom. Teacher 5 said, *"I hand out a species of tree to each parent and ask them to deliver a presentation with their child in the classroom."*

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 14 said that he holds family involvement activities throughout the year in line with a plan. Teacher 14 said that *"family involvement activities are held throughout the year in the classroom in line with a plan."*

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 4 said that she focuses on daily life skills, informing parents about life skills and the activities to do at home. Teacher 4 said *"I advise them to acquire daily life skills, such as unbuttoning and buttoning their clothes, tying their*

shoelaces, stringing beads on a string, etc. *I inform parents about the life skills expected of children according to their age and about the activities we perform in the classroom. I also tell them about the activities they can do together at home."*

With regard to the activities and methods used in life skills and family involvement, teacher 2 and teacher 12 stated that they asked families to practice the skills practiced at school at home to further consolidate them. Teacher 2 said, *"To support life skills, I want to make sure that they consider home to be an extension of school and want them to do what we do at school at home with their families."*

With regard to the life skills activities and methods used for family involvement, teacher 12 stated that he asked families to practice at home the skills they practice at school and also noted that they cooperate with the counseling unit of the school and send monthly newsletters to home. Teacher 12 said, *"The families will always stay with children and that is why they are the most important part of this and their active involvement is very important for us because it will not be lasting and effective if it is not supported and consolidated both in family and at school. I develop my activities in a way that they can be applied both at school and at home. The counseling department at the school and the monthly newsletters we send home are also very effective."*

With regard to life skills activities and methods used for family involvement, teacher 3, teacher 7, teacher 8, teacher 9, teacher 11, teacher 13, and teacher 15 stated that they involve parents in classroom activities. Teacher 8 said, *"In order to ensure parental involvement, I ask them to perform the activity (experiment, game, singing, role-playing, etc.) they prepared with their children in the classroom."* Teacher 13 said, *"I invite families to the classroom in activities that can improve the life skills of children, we plan activities that can be done together and ensure the active participation of children. I also give out tasks to be performed at home."* Teacher 15 said, *"I involve families in experiments and games. I get the help of mothers for trips."* Teacher 7 said, *"In order to support every aspect of children's development, I hold family involvement activities every week. I'm trying to make sure that both me and parents coming to activities are role models for them. I make things more fun by including skills in activities. I see that they learn much easier like this."*

With regard to the life skills activities and methods used for family involvement, teacher 11 stated that he involves parents in classroom activities and provides to them recommendations on the things they can do at home. Teacher 11 said, *"In family involvement activities, I tell parents that they can take part in life skills such as baking cakes or cookies, pickling, or fermenting yoghurt. I pick one student to be the child of the week, the family of whom is invited to class one day to perform activities that I mentioned."*

With regard to the life skills activities and methods used for family involvement, teacher 3 said that he involves parents in classroom activities and gives out design assignments to be done at home. Teacher 3 said, *"Family involvement makes activities more meaningful and lasting for children. I distribute activities to families for certain topics. Parents come to the classroom, tell the children about the activity, and practice. Thanks to this, both parents and students develop a sense of responsibility. In certain subjects, I give design homeworks to be done at home. I get positive results."*

Regarding the subject, teacher 9 stated that she includes parents in classroom activities with regard to the activities related to life skills and the methods they use within the scope of family involvement, and sends newsletters about parents giving responsibility to children at home. Teacher 9 said *"I send newsletters about giving the child responsibilities that he can do with the family. For example, tasks such as setting the table for dinner belong to children at home. In the case of family participation in the classroom, usually, mothers come, and the children are tasked to help out their mothers. And they fulfill this task."*

Theme 3: The Contribution of Cooperation with Families to the Acquisition of Life Skills from the Perspective of Teachers

Teacher 13 stated that his cooperation with families offers benefits and is complementary to children's life skills acquisition. Teacher 13 said, *"I think it is quite beneficial in developing the life skills of children. It is complementary for the child that it is supported both at home and at school."*

Teacher 12 and teacher 14 stated that their cooperation with families would have a lasting impact on the acquisition of life skills by children. Teacher 12 said, *"Raising the awareness of families and keeping them involved means that we have an extension at home, and we may be in the lives of children for one year, but their families will always be there. Their cooperation will make the skills of children more lasting."*

Teacher 14 stated that her cooperation with families has positive contributions to children's life skills acquisition, while at the same time adding that it has effective, productive and lasting impact. Teacher 14 said, *"I think it will have a positive impact. Education provided through school-family cooperation will be effective, productive, and long-lasting."*

Regarding the subject, teacher 4, teacher 5, teacher 7, teacher 9 and teacher 15 stated that their cooperation with families supports the development of self-confidence in the acquisition of life skills.

Teacher 4 and teacher 7 said that their cooperation with families has a positive impact on the acquisition of life skills and that they can express themselves more freely and become more self-confident. Regarding the issue, teacher 4 said, *"I think it has positive impacts. They are able to express themselves more freely and their self-confidence improves."* Teacher 7 said, *"I think that it supports all areas of children's development, children can express themselves more easily and become self-confident, and it can make their future life easier."*

Teacher 5 stated that his cooperation with families contributes to the development of self-confidence and language of children and supports their creativity. Teacher 5 said, *"It supports self-confidence, language development, and creativity in children."*

Teacher 5 and teacher 9 stated that their cooperation with families contribute to the development of children's creativity in the acquisition of life skills.

Regarding the issue, teacher 6 and teacher 7 stated that their cooperation with families supports all areas of development in the acquisition of life skills. Teacher 6 said, *"Education starts with family and continues in preschool. Cooperation with*

families not only in life skills but also in the development of all areas of development accelerates the development of children."

Teacher 8 stated that the collaboration with families helped children learn life skills more quickly through experience and that parents' role modeling both at home and at school improved children's skills. Teacher 8 said, *"Children learn hands-on activities much faster. The fact that the family is a role model at home and at school supports this."*

Teacher 3, teacher 9 and teacher 11 stated that their cooperation with families improves the sense of responsibility of children in the acquisition of life skills.

Regarding the subject, teacher 1, teacher 11 and teacher 15 stated that their cooperation with families makes children happy. Teacher 1 said, *"We observe them being happy individuals who are enjoying themselves. And we know that happy individuals learn much better."* Teacher 15 said, *"Children become happy when they see their families at school. They become more self-confident."*

Teacher 11 stated that his cooperation with families supports children's happiness, success, creativity, emotional, social, cognitive, physical development and existing skills in acquiring life skills. Teacher 11 said, *"It supports the happiness and success of children. It helps them to become responsible individuals. It contributes to their emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development greatly. It improves their existing skills."*

Teacher 9 stated that his cooperation with families contributes to the strengthening of their sense of responsibility, improvement of their self-confidence, development of their creativity and helps them become more free and good. Teacher 9 said, *"Their sense of responsibility strengthens. The tasks that convey the message "You can do it, I trust you" improve their self-confidence. It is very important they they feel that they exist and are useful in the classroom. The fact that they are able to do things makes it easier to act on their own. Children become freer as they become less dependent on adults. Children who are free become more creative and they adapt to the classroom much better. In short, children become better as they succeed."*

Regarding the subject, teacher 2 and teacher 16 stated that their cooperation with families has positive contributions to children's life skills acquisition, while at the same time, strengthening the skills learned at school at home makes it easier for children to acquire skills and internalize them. Regarding the subject, teacher 2 said, *"Based on my observations, I can say that life skills can turn into practice much easier when children and their families can strike a balance between school and home without separating the two."* Teacher 16 said, *"I have positive views. Because it is easier for the child to internalize the skills he learns in the classroom into his life when he practices them at home. These skills are grasped much easier when they are supported both at school and at home."*

Teacher 10 underlined the importance of cooperation between families and teachers by noting the fact that any disagreement between families and teachers may confuse children and damage their skills as children take them as role models. Regarding the subject, teacher 10 said, *"I think that cooperation with families is important for children in every way. A child takes his parents and teacher as role models during the preschool period. He can get confused in case*

of conflict or disagreement. Which can damage his life skills. That is why families and teachers are inseparable."

Teacher 3 stated that cooperation with families heightens the sense of responsibility of families, children develop a positive attitude towards their families in the acquisition of life skills and the ability to express themselves in society. Regarding the subject, teacher 3 said, *"In the activities, families also learn many things. Families' sense of responsibility heightens. Children, on the other hand, feel proud of the work they do with their families, which feeds their positive feelings towards their families. Both children and parents feel the joy of their efforts coming to fruition. Children improve their ability to express themselves in society."*

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of the research, most of the parents who participated in the interview stated that they were in frequent contact with teachers in order to improve their children's life skills. Child, family, and teacher are the building blocks of the education system. The effectiveness of educational systems depends on the strong communication and collaboration among these building blocks. Families, in particular, need to actively participate in the process. For this reason, the school administration should pay attention to the family-teacher relationship (Akbaşlı and Kavak, 2008). The more effective the communication that families establish with teachers, the more effective the education to be provided to the children will be. For this reason, frequency communication between families and teachers can be decisive in understanding the nature of the education to be provided to children.

It is noteworthy that in the research, only two of the parents stated that they could not communicate with the teacher enough to improve their children's life skills. Parental involvement strengthens the relationship between the school and the family and improves the relationship between parents and the teacher and the school environment, contributing to the development of life skills of children so that they can maintain healthy and rewarding relationships (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011). From this point of view, it is safe to say that it will be effective for parents to maintain a constant communication with teachers to improve the life skills of their children.

One of the parents stated contacting the teacher once a week, while two stated that they get in touch only when there is a problem with their child. In the study by Çelenk (2003) it was found that "children of parents who are on the same page about the program and in regular communication with the school, and offer educational support to their children with this understanding have better academic performance." Accordingly, it can be concluded that communicating with teachers only in case of a problem would render the process ineffective and negatively affect children's performance.

It was found that parents provided recommendations for improving motor skills and daily life skills with regard to family involvement activities in providing life skills to children. Life skills include pro-social skills such as decision making, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, empathy, coping with stress, cooperation, respect, trust, tolerance, sharing, conflict resolution, self-awareness, and forming and maintaining friendships (Yıldırım and Temel, 2018; UNESCO, 2008; Hanbury, 2008). In the light of this information, it is safe to say that parents do not have sufficient knowledge about what life skills cover.

Another striking finding of the research is that only one parent did not offer a recommendation on family involvement activities in providing life skills to children. Based on other statements, it can be concluded that this parent lacks sufficient knowledge about the subject.

Five parents involved in the research offered suggestions on family involvement activities such as parent meetings, individual meetings, participating in activities, conferences, and submission of reports to home. However, family involvement activities should not only consist of at-school activities. Activities performed at home should also be considered to be a part of family involvement activities. In the study of Temel (2001), it is noted that the involvement of parents in education is effective in consolidating the knowledge and skills gained by ensuring continuity between school and home and in improving success as a result of ensuring continuity in education.

Almost all of the parents who participated in the interview stated that their cooperation with the teacher had a positive contribution to their children's life skills acquisition. Three parents stated that it contributed to children in the field of social skills, two in the field of self-care and social skills, one in the field of self-care and language skills, three in the field of cognitive and social skills. Studies have shown that family involvement activities contribute to children's social development, their self-care skills, and academic performance and improve the relations between family, child, and teacher (Gürşimşek, 2002; Arabacı and Aksoy, 2005; Miedel and Reynolds, 1999; Kohl et al., 2000; Feinberg, 2001; İnal, 2006; Güven, 2011). It was observed that the cooperation of parents with teachers in order to support life skills does not offer an explanation that it supports all areas of development of children.

According to the results of the research, the majority of the teachers who participated in the interview stated that they were in frequent contact with parents in order to improve their children's life skills. Based on the view that the first educators of children are parents, an integrative approach should be adopted between the education provided in school and at home so that families support and contribute to the education of children (Şahin and Ünver, 2005). At this point, teachers have great duties. It is important that teachers provide education in collaboration with parents by being in constant contact with them.

In the research, it is noted that some teachers use only the expression of daily life skills in their activities aimed at supporting life skills within the scope of family involvement. There is a variety of skills within the scope of life skills education. Rubane (2000) considers life skills as critical thinking, problem solving, social adaptation and cooperation, being aware of one's own emotions and characteristics, managing stress by resisting psychological pressure, making one's own decisions about their lives, knowingly defending one's rights, and communicating effectively (cit. Lidaka & Lanka, 2014). In the light of this information, it is safe to say that life skills are not only about daily life skills and that teachers are not completely knowledgeable about the content and applications of life skills education.

Another noteworthy finding in the research is that some teachers stated that life skills education only supports the development of self-confidence or creativity in children. However, life skills education contributes to the development of numerous skills such as positive self-perception, effective problem solving, decision-making, and effective communication (Akfirat & Kezer, 2016).

Given the results obtained from interviews, the priority should be to raise the awareness of families and teachers on life skills education. The awareness of families should be

raised on the fact that life skills education should not only be left to schools, they are also responsible, and high-quality education can only be achieved through family involvement. Also, the awareness of teachers should be raised on life skills education and they should be made aware of the importance of being in cooperation with families to equip children with effective education. For this purpose, both families and teachers should be provided with informative seminars, conferences and educational programs, and their awareness should be raised about life skills education. This way, the awareness of families and teachers on life skills will be raised much more effectively and they will be able to answer the question, "How can we more effectively deliver life skills education to children?"

Recommendations

Based on the findings and analysis of the cooperation between teachers and families in providing life skills to preschool children, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Enhancing Teacher-Family Communication:**

Teachers and families should maintain regular and varied communication channels (including face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and digital platforms like WhatsApp) to strengthen collaboration for life skills acquisition. Schools should implement structured communication strategies, such as scheduled meetings and feedback mechanisms, to ensure consistent interaction. Support from school administrations could include organizing parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings and creating digital solutions for real-time communication updates.

- **Raising Awareness on Life Skills Education:**

It is crucial to expand the conceptual understanding of life skills among both teachers and families. Training programs should be organized to highlight that life skills go beyond daily skills (e.g., cooking, cleaning) and encompass domains such as critical thinking, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, and self-awareness (UNESCO, 2008; Hanbury, 2008). Teachers must be well-informed about life skills and its broader application to better guide parents.

- **Integrative Family Participation:**

Family involvement should not be limited to classroom activities but also extend into home practices aligned with school activities. Schools and teachers should provide families with guidelines, such as newsletters or recorded tutorials, on how to engage children in life-skills-enhancing tasks at home (Temel, 2001). Activities might include collaborative problem-solving, creative thinking exercises, and social behavior modeling at home.

- **Focused Professional Development:**

Teachers should receive continuous professional development on life skills education that emphasizes holistic approaches. Workshops or seminars could introduce contemporary methods for integrating life skills into daily lessons, with particular attention paid to fostering collaboration with families. Topics might include effective family involvement strategies, handling discrepancies between school and home practices, and the importance of synchronized methods for skill reinforcement.

- Institutional Support for Educational Partnerships:

Policies at the institutional level should support the establishment of sustainable school-family collaboration frameworks. Schools should regularly organize joint events, such as family workshops, weekend activities, or activity-specific projects involving parents and children. These initiatives will create opportunities for shared learning experiences and foster a sense of collective responsibility.

- Providing Tools and Resources for Families:

Educational institutions should distribute resource materials, such as activity guides and instructional booklets that outline practical strategies families can adopt to contribute to their children's life skills development. Hands-on activities, such as storytelling, role-playing, and creative games involving both parents and children, should be emphasized as tools to reinforce learning at home.

- Monitoring and Evaluating Progress:

A structured mechanism should be introduced to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of teacher-family cooperation in life skills education. Feedback from parents and teachers should be collected systematically, and adjustments to educational practices should be made based on measurable outcomes, such as improvements in children's self-care, social, and emotional development.

- Promoting Positive Learning Environments:

Both at home and in school, children should be encouraged to take on responsibilities and make decisions to strengthen their life skills and confidence. Parents and teachers should collaborate to ensure consistency in providing positive reinforcement, fostering independence, and creating opportunities for children to practice these skills in meaningful situations.

- Culturally Responsive Practices:

Considering the diversity of family backgrounds, schools should implement culturally responsive approaches in life skills education. Family involvement strategies should respect cultural differences and tailor activities to resonate with individual family values and dynamics.

- Organized Collaborative Events:

Schools should organize events that bring parents and teachers together to exchange ideas and share successful practices. For example, joint projects like family-friendly competitions, educational seminars, or collaborative art and science projects can strengthen bonds and align goals.

By implementing these recommendations, schools, teachers, and families can establish a cohesive framework for fostering life skills in preschool children. A collaborative and informed approach will enhance not only children's development but also the relationships among educators, parents, and the broader school community.

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