

## **The Views Of Primary and Preschool Education Teachers about Home Visiting: A Study in Turkey**

**Pınar Bahçeli Kahraman<sup>1</sup>**

**Meral Taner Derman<sup>2</sup>**

### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to investigate the views of primary school and preschool teachers about home visiting and the reasons of performing home visiting with respect to parental involvement. A survey form which was prepared by the researchers has been given to primary school and preschool teachers. The survey consists of four open ended questions. 108 teachers have participated in the study. 30 of these teachers were preschool teachers and 78 of them were primary school teachers. The data indicated that 39 teachers haven't used home visiting before. %45 of teachers who have used home visiting preferred to learn the child's home environment and life style. According to the findings, only 1 teacher stated that home visiting isn't useful. Also, teachers who used home visiting stated that they encountered with positive reactions although 4 of them indicated that they encountered with negative reactions.

**Keywords:** Home visiting, parental involvement, preschool teacher, primary teacher

---

<sup>1</sup> Uludag University, Education Faculty, Department of Primary Education, pinarbag@uludag.edu.tr

<sup>2</sup> Uludag University, Education Faculty, Department of Primary Education, mtaner@uludag.edu.tr

Education begins at home and the development of a child is directly proportional to family's meeting and supporting his/her needs. The child passes to institutional education following first educational experiences. This education is not possible to isolate from the family (Saracho & Spodek, 2003; Yazar, Çelik & Kök, 2008). Achieving cooperation with families depends on mutual confidence, sharing of responsibilities and reciprocal relationship between the family and the school (Kasting, 1994).

According to Ensari & Zembat (1999), family participation is a systematic approach which is based on supporting and instructing families, increasing and sustaining the communication between the home and the school of the child and enriching the programs with the participations and contributions of parents. The process of family participation, communicating and sharing information can be identified as a basic institution of the invisible program and a consistency bridge between children's worlds. Considering that the first educators of children are their parents, an approach that parallelizes the education in the home is shown in order to educate families about child development and teaching and to make children participate in education programs (Tezel-Şahin & Ünver, 2005). Family participation and family education activities can be investigated under seven titles. These titles are family communication activities, families participating in education activities, home visits, the activities in the home, individual intercourses and participation in decision making processes (Temel, 2009). The family's participation in education not only enables the teacher to get to know the family better but also enables the family to get to know the school better (Arabacı & Aksoy, 2005). One of the best activities to know about family and to learn about parents' values, their attitudes and behaviors toward children and their expectations about their children is home visiting (Ömeroğlu, Yazıcı & Dere, 2003).

Home visiting has been used by Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Intervention, and by general education teachers of young children to learn from families and to support children's education (Knopf and Swick, 2008). It was determined that the effectiveness of these programs depended on the quality of practices (Gomby et al, 1999: cited. Knopf & Swick, 2008). Also it has been stated that teacher and family had to develop a positively affective relationship to be successful in home visiting (Brooks-Gunn et al. 2000: Knopf & Swick, 2008). Although it is difficult for teachers, home visiting is one of the best effective and valuable resources for learning about parents' values, their attitudes and behaviors toward their children, their expectations about their children and for knowing about families. It plays an important role in establishing rapport between teachers and students' parents, building self-confidence in the child, increasing communication between teachers and students' parents,

and creating enriched environments to support the development of a child. For home visiting to be fruitful, teachers should acknowledge different home environments and the variety of cultures (Avcı, 2010; Ömeroğlu, Kandır & Ersoy, 2006; Aral, Kandır & Can Yaşar, 2000). Through home visiting, children find the opportunity to consolidate what they learn at school, parents find the opportunity to share their conditions and problems which they cannot talk about in a group environment reciprocally with teachers at home (Ömeroğlu, Yazıcı & Dere, 2003). Moreover, home visiting achieves establishing relationships between teachers and parents and strengthening school-parents bridge (Avcı, 2010). Teachers should determine the most suitable time for visits together with families, refrain from criticizing attitudes and behaviors, adjust duration of visit, and make parents feel important (Çağdaş & Seçer, 2004).

When studies made abroad on home visiting were examined, it was found that home visit programs had been put into practice and these programs had a positive effect on families and children (Sweet & Appelbaum, 2004; Korfmacher et al, 2008). Moreover, in a study conducted with 164 children, it was found that home visits had a positive and direct effect on home safety, and on the readiness levels of children, though that is not done directly (Schull & Anderson, 2008). But when studies made on the matter were examined, it was observed that there was only one study made on home visiting with primary teachers in Turkey. In this research the preferences of primary and preschool teachers about home visiting and the views of teachers about this subject were investigated.

The aim of this study is to investigate the views of primary school teachers and preschool teachers about home visiting and the reasons of performing home visiting with respect to classroom-parent communication. With regards to this aim, the following questions were tried to be answered.

1. Do teachers prefer to use home visiting?
2. Why do the teachers use home visiting?
3. Which reactions do teachers encounter in home visiting?
4. What are the advantages of home visiting?

### **Method**

In this study qualitative research method was used to determine and evaluate primary and preschool teachers' views about home visiting.

### **Participants**

The population of study includes primary and preschool teachers working at the primary schools in the central districts of Bursa. 91 female and 17 male teachers with a total

of 108 have participated in this study. 30 of these teachers were preschool teachers and 78 of them were primary school teachers. 44 of these teachers worked in city centers, 36 of them worked in town centers and 28 of them worked in villages.

### Data Collection Instrument

The data have been collected by using a survey form, which had been prepared by researchers. The survey's name is "The Views of Teachers about Home Visiting". A part of the survey asked personal information including gender and the place of duty (city, town and village), and another part consists of four open ended questions. The questions have been shown to 2 specialists and expert opinion on the observation form has been obtained. The questions have been finalized through the expert opinions. In order to test the observation form, 3 teachers have been asked to read the observation form and give feedback. The necessary editing has been done through the suggestions of teachers.

### Data Analysis

In this study content analysis technique was used in order to analyze the views' of teachers. Content analysis is to bring the similar data together within some certain concepts and themes and organise and interpret them (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Firstly, the data were coded and then they are classified and the themes were determined. The data was analyzed according to the determined themes and codes. The data gained from the answers of teachers has been evaluated as frequencies and percentages and listed as tables.

### Findings

The findings obtained from this study give opportunity to investigate the views of primary school teachers and preschool teachers about home visiting and the reasons of performing home visiting with respect to classroom-parent communication.

Table 1: The frequency and the percentage distribution of the answers to the question; "do you use home visiting?"

Do you use home visiting?	City		Town		Village		Total	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	f	%
Yes	23	5	15	2	19	5	69	63,89
No	13	3	14	5	4	0	39	36,11
Total	36	8	29	7	23	5	108	100

39 of teachers haven't used home visiting before. But 69 teachers have preferred to use home visiting. 28 teachers who have used home visiting worked city center, 17 teachers worked in town centers and 24 of them worked in villages. In this study it has been determined that especially teachers who worked in villages preferred to use home visiting.

Table 2: The frequency and the percentage distribution of the answers to the question; “why do you use home visiting?”

Why do you use home visiting?	Gender		Place of Duty			Total	
	Male	Female	City	Town	Village	f	%
Learning the child’s home environment and life style	2	28	14	9	5	30	44,8
Peaking with family about the problems effected to the child’s behavior	2	10	7	2	2	12	17,9
Identifying the child	0	10	3	2	2	10	14,9
Providing the child’s continuity to school	1	5	1	1	4	6	8,96
Providing parents to participate in the education process	0	4	1	2	1	4	5,97
Understanding family communication	1	4	2	1	2	5	7,46
Assessing the student’s performance and explaining what to do	2	3	0	3	3	5	7,46
Illness	2	2	1	2	1	4	5,97
Died	2		1	1	0	2	2,99
Determining the approaches to the child	0	1	1	0	0	1	1,49
Meeting	0	1	0	1	0	1	4,48
When he/she invites to the child’s house	0	3	0	3	0	3	1,49
Making child happy	0	1	1	0	0	1	44,8

%45 of teachers who used home visiting responded the question of “Why do you use home visiting?” as learning the child’s home environment and life style, %17,91 of these teachers indicated that speaking with family about the problems effected the child’s behavior, %14,9 of teachers stated that home visiting is useful for identifying the child and %8,96 of these teachers responded the question as providing the child’s continuity to school.

Table 3: The frequency and the percentage distribution of the answers to the question; “what are the advantages of home visiting?”

What are the advantages of home visiting?	Gender		Place of Duty			Total	
	Male	Female	City	Town	Village	f	%
I understood the child better with some information about child' family and environment.	0	16	7	7	2	16	23,9
It made me understand what the child can/can't do.	0	16	5	8	3	14	23,9
It makes the communication easier	3	4	3	1	3	7	10,4
The contribution of family increased in the process.	0	6	3	2	1	6	8,96
It increased the sincerity and confidence.	2	4	5	0	1	6	8,96
The importance of lesson and the child's success increased.	1	2	1	1	1	3	4,48
Their economic condition's been determined.	0	2	0	1	1	2	2,99
School needs completed.	1	0	0	0	1	1	1,49
Parents have more information about their child.	0	2	1	0	1	2	2,99
The views of parents changed the school and teacher.	0	3	1	1	1	3	4,48
Our relationship became strong.	0	1	0	1	0	1	1,49
The child's behavior is observed out of school.	0	2	1	1	0	2	2,99
Nothing changed.	0	1	0	1	0	1	1,49

To the question of “What are the advantages of home visiting?” teachers expressed their views as “I understood the child better with some information about the child and his environment” (%23,9), “I found a chance to identify the child better” (%23,9). According to findings, only a teacher explained that home visiting isn't useful.

Table 4: The frequency and the percentage distribution of the answers to the question; “what are the reactions of parents you encountered?”

What are the reactions of parents you encountered?	Gender		Place of Duty			Total	
	Male	Female	City	Town	Village	f	%
Positive	13	44	19	17	19	57	85,1
Sometimes positive sometimes negative	1	2	2	0	1	3	4,48
Not so positive	1	3	2	2	0	4	5,97
Parents and students feel themselves worthy	0	2	2	0	0	2	2,99
Mothers whose children don't continue to the school are negative	0	1	0	1	0	1	1,49
Parents are negative because of raising money.	0	2	0	2	0	1	1,49
I haven't used any home visiting.	2	37	18	17	4	39	58,2

%85 of teachers who used home visiting stated that they encountered with positive reactions although 4 teachers indicated that they encountered with negative reactions. One teacher who used home visiting indicated that the mothers whose children don't continue to

the school are negative and 2 teachers indicated that mothers are negative because of raising money.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

As a result of the study carried out, it was determined that approximately 50% of the teachers included within the scope of the study prefer to pay home visits. However, Çağdaş and Seçer (2006) have stated in their research that home visiting comes last in family participation activities. It has been determined in similar researches that preschool teachers don't include home visits in their yearly plans and that's why they don't take place (Abbak, 2008; Köksal-Eğmez, 2008; Akkaya, 2007; Kaya 2007; Işık, 2007; Şahin & Turla, 2003; Kaya, 2002; Ünüvar, 2010). In addition to this, Biber (2003) has stated that families from low socio-economical environments don't meet with parents out of school but some of the families from high socio-economical environments make mutual home visits.

Most of teachers preferring home visiting explained the reasons for home visits as seeing the child's home environment, discussing domestic problems and getting to know the child better. Gülcan and Taner (2011) have determined in their study with teachers making home visits that main purposes of teachers when they make home visits are about children's successes or failures. Teachers also have stated that home visits have positive effects on children.

Through home visiting, teachers have stated that they can find the opportunity to make students' parents involved in the process, get more information about the child and understand the capabilities of the child. Moreover, most of the teachers stated that they have received positive reactions from students' parents for their home visits. Abbak (2008) has determined in a research that parents are glad to see teachers in their homes. Wu (1995) has indicated that more than 90% of teachers use different techniques for parental involvement like home visiting. Ömeroğlu and others (1997) have stated in a research to measure the effects of home visits that mothers from the experimental group are more sensitive and more concerned toward their children, that they support the developmental improvements of their children and that home visits have a huge impact on mothers. Besides, Ömeroğlu and Can Yaşar (2002) have stated in a research that home visits have significant influence on the behaviors of mothers toward their children. Reglin (2002) has determined that the participation of families of high-risk children in school activities have increased through home visits.

As a result of the study, it was found that most students' parents are open to home visits and teachers find the opportunity to better evaluate the educational process at school provided that they make home visits.

The environmental and family conditions of the child must be considered in order to determine the development status, the interests and the needs of the child, and handle the child as a whole (Aral, Kandır & Can Yaşar, 2000). The child does not exist only as a child but exists in an environment including culture, family and other people (Bee, 1995). Home visiting is one of the best ways to help teachers determine the developmental conditions and needs of the child and contribute to education by providing teachers with the opportunity to see the living conditions of the child. Teachers preferring to use home visiting as a method will contribute both to the development of the child and to the creation of positive classroom atmosphere.

It is suggested that more comprehensive studies on the matter of home visiting should be made and the reasons why and why not teachers make home visits should be determined. It is considered that it will be useful and it will contribute to the educational process, if teachers are given in-service training on this matter and teacher trainees at universities are given more comprehensive knowledge on home visits.

### References

- Abbak, B., S. (2008). *The survey of the family involvement activities in preschool training programme in terms of preschool teachers and parental view*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Adana: Çukurova University, Social Sciences Institute.
- Arabacı, N. & Aksoy, A. B. (2005). Effects of the involvement in preschool education programs on the information levels of mothers. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education*, 29, 18-26.
- Aral, N., Kandır, A. & Can Yaşar, M. (2000). *Handbook Of Teacher About Preschool Education And Nursery Class Programs*. İstanbul: Ya-Pa Broadcast Marketing.
- Avcı, N. (2010). Parent involvement in preschool education. Ed. Rengin Zembat. *Special Teaching Methods in Preschool Education*, İstanbul: Anı Publishing, 407-439.
- Biber, K (2003). Teacher-parent communication by socio-economic status of family at primary school first grade. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 35, 360-373.
- Çağdaş, A. & Seçer, Z. Ş. (2004). *Training of Parents For Happy And Healthy Future*. Konya: Education Bookstore.
- Ensari, H. & Zembat, R. (1999). The effect of management styles on family's participation in preschool education programs. *Marmara University, Preschool/Nursery Class Handbook Of Teacher: Series Of Guidebooks*, İstanbul: YaPa Publications, 180-205.
- Gülcan, M. G., & Taner, N. (2011). Views of teachers regarding the effect of the home visit in the school success in primary education (Case of K. Maraş). *Journal of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Education Faculty*, 11(22), 138 – 154.
- Işık, H. (2007). *Study of parent-school collaboration activities which are implemented in preschool education institutions on the base of parent opinions*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Anadolu University, Educational Sciences Institute, Eskişehir.
- Kaya, Ö.M. (2002). *Family interest and contribution to the programs applied in pre-school education institutions and the opinions of parents about the contribution of preschool education institutions to the parent education*, Unpublished Master Thesis, Anadolu University, Educational Sciences Institute, Eskişehir.
- Kaya, Ö.M., Dinç, B. & Cihangir, S. (2006). A model proposal to parent involvement in preschool education institutions. *Marmara University Atatürk Education Faculty I. International Preschool Education Congress*, 3, 379-397.
- Kaya, R. (2007). *The attitudes of preschool teachers toward parent involvement*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Social Sciences Institute.

- Kasting, A. (1994). Respect, responsibility and reciprocity the 3 rs of parent involvement. *Childhood Education, 70*(3), 146-150.
- Knopf, H., T. & Swick, K., J. (2008). Using our understanding of families to strengthen family involvement. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 35*, 419-427.
- Korfmacher, J., et al. (2008). Parent involvement in early childhood home visiting. *Child and Youth Care Forum, 37*, 171-196
- Köksal-Eğmez, C.F. (2008). *The participation of families at preschool education (A Research in five preschool in Kocaeli)*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Sakarya University, Social Sciences Institute.
- Ömeroğlu, E., Tezel Şahin, F., Turla, A & Can Yaşar, M. (1997). The effect of home environments to the child's education during childhood. *I. National Congress of Child Development and Education*. 316-335.
- Ömeroğlu, E. & Can Yaşar, M. (2002). The effect of home-based parent-child education program on home environment. *Symposium of Early Childhood Development and Education*. Ankara: Kök Publishing, 34-49.
- Ömeroğlu, E., Kandır, A. & Ersoy, Ö. (2006). *Examples Of The Annual Plan And Studies of Parent Involvement*. İstanbul: Morpa Culture Publications.
- Ömeroğlu, E., Yazıcı, Z. & Dere, H. (2003). Parent involvement in preschool education institutions. Ed. Müzeyyen Sevinç, *New Approaches In Development And Education In Early Childhood*. İstanbul: Morpa Culture Publications, 440-446.
- Reglin, G. (2002). Project reading and writing (r.a.w): home visitations and the school involvement of high-risk families. *Education, 123*, 153-161.
- Saracho, O.N. & Spodek, B. (2003). Recent trends and innovations in the early childhood education curriculum. *Early Child Development and Care, 173*(2-3), 175-183
- Schull, C. & Anderson, E. A. (2008). The effect of home visiting and home safety on children's school readiness. *European Early Childhood Education Research (EECER) Journal, 16*(3), 325-336.
- Sweet, M. A., & Appelbaum, M. I. (2004). Is home visiting an effective strategy? A meta-analytic review of home visiting programs for families with young children. *Child Development, 75*(5), 1435-1456.
- Temel, F. (2009). Family involvement in preschool education. *International Conference of Pre-School Education in the Context of Child, Family and School*, Trabzon: Governor of Trabzon Culture Publications, 89-104.

- Tezel-Şahin, F. & Turla, A. (2003). Examination of family involvement activities in pre-school educational institutions. *OMEP World Council and Conference, Crossroads of Cultures: Implications for Early Childhood Development and Education*, Kuşadası, 1, 379-392
- Tezel-Şahin, F. & Ünver, N. (2005). Parent involvement in preschool education programs, *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 13(1), 23-30.
- Ünüvar, P. (2010). Comparison of parents and teachers' views related to parent involvement activities. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 18(3), 719-730.
- Wu, P.J. (1995). *The relationships of teachers' sense of efficacy and school climate to teachers' parent involvement practices in early childhood programs in Taiwan*. Doctoral Dissertation, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University.
- Yazar, A., Çelik, M. & Kök, M. (2008). The place of parent involvement in preschool education and 2006 preschool education program. *Atatürk University Journal of Graduate School of Social Sciences*, 12(2), 233-243.
- Yıldırım A., & Şimşek, H. (2011). *Qualitative Research Techniques in Social Sciences*. Ankara: Seçkin Publications.