

Early reading at home and its impact on children's language skills: Effective synergy between family and school.

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Summary

Early reading at home is fundamental for children's language development, as it fosters skills such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, and oral expression. Activities such as reading aloud and talking about books not only strengthen learning, but also bonding between parents and children. In addition, an appropriate family environment, with access to a variety of books adapted to children's interests, encourages positive reading habits from an early age. Collaboration between family and school amplifies these benefits through effective communication and joint activities, such as workshops and reading clubs. However, challenges remain related to lack of access to resources and low participation by some families. Educational technologies can complement these practices but require adequate supervision. Equity in access to resources is essential for all children to develop their linguistic and personal potential.

Keywords: Reading, children, home, voice, book

I. INTRODUCTION

Early reading at home is fundamental for the development of language skills in early childhood education. According to López and Martínez (2022), early exposure to written language in the home environment enhances vocabulary and reading comprehension in the first years of life. This process establishes the basis for successful learning in later stages.

Family interactions around reading strengthen the emotional bond and stimulate interest in books. González and Herrera (2021) emphasize that children whose parents read to them regularly develop superior language skills and show greater motivation to learn. In addition, these practices foster curiosity and critical thinking from an early age (Sánchez et al., 2023).

The role of the family in early Reading

Creating an appropriate home environment is key to fostering reading habits in children. Designing cozy spaces, with good lighting and a variety of books according to their interests, promotes a natural inclination towards reading, strengthening the development of language and curiosity for literature. Incorporating reading into the daily routine transforms this activity into a valuable aspect of family life (Mareovich et al., 2024).

Parents act as reading role models, influencing children's habits and attitudes. Reading regularly, sharing books and talking about them reinforces the idea that reading is pleasurable and educational, strengthening family connection and children's language skills (Martinez-Velasco, 2024).

Interactive reading sessions offer benefits such as improving comprehension, critical thinking, and vocabulary. These activities also strengthen emotional bonds between parents and children, creating a safe space for expression and shared learning, thus promoting children's cognitive and emotional growth (Maina and Papalini, 2023).

Language development through early Reading

Early reading at home significantly improves children's vocabulary, comprehension and communication skills. Exposure to new words and their context expands their linguistic repertoire, while repetition in stories reinforces language acquisition. Reading aloud helps them pick up nuances such as tone and expression, improving their ability to communicate and express ideas clearly (Cuetos-Revuelta et al., 2024).

In addition, it fosters critical thinking and cognitive development by interacting with stories, analyzing characters, and predicting plots, key skills for problem solving and understanding the world (Resches et al., 2024). These experiences also stimulate imagination and creativity, establishing a solid foundation for continued learning, especially when complemented by school support (Rodriguez et al., 2024).

Collaboration between family and school

Effective communication between parents and teachers is critical to improving children's language skills (Korzeniowski et al., 2023). A two-way interaction allows for sharing ideas, addressing challenges, and celebrating accomplishments, creating an environment conducive to learning (Maina and Papalini, 2023). However, parents often perceive a lack of information about their children's progress and educational strategies. To bridge this gap, schools can organize workshops, regular meetings, and use digital platforms that maintain a continuous flow of communication, strengthening collaboration for the benefit of children's language development (Orellana et al., 2022).

Joint reading initiatives, such as book clubs and family nights, significantly strengthen language skills by integrating family and school in shared activities. These practices, such as reading aloud, not only improve pronunciation and intonation, but also foster family cohesion and a love of reading. Collaborating in these programs allows learning to extend beyond the classroom, strengthening both language skills and family ties (Johnson et al., 2024).

Monitoring children's language progress is key to tailoring support to their individual needs (Bravo et al., 2024). Assessments such as reading logs and parent-teacher conferences identify strengths and areas for improvement, facilitating timely adjustments in teaching strategies. This collaborative system ensures that both parents and teachers work together to ensure children's success in language and reading acquisition (Cervantes et al., 2024).

By integrating effective communication, joint reading programs, and monitoring systems, the family and school become partners in children's language development. This holistic approach promotes not only academic learning, but also a strong bond between the different actors involved, contributing to the comprehensive success of children in their early education (Aparici et al., 2024).

Synergy between family and school.

Synergy between family and school is key to maximize the impact of early reading. Falcó et al., (2024) state that effective communication between parents and teachers facilitates the continuity of educational strategies and reinforces the child's development. When both environments collaborate, a more coherent and enriching learning experience is created (Delehanty et al., 2024).

Teachers can guide families on how to promote reading at home. López-Fernández et al., (2023) suggest that workshops and educational resources aimed at parents improve reading practices and, therefore, children's language skills. This collaboration empowers parents as active agents in their children's education.

The incorporation of digital resources also plays an important role. Gottfried et al., (2024) indicate that apps and e-books can complement traditional reading, capturing children's interest and adapting to their individual needs. However, Echarri et al., (2021) warn about the importance of monitoring and properly selecting these resources to ensure their educational quality.

It is essential to consider the socioeconomic differences that affect access to reading materials. Egana-delSol, (2023) notes that low-income families face obstacles in providing a rich reading environment, which can negatively impact children's language development. Educational policies must address these gaps to promote equity (Cheng et al., 2023). Cultural diversity also influences reading practices. Jellinek et al., (2023) emphasizes that including materials that reflect the home culture and language enriches the reading experience and strengthens the child's identity. This facilitates a deeper connection to the content and promotes meaningful learning (Guthrie et al., 2023).

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was carried out in the district of Villa María del Triunfo, under a quantitative approach and using a non-experimental, correlational and cross-sectional design. This design made it possible to analyze the relationship between early reading at home and the development of language skills in early childhood education children without intervening or manipulating the variables. According to Hernandez (2018), this approach is suitable for establishing relationships between variables in real educational contexts.

The population consisted of early education children enrolled in educational institutions in Villa María del Triunfo, together with their parents or guardians, who provided key information for the study. The sample consisted of 60 children and their families, selected by means of non-probabilistic purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were: children aged 3 to 5 years, families who perform reading activities at home at least once a week, and those whose parents gave informed consent (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

For data collection, three main instruments were employed. First, a structured survey was administered to parents, designed to measure the frequency, duration, and quality of reading activities at home. This instrument was validated by experts in pedagogy and linguistics, reaching a reliability index of 0.85 through Cronbach's alpha (Otzen and Manterola, 2017). Secondly, an adapted test of language skills aimed at children was used, based on the instrument the Test of Language Development of Navarra

(TDL-N) to measure vocabulary, comprehension and oral expression in children, adjusted to the sociocultural context of Villa María del Triunfo.

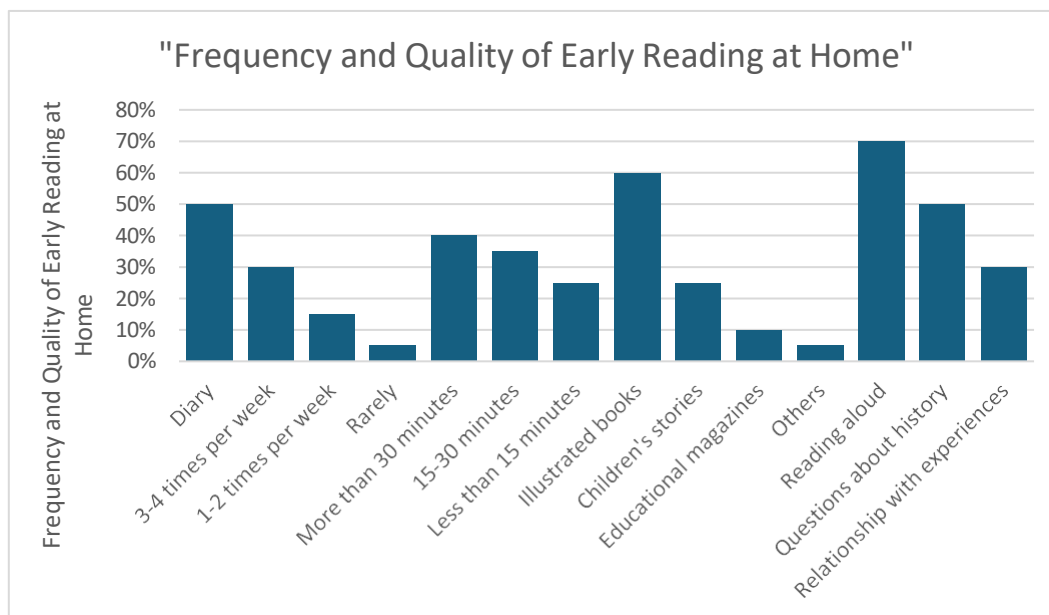
A sociodemographic card was also used to collect information on family characteristics, such as the socioeconomic and educational level of the parents. An observation diary complemented these instruments by recording relevant behaviors of the children during the evaluations. Finally, an expert validation guide allowed for adjustment and quality assurance of the instruments, ensuring their appropriateness to the study objectives (Hernandez et al., 2017). These instruments provided a comprehensive and reliable view to analyze the variables investigated.

The data collection procedure was developed in three phases. The first phase consisted of planning, during which the instruments were designed, the work team was trained and the necessary authorizations were obtained from the participating educational institutions. In the second phase, the surveys were administered to parents and the tests were administered to children in a controlled environment within the educational institutions, guaranteeing uniformity in the evaluation conditions. Finally, the data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics software, version 26, and analyzed with descriptive and correlational statistical methods to characterize the variables and determine their relationship (Biesta, 2022).

Informed consent was obtained from the parents or guardians of each child, guaranteeing the confidentiality of the information and its exclusive use for academic purposes. In addition, participants were informed of the objectives of the study, ensuring their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any time.

As for the statistical analysis, descriptive procedures were performed to identify the general characteristics of the sample, and Pearson's correlation was used to determine the relationship between reading practices at home and the development of linguistic competencies in children. The results were considered significant at a level of $p < 0.05$ and were presented using tables and graphs to facilitate their interpretation and discussion (Otzen and Manterola, 2017).

Frequency and Quality of Early Reading at Home



Source: Own elaboration

Analysis of the frequency and quality of early reading at home reveals that a significant proportion of families read daily, suggesting a strong commitment to this practice. A considerable group also reads with their children between 3 and 4 times a week, while those who rarely do so represent a minority.

As for the duration of the sessions, most families devote more than 30 minutes to reading, indicating an interest in deepening this activity. A significant number opt for sessions of between 15 and 30 minutes, which also contributes significantly to the development of language skills in children.

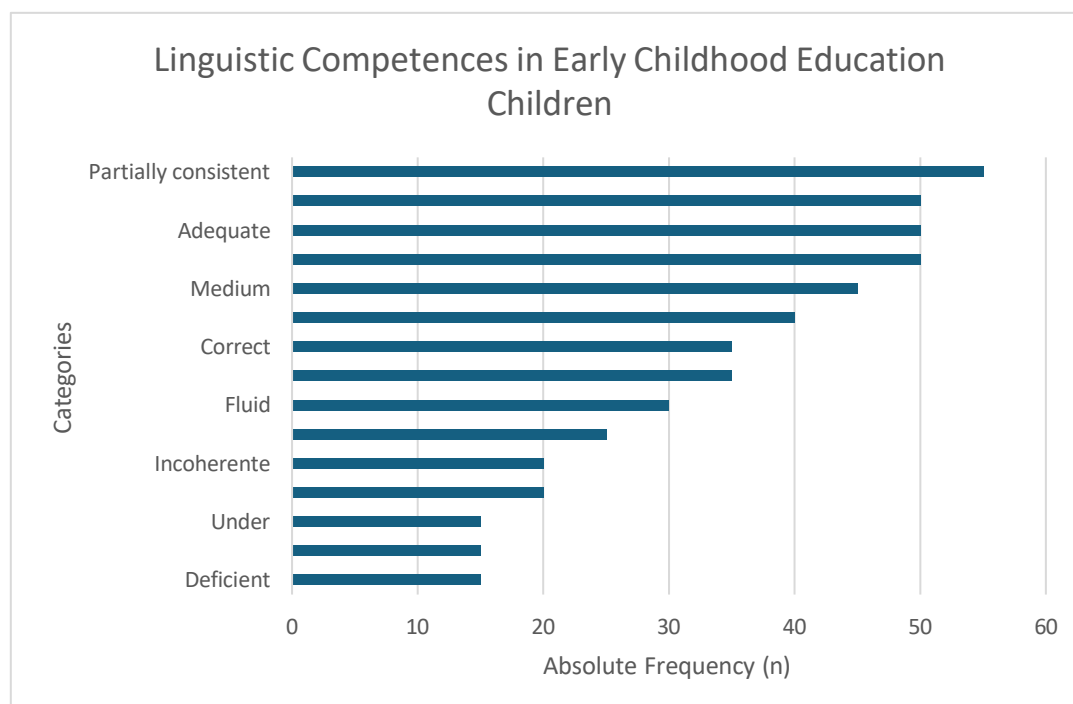
Regarding the materials used, picture books are the most popular, followed by children's stories, which shows a preference for visually attractive and age-appropriate texts. Educational magazines and other

materials have a lower presence, which could be due to their availability or lower appeal to young children.

In terms of interaction, reading aloud and questions about stories are the most common strategies, fostering the development of comprehension and critical thinking. However, relating stories to personal experiences appears to be a less commonly used technique, which could represent an opportunity to further enrich the reading experience at home.

Overall, these results reflect a positive approach to early reading at home, with practices that not only promote learning, but also strengthen the emotional bond between parents and children. This highlights the importance of continuing to promote and diversify these activities to maximize their educational and emotional benefits.

Levels of Linguistic Competence in Early Childhood Education Children



Source: Own elaboration

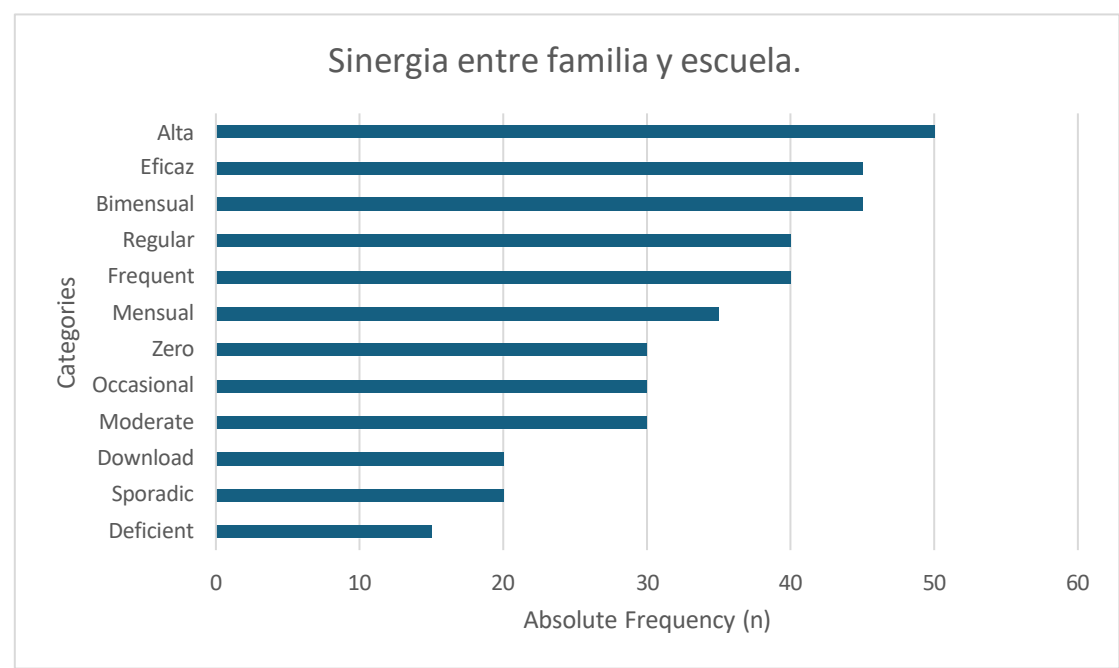
The analysis of language proficiency levels in preschool children shows an encouraging picture. Most of the children are in the “Partially Coherent” category, indicating that they are on their way to better language proficiency. Although they still present some difficulties, they are building the foundation for more effective communication. A significant number reach the “Adequate” level, demonstrating that they can functionally function and that their language skills are growing in a positive way.

Many children are at a “Medium” level, a transition point where they need a little more support to strengthen their development. On the other hand, some have already reached “Correct” and “Fluent” levels, evidencing the positive impact of a family and school environment that fosters a love of words and communication.

However, there is a small group of children in the “Inconsistent,” “Low” and “Poor” categories, reflecting significant challenges in their language development. This group needs special attention, but more importantly, they need support, patience and strategies that allow them to explore and develop their potential.

Overall, these results tell us of children who are discovering and building their ability to communicate, each at their own pace and with their own challenges. This invites us to continue working together, as families and educators, to create spaces full of words, stories and conversations that help them grow and flourish in the fascinating world of language.

Synergy between family and school



Source: Own elaboration

The analysis of the synergy between family and school shows an encouraging picture, where many families and teachers work hand in hand to support children's development. The categories “High” and “Effective” reflect a remarkable commitment between both parties, demonstrating that, when a solid relationship is established, children benefit from an enriching educational environment. These families and teachers not only share common goals, but together build a path for children to grow and learn with security and confidence.

In many cases, interaction occurs on a “Bi-Monthly,” “Regular” or “Frequent” basis, suggesting a constant effort to stay connected. This level of involvement not only strengthens the bond between family and school, but also creates a learning environment where children feel they are supported both at home and at school.

However, not all families have the same opportunity or ability to get involved. Some parents participate on a “Monthly” or “Occasional” basis, while a small group faces greater challenges, with “No”, “Sporadic” or even “Deficient” interactions. These situations invite us to reflect and look for ways to build bridges so that these families can also be integrated and take an active part in their children's education.

These results remind us that behind each piece of information there are different stories, contexts and realities. For some parents, the barriers may be time, work or even the lack of tools to communicate with the school. For others, it may simply be not knowing how to get started. The important thing is to recognize these difficulties and work together to build a more inclusive and accessible relationship, because when family and school walk hand in hand, children are the main beneficiaries. This analysis shows us that shared effort is possible and that, although there is still a long way to go, every step towards better communication and collaboration makes a difference in children's lives.

III. DISCUSSION

Early reading at home proves to be a fundamental tool in the development of language skills in early childhood education (Kim et al., 2023). This study confirms that early exposure to appropriate reading materials, combined with meaningful parent-child interactions, strengthens skills such as vocabulary, reading comprehension and oral expression (Santos et al., 2023). The constant practice of reading aloud and questions about texts not only stimulates learning, but also reinforces emotional bonding, creating an environment that favors both cognitive and emotional development (Behboudi et al., 2023).

The results also show that the level of family involvement directly influences children's achievement. Families that engage in daily reading activities and create an environment conducive to reading, such as a welcoming space with a variety of books, show better results in children's language development (Cheng et al., 2023). However, the low interaction of some families underscores the importance of implementing inclusive strategies that facilitate the active participation of parents in this key process.

In terms of language skills, most children are at intermediate levels, reflecting progress toward functional language proficiency. This indicates that reading activities are making a significant difference (Egana-delSol, 2023). However, a small group remains at low or deficient levels, highlighting the need for targeted interventions, such as parent workshops or personalized programs, to ensure that no child is left behind in their development.

Synergy between family and school emerges as a crucial factor in this context. Effective communication between parents and teachers aligns goals and strategies, creating a cohesive environment that reinforces learning. Schools can play an active role by organizing workshops, regular meetings and joint activities that strengthen this collaboration. The participation of both parties ensures that children receive comprehensive support, both at home and in the classroom.

Despite the observed achievements, it is important to consider the barriers faced by some families, such as time or resource constraints. The incorporation of educational technologies, such as reading applications, can offer accessible and adaptable solutions to each family's needs. However, it is essential that these tools are monitored to ensure their educational quality and that they are used as a complement, not a replacement, for family interactions.

This study highlights the importance of early reading as a pillar in children's linguistic development. Fostering a collaborative environment between family and school, accompanied by inclusive strategies and accessible resources, ensures that every child has the opportunity to develop his or her language potential to the fullest. The key is to recognize that learning is a shared effort, where every action counts in building a strong future for children.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Research confirms that early reading at home is a fundamental pillar of language development in preschool children. Activities such as reading aloud and conversations about books not only strengthen essential skills such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, and oral expression, but also foster critical thinking, curiosity, and emotional bonding between parents and children (Bravo et al., 2024). These practices, when incorporated as part of the daily routine, generate a positive and significant impact on children's learning.

The role of the family environment is decisive in this process. Families that create welcoming spaces with access to varied books, adapted to children's interests, manage to encourage reading habits from an early age (Lopez and Arango-Tobon, 2024). However, the lack of participation of some households highlights the importance of designing inclusive strategies to involve all families in this enriching practice.

On the other hand, family-school collaboration amplifies positive outcomes. Effective communication between parents and teachers, accompanied by joint activities such as workshops and reading clubs, reinforces language skills and promotes comprehensive learning. This synergy ensures that children receive constant support, both at home and at school, consolidating a solid foundation for their development.

Despite these advances, challenges persist that require specific attention. A small group of children have low levels of language skills, which may be due to a lack of reading interaction at home or limitations in access to adequate resources (Cervantes et al., 2024). These gaps call for targeted interventions, such as parent training programs or personalized pedagogical support, to ensure equitable opportunities for all.

The use of educational technologies also emerges as a valuable complement to traditional reading practices. Applications and e-books can be useful tools to encourage reading in contexts where physical resources are limited. However, it is essential to monitor their use and ensure that they do not replace family interactions, but rather complement them.

Equity in access to resources must be a priority. Socioeconomic differences continue to limit the opportunities for many families to provide an adequate reading environment. Therefore, educational policies should focus on reducing these gaps, ensuring that all children have the same opportunities to develop their linguistic potential. In conclusion, early reading, supported by effective family-school collaboration, represents a powerful tool for the integral development of children and an investment in their future.

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