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KINDERGARTEN LEARNERS' READINESS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION AS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS

FREDELYN TORRES BAJEN

Cagayan State University-Sanchez Mira Campus, Sanchez Mira, Cagayan

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***Corresponding author:** FREDELYN TORRES BAJEN

Cagayan State University-Sanchez Mira Campus, Sanchez Mira, Cagayan

Abstract

This study assessed the readiness of kindergarten learners for primary education in the SEND Cluster of Calanasan District, Apayao, for SY 2024–2025. It examined parents' perceptions of their children's cognitive, emotional, and social readiness, evaluated actual readiness using the ECCD Checklist, and explored the relationship between the two. Using a descriptive-correlational design, 20 parents from Sabangan and Naguilian Elementary Schools participated. Results showed that parents perceived their children as school-ready, particularly in cognitive skills. ECCD results confirmed a very high level of readiness, especially in cognitive and fine motor areas. A very strong, significant correlation ($r = 0.915$, $p < 0.001$) was found, highlighting the accuracy of parental perceptions and the value of parent-teacher collaboration.

Keywords: kindergarten readiness, parental perception, cognitive development, emotional development, social development, early childhood education

INTRODUCTION

School readiness is a vital determinant of a child's long-term academic and social success. It encompasses cognitive, emotional, and social competencies that enable a smooth transition to formal education. Globally, research has emphasized the importance of early childhood education in shaping learners' future abilities and outcomes. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017) noted that children who enter school well-prepared tend to perform better academically and adapt more effectively to school environments. Studies across the United States and Europe have further demonstrated that parental involvement significantly impacts a child's preparedness for school, with parents' perceptions and support playing a critical role

in early developmental outcomes (Fantuzzo et al., 2004; Sheridan et al., 2011).

In the international context, school readiness is influenced by numerous interrelated factors, such as family background, access to quality preschool education, and socioeconomic conditions. Britto, Yoshikawa, and Boller (2011) stressed the centrality of family engagement in early learning, revealing that strong parental support correlates with higher levels of school readiness. Similarly, UNICEF (2021) reported that quality early childhood programs and active parental guidance contribute positively to cognitive and social development, particularly in developing countries.

In the Philippines, the government has institutionalized early childhood education through Republic Act No. 10157, or the "Kindergarten Education Act," which mandates kindergarten as the initial stage of formal education. The Department of Education's (DepEd, 2012) Kindergarten Curriculum Guide outlines key developmental domains for school readiness—cognitive, socio-emotional, physical, and language development. Supporting these efforts, the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council has been instrumental in implementing programs that promote the holistic development of Filipino children.

Local studies mirror global findings on the importance of parental roles in early childhood education. Reyes and Alampay (2019) found that socioeconomic status, parental knowledge, and the home learning environment significantly influenced the school readiness of Filipino children. Cruz (2021) added that while most parents acknowledged the value of early education, some struggled with readiness preparation due to financial limitations and inadequate awareness of effective learning strategies. These findings underscore the relevance of understanding parental perceptions and their influence on children's developmental preparedness.

In the SEND Cluster of Calanasan District—comprising Sabangan, Eleazar, Naguilian, and Don Roque Elementary Schools—teachers observed varied levels of readiness among kindergarten learners. While some exhibited strong foundational skills, others faced challenges in basic cognitive and social domains. Differences in economic background, parental education, and availability of learning resources were identified as contributing factors. These observations highlighted the need to assess parents' perceptions of school readiness and how these perceptions align with actual learner performance.

This study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which provides a holistic framework for understanding the environmental factors shaping child development. According to the theory, a child's readiness for school is not solely a function of innate abilities but a result of the dynamic interactions between the child and multiple layers of their environment.

At the microsystem level, parents—as primary caregivers—play a direct role in influencing early learning experiences. Their beliefs, behaviors, and support strategies shape children's readiness in cognitive, emotional, and social domains (Tudge et al., 2009). The mesosystem refers to the interactions between key settings in the child's life, particularly the home and school. Strong parent-teacher collaboration enhances children's learning outcomes and school adjustment. The exosystem, comprising factors such as parental work conditions and community resources, indirectly affects a child's development by shaping the home environment and availability of learning materials. The macrosystem includes societal values and national policies such as RA 10157, which define educational goals and standards for readiness. Lastly, the chronosystem acknowledges that developmental contexts evolve over time due to changes in policies, social conditions, or family circumstances.

Applying Bronfenbrenner's theory allows for a comprehensive exploration of how multiple environmental influences converge to shape parents' perceptions and support practices regarding school readiness. It also emphasizes the need for systemic collaboration

among families, educators, and policymakers to foster positive developmental outcomes.

By examining school readiness through both empirical and theoretical lenses, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the alignment between parental perceptions and actual readiness levels of kindergarten learners in the SEND Cluster. The findings will inform strategies to strengthen early learning support and ensure a smoother transition to formal education.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the readiness of kindergarten learners for primary education in the SEND Cluster of Calanasan District, Apayao, as perceived by their parents and assessed using the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Checklist. The descriptive aspect determined parents' perceptions of their children's readiness in cognitive, emotional, and social domains, while the correlational component analyzed the relationship between these perceptions and the learners' actual readiness levels.

The study was conducted in four elementary schools—Sabangan, Eleazar, Naguilian, and Don Roque—serving diverse kindergarten populations in rural and remote communities. Twenty parents participated, selected through purposive sampling, including 14 from Sabangan and 6 from Naguilian Elementary School. This sampling approach ensured that only parents of enrolled kindergarten learners were included.

Two main instruments were used: (1) a researcher-made survey questionnaire validated by education experts, which consisted of 15 items equally distributed across cognitive, emotional, and social development domains rated on a five-point Likert scale; and (2) the ECCD Checklist, a standardized tool from the Department of Education that assessed learners' actual developmental readiness across multiple domains. The ECCD was administered in coordination with the learners' classroom teachers.

Data collection began with approval from school heads, followed by coordination with teachers to identify respondents. An orientation was conducted to explain the study's purpose and secure informed consent. The survey was administered either in print or digitally, and the ECCD assessments were conducted by the teachers.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to interpret parents' perception levels and the actual readiness of learners. The readiness levels were categorized using predefined scale ranges. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), were employed to determine the relationship between parental perceptions and ECCD results. All statistical analyses were processed using appropriate software to ensure data accuracy and validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perception Of Parents on the Readiness of Kindergarten Learners for Primary Education Across Three Domains

The parents' perceptions of kindergarten learners' readiness for primary education across cognitive, social, and emotional domains are the following: Cognitive indicators received the highest ratings, particularly in recognizing shapes and colors ($M=4.55$) and following instructions ($M=4.50$), suggesting strong foundational skills for early academic tasks. This supports Neuman and Roskos

(2020), who highlighted the role of early structured learning in cognitive readiness. Social skills were rated Agree (M=4.00), indicating functional but developing peer interaction, aligning with Denham et al. (2020) who emphasized social maturity as gradual in early childhood. Emotional development showed slightly lower scores (M=3.65–3.80), suggesting a need for enhanced emotional regulation, consistent with Shanker and Barker’s (2021) findings. The overall grand mean of 4.06 indicates general readiness, with emphasis on cognitive strength. However, holistic development remains essential, as supported by the National Early Childhood Care and Development (NECCD, 2022) framework.

Level of Readiness of Kindergarten Learners for Primary Education

The ECCD Checklist results revealed a Very High overall readiness level among kindergarten learners in the SEND Cluster (M=4.38), indicating that most children demonstrate the developmental competencies expected for school entry (ECCD Council, 2022). In the Gross Motor Domain, learners showed solid coordination (M=4.00), with dancing and movement activities rated even higher (M=4.75), reflecting physical readiness for active school participation (Department of Health, 2021). Fine Motor Skills were particularly advanced, with children performing well in tasks requiring precise hand control such as grasping objects and drawing shapes (M=4.50–4.75), which supports Clements and

Sarama’s (2020) findings that fine motor ability is linked to early academic success.

In the Self-Help Domain, autonomy in basic tasks like toileting was strong (M=4.80), though more complex routines like food preparation scored lower (M=3.30), suggesting ongoing development in personal responsibility (Ginsburg, 2021). Learners also showed strong Receptive Language abilities (M=4.00–4.60), with a solid understanding of basic instructions (Snow & Van Hemel, 2008), while Expressive Language was similarly well-developed (M=4.30), enabling children to communicate effectively—an important precursor to literacy (Burchinal et al., 2020).

The Cognitive Domain received the highest ratings (M=5.00), reflecting advanced skills in shape recognition, color matching, and puzzle completion. These results align with Piagetian views and Shonkoff and Phillips (2021), who emphasized the role of early problem-solving in learning readiness. Lastly, the Social-Emotional Domain showed children were emotionally expressive and socially aware (M=3.75–4.75), essential traits for school success (Denham et al., 2020). These findings affirm that learners are generally prepared across developmental domains but highlight areas where continued support is beneficial.

Table 2. Level of Readiness of kindergarten learners for primary education as assessed by the ECCD Checklist.

	Mean	Descriptive Value
Gross Motor Domain		
1. Umaakyat ng mga silya.	4.00	High
2. Lumalakad ng paurong.	4.00	High
3. Tumatakbo na hindi nadadapa.	4.00	High
4. Bumababa ng hagdan, parehong paa bawat baitang, habang hawak ng tagapag-alaga ang isang kamay.	4.00	High
5. Umaakyat ng hagdan, parehong paa bawat baitang, habang nakahawak sa gabay ng hagdan.	4.00	High
6. Umaakyat ng hagdan na salitan ang mga paa na hindi na humahawak sa gabay ng hagdan.	4.00	High
7. Bumababa ng hagdan na salitan ang mga paa na hindi na humahawak sa gabay ng hagdan	4.00	High
8. Ginagalaw ang mga parte ng katawan kapag inuutusan	4.00	High
9. Tumatalon	4.00	High
10. Hinahagis ang bola nang paitaas na may direksyon	4.00	High
11. Lumulundag ng 1-3 beses gamit ang mas gustong paa	4.00	High
12. Tumatalon at umiikot	4.00	High
13. Sumasayaw / sumusunod sa mga hakbang sa sayaw, grupong gawain ukol sa kilos at galaw	4.75	Very High
Fine Motor Domain		
1. Kinakabig ang mga laruan o pagkain gamit ang limang daliri.	4.75	Very High
2. Kinukuha ang mga bagay gamit ang hinlalaki at hintuturo.	4.75	Very High
3. Nagpapakita ng higit na pagkagusto sa paggamit ng partikular na kamay.	4.75	Very High
4. Nailalagay/tinatanggal ang maliliit na bagay mula sa lalagyan.	4.75	Very High
5. Hinahawakan ang krayola gamit ang nakasarang palad.	4.75	Very High
6. Tinatanggal ang takip ng bote/lalagyan, anaalis ang balot ng mga pagkain.	4.65	Very High

7. Kusang gumuguhit-guhit.	4.60	Very High
8. Gumuguhit ng patayo at pahalang na marka.	4.60	Very High
9. Kusang gumuguhit ng bilog na hugis.	4.50	Very High
10. Gumuguhit ng larawan ng tao (ulo, mata, katawan, braso, kamay, daliri, hita, paa).	4.50	Very High
11. Gumuguhit ng bahay gamit ang iba't-ibang uri ng hugis (parusukat, tatsulok).	4.50	Very High
Self-help Domain		
1. Pinapakain ang sarili ng mga pagkain tulad ng biskwit at tinapay (finger food).	4.65	Very High
2. Pinapakain ang sarili ng ulam at kanin gamit ang mga daliri ngunit may natataponing pagkain.	4.65	Very High
3. Pinapakain ang sarili gamit ang kutsara ngunit may natataponing pagkain.	3.30	Moderate
4. Pinapakain ang sarili ng ulam at kanin gamit ang mga daliri na walang natataponing pagkain.	4.00	High
5. Pinapakain ang sarili gamit ang kutsara ngunit walang natataponing pagkain.	4.00	High
6. Kumakain na hindi na kailangang subuan pa.	4.70	Very High
7. Tumutulong sa paghawak ng baso/tasa sa pag-inom.	4.70	Very High
8. Umiinom sa baso ngunit may natatapon.	4.60	Very High
9. Umiinom sa baso na walang umaalalay.	4.70	Very High
10. Kumukuha ng inumin ng mag-isa.	4.05	High
11. Binubuhos ang tubig (o anumang likido) mula sa pitsel na walang natatapon.	4.00	High
12. Naghahanda ng sariling pagkain/meryenda.	3.30	Moderate
13. Naghahanda ng pagkain para sa nakakabatang kapatid/ibang miyembro ng pamilya kung walang matanda sa bahay.	3.40	Moderate
14. Nakikipagtulungan kung bibibihisan (hal., itinataas ang mga kamay/paa).	4.00	High
15. Hinuhubad ang shorts na may garter.	4.00	High
16. Hinuhubad ang sando.	4.00	High
17. Binibihisan ang sarili na walang tumutulong, maliban sa pagbubutones at pagtatali.	3.95	High
18. Binibihisan ang sarili na walang tumutulong, kasama na ang pagbubutones at pagtatali.	4.05	High
19. Ipinakita o ipinahiwatig na naihi o nadumi sa shorts.	4.80	Very High
20. Pinapaalam sa tagapagalaga ang pangangailangang umihi o dumumi upang makapunta sa tamang lugar (hal., banyo, CR).	4.80	Very High
21. Pumupunta sa tamang lugar upang umihi o dumumi ngunit paminsan-minsan ay may pagkakataong hindi mapigilang maihi o madumi sa shorts.	4.80	Very High
22. Matagumpay na pumupunta sa tamang lugar upang umihi o dumumi.	4.80	Very High
23. Pinupunasan ang sarili pagkatapos dumumi.	4.80	Very High
24. Nakikipagtulungan kung pinapaliguan (hal., kinukuskos ang mga braso).	4.70	Very High
25. Naghuhugas at nagpupunas ng mga kamay na walang tumutulong.	4.70	Very High
26. Naghihilamos ng mukha ng walang tumutulong.	4.65	Very High
27. Naliligo ng walang tumutulong.	4.05	High
Receptive Language Domain		
1. Tinuturo ang mga kapamilya o pamilyar na bagay kapag ipinaturo.	4.60	Very High
2. Tinuturo ang 5 parte ng katawan kung inuutusan.	4.60	Very High

3. Tinuturo ang 5 napangalanang larawan ng mga bagay.	4.60	Very High
4. Sumusunod sa isang lebel na utos na may simpleng pang-ukol (hal. sa ibabaw, sa ilalim).	4.00	High
5. Sumusunod sa dalawang lebel na utos na may simpleng pang-ukol.	4.00	High
Expressive Language Domain		
1. Gumagamit ng 5-20 na kilalang salita.	4.30	Very High
2. Gumagamit ng panghalip (hal., ako akin).	4.30	Very High
3. Gumagamit ng 2-3 kombinasyon ng pandiwa-pantangi (verb-noun combinations) [hal. hingi pera].	4.30	Very High
4. Napapangalanan ang mga bagay na nakikita sa larawan (4).	4.30	Very High
5. Nagsasalita sa tamang pangungusap na may 2-3 salita.	4.30	Very High
6. Nagtatanong ng <i>ano</i> .	4.30	Very High
7. Nagtatanong ng <i>sino</i> at <i>bakit</i> .	4.30	Very High
8. Kinukuwento ang mga katatapos na karanasan (kapag tinanong/diniktahan) na naayon sa pagkakasunod-sunod ng pangyayari gamit ang mga salitang tumutukoy sa pang nakaraan (past tense).	4.30	Very High
Cognitive Domain		
1. Tinitingnan ang direksyon ng nahuhulog na bagay	4.60	Very High
2. Hinahanap ang mga bagay na bahagyang nakatago	4.60	Very High
3. Ginagaya ang mga kilos na kakakita pa lamang	4.60	Very High
4. Binibigay ang bagay ngunit hindi ito binibitiwan	4.00	High
5. Hinahanap ang mga bagay na lubusang nakatago	4.65	Very High
6. Naglalaro ng kunwa-kunwarian	4.80	Very High
7. Tinutugma ang mga bagay	4.90	Very High
8. Tinutugma ang 2-3 kulay	5.00	Very High
9. Tinutugma ang mga larawan	5.00	Very High
10. Nakikilala ang magkakapareho at magkakaibang hugis	5.00	Very High
11. Inaayos ang mga bagay ayon sa 2 katangian (hal., laki at kulay)	5.00	Very High
12. Inaayos ang mga bagay mula sa pinakamaliit hanggang sa pinakamalaki	5.00	Very High
13. Pinapangalan ang 4-6 na kulay	5.00	Very High
14. Ginagaya/ginuguhit ang mga hugis	5.00	Very High
15. Pinapangalanan ang 3 hayop o gulay kapag tinanong	5.00	Very High
16. Sinasabi ang mg gamit ng mga bagay sa bahay	4.95	Very High
17. Nakakabuo ng isang simpleng puzzle	5.00	Very High
18. Naiintindihan ang magkakasalungat na mga salita sa pamamagitan ng pagkumpleto ng pangungusap (hal., Ang aso ay malaki, ang daga ay ____)	4.75	Very High
19. Tinuturo ang kaliwa at kanang bahagi ng katawan	4.75	Very High
20. Nasasabi kung ano ang mali sa larawan (hal., Ano ang mali sa larawan?)	4.75	Very High
21. Tunutugma ang malalaki at maliliit na mga titik	4.75	Very High
Social-emotional Domain		
1. Natutuwang nanonood ng ginagawa ng mga tao o hayop sa malapit na lugar	4.75	Very High

2. Lumalapit sa mga hindi kakilala ngunit sa una ay maaaring maging mahiyain o hindi mapalagay	4.00	High
3. Naglalarong mag-isa ngunit gustong malapit sa mga pamilyar na nakatatanda o kapatid	4.75	Very High
4. Tumatawa/tumitili nang malakas sa paglalaro	4.00	High
5. Naglalaro ng “bulaga”	4.75	Very High
6. Pinapagulong ang bola sa kalaro o tagapag-alaga	4.75	Very High
7. Niyayakap ang mga laruan	4.75	Very High
8. Nagpapakita ng respeto sa nakatatanda gamit “Opo”, “Po” (o anumang katumbas nito) sa halip na kanilang unang pangalan	3.75	High
9. Pinahihiram ang sariling laruan sa iba	4.00	High
10. Ginagaya ang mga ginagawa ng mga nakatatanda (hal., pagluluto, paghuhugas)	4.00	High
11. Natutukoy ang nararamdaman ng iba	4.00	High
12. Gumagamit ng mga kilos na narapat sa kultura na hindi na hinihiling/dinidiktahan (hal., pagmamano, paghalik)	4.00	High
13. Inaalo/inaaliw ang mga kalaro o kapatid na may problema	4.00	High
14. Nagpupursige kung may problema o hadlang sa kanyang gusto	4.00	High
15. Tumutulong sa mga gawaing pambahay (hal., nagpupunas ng mesa, magdidilig ng mga halaman)	4.00	High
16. Interesado sa kanyang kapaligiran ngunit alam kung kailan kailangang huminto sa pagtatanong	4.00	High
17. Marunong maghintay	4.25	Very High
18. Himihingi ng permiso na laruin ang laruan na ginagamit ng ibang bata	4.25	Very High
19. Binabantayan ang mga pag-aari nang may determinasyon	4.00	High
20. Naglalaro ng maayos sa mga pang-grupong laro (hal., hindi nandadaya para manalo)	4.00	High
21. Naikukuwento ang mga mabigat na nararamdaman (hal., galit, lungkot).	4.00	High
22. Tinatanggap ang isang kasunduang ginawa ng tagapag-alaga (hal. linisin muna ang kuwarto bago maglaro sa labas)	4.00	High
23. Responsableng nagbabantay sa mga nakababatang kapatid/ ibang miyembro ng pamilya	4.00	High
24. Nakikipagtulungan sa mga pang-grupong sitwasyon upang maiwasan ang mga away o problema	4.00	High
GRAND MEAN	4.38	Very High

Correlation Result Between the Parent’s Perception of their Children’s Readiness and the Actual Results of the ECCD Assessment

Table 3 presents the statistical analysis of the relationship between the parents’ perception of their children’s readiness and the actual results of the ECCD assessment. The computed Pearson’s *r* value of 0.915 indicates a very strong positive correlation, and the *p*-value of <0.001 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level.

This finding means that as parents perceive their children to be more ready for primary education, the ECCD assessment results also reflect higher actual readiness. This implies that parents in the SEND Cluster generally have an accurate understanding of their children’s developmental status and school preparedness. This aligns with the findings of Kim and Mahoney (2021), who emphasized that parental insight into child development is a critical factor in ensuring successful school transitions, particularly when

supported by active parental involvement and developmental monitoring tools like the ECCD checklist.

Table 3. Significant relationship between the parents’ perception of their children’s readiness and the results of the ECCD assessment.

		Pearson’s <i>r</i>	<i>p</i>-values	Remarks
Parents’ Perception	ECCD assessment	0.915**	<0.001	Positive correlation

** Significant at 1%

Conclusion

The study findings show that kindergarten learners in the SEND Cluster are generally ready for primary education. Parents perceive their children as cognitively prepared—able to recognize letters and numbers, follow instructions, and demonstrate curiosity and focus. While social skills are developing well, emotional readiness,

such as self-confidence and frustration management, scored lower, indicating areas needing support. These perceptions align with ECCD Checklist results, which confirmed high readiness levels, especially in cognitive and fine motor domains. Learners also showed strong self-help and language skills, reinforcing their preparedness for classroom tasks. A very strong correlation between parental perceptions and ECCD-assessed readiness ($r = 0.915$) highlights that parents accurately understand their children's developmental status. This underscores the importance of involving parents in readiness planning and early education strategies. In conclusion, learners in the SEND Cluster are well-prepared for school, though emotional development requires continued nurturing. Collaborative efforts between parents and educators are essential for holistic school readiness.

Recommendations

In light of the findings, it is recommended that DepEd integrate parental insights into early childhood education policies and promote localized awareness campaigns. Curriculum planners should align instructional content with home-based activities to encourage parental involvement, while school administrators must institutionalize structured parent engagement and collaborative ECCD assessments. Teachers are encouraged to strengthen communication with parents and implement emotional development strategies. Parents should sustain supportive home environments and reinforce learning through daily interactions. Community stakeholders must support early childhood initiatives via parenting seminars and accessible services. Lastly, future research should explore long-term effects of parental involvement and contextual influences on school readiness to inform more inclusive, responsive early education programs across diverse settings.

Declaration of No Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that there is no conflict of interest and this work is her original work.

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