



## IMPROVING HOME LITERACY SKILLS OF PARENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Received: October 08, 2022

Accepted: December 29, 2022

Published: December 31, 2022

### Suggested Citation:

Canbulat, T., Ilhan, E., & Olgun Baytaş, M. (2022). Improving home literacy skills of parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Online Journal of Primary Education (IOJPE)*, 11(2), 461-475. <https://doi.org/10.55020/iojpe.1186097>



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### Abstract

The first years of human life are critical in all developmental areas. In these years, shared family experiences, social interaction, and safe, responsive, and nurturing environments provided to a child constitute the determining factor in their future life. The home environment is considered to be a place where the foundations of language and literacy skills are stimulated for many children. The COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the whole world, has caused non-formal education to be carried out remotely and via digital tools to an unprecedented extent. This situation has necessitated parents to be more aware of the possibilities of the home environment and its impact on children and to better understand the importance of taking responsibility. However, very few scholars in this pandemic situation have pointed out how language and literacy opportunities can be offered in the home environment, which is the first place of education for children. Therefore, this study aims to increase parents' home literacy skills and attitudes in order to develop opportunities and resources for children's participation in literacy-related interactions. Over a semester, 11 preschool and 12 first-year elementary school parents participated in this action research from Buca district of Izmir province in Turkey. Before implementing the action plans, parental attitudes towards home literacy competencies were assessed using a semi-structured survey prepared by the researchers. After the action plan, the parents' developmental status and attitudes towards home literacy were again evaluated with a semi-structured survey, and all data were analyzed using descriptive, percentage, frequency, and Cramer V analysis methods. According to the results, the action plan steps had a positive impact on raising awareness of the home literacy environment, building language and literacy activities, and supporting extension skills in essential language development (listening/watching, speaking, reading, and writing).

**Keywords:** Covid-19, home literacy, distance education, action research.

### INTRODUCTION

COVID-19, which was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, has taken all the countries of the world under its influence in a short time. The disease has had negative effects in many areas, including education, agriculture, economy, and tourism with a number of restrictions made in daily life. In this context, as a result of the suspension of face-to-face education for precautionary purposes and the cessation of activities in areas, where free time is used, there has been an increase in the duration of children staying at home. In addition to suspending educational activities, as Benner and Mistry (2020) stated, macro-level crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, are thought to have long-term effects on children's development. At this point, parents have needed to be guided about



which activities they could engage in with their children in order to lessen the negative impacts of the restrictions brought on by the pandemic. During this stay-at-home period, a unique opportunity has emerged to examine how families spend time at home with their kids. Although there are studies on the problems faced by families during the pandemic (Patrick et al., 2020; Prime et al., 2020; Russell et al., 2020), there has been little empirical research on home literacy activities performed by parents and students (Barnett et al., 2021; Gayatri et al., 2020; Stites & Ross, 2021; Stites et al., 2021). A limited study examines what parents need in terms of home literacy and family involvement and how they can improve these skills during the pandemic process. Studies generally focus on the problems that families experience during the COVID-19 period. During the pandemic, family members have had to spend most of their time at home, trying to cope with difficulties such as masking, social distancing, isolation, and quarantine (Çelik & Çak, 2021) in addition to helping their children overcome their fears and anxieties (Çetin & Kırıl, 2021). According to different studies, parents also experienced difficulties in the distance education process, such as not being able to make adequate use of the applications used in distance education; deficiencies on the internet and technological tools; not being able to connect to the course and not being able to access course materials; and a decrease in the sense of responsibility of students versus an increase in technology and social media addictions (Arslan, Görgülü Arı, & Hayır Kanat, 2021; Üstündağ, 2021).

The preschool period has an important role in human life. During this time, in which rapid changes are experienced in different areas of development (physical, mental, emotional, etc.), many building blocks for the future life of children are formed and shaped (Aryanti, Warsini, & Haryanti, 2018; Blair, McKinnon & Daneri, 2018). It is important at this time to provide children with basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional areas that they can benefit from throughout their lives (Topcu, 2012). The impact of home literacy cannot be ignored in terms of developing these skills. Although schools clearly play an important role in children's literacy development, literacy begins at home before formal education (Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Serpell et al., 2005). Since the pandemic has led to the closure of schools, parental involvement has become even more important, as the home has become the place where children learn to read and write and continue their literacy practices. Accordingly, the role of the teacher has passed on to parents, especially in cases where children have no access to online learning. The importance of home literacy has increased even further in this period in terms of ensuring that children can access information and improve their problem-solving skills. The home literacy environment is defined as the opportunities offered to children through various sources and the abilities, skills, and tendencies that parents must have in order to present these opportunities (Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, 2002). Beauty (2000) underlines that providing a suitable learning environment at home by the parents contributes significantly to the education process of the student. The literacy environment is handled in different dimensions. These are the sub-dimensions of the active environment (parents planning and implementing literacy activities with their children), passive environment (the child's exposure to a rich physical environment in the home environment where there are books, library, etc.), and modeling (parents modeling for the child by engaging in literacy behaviors) (Van Vechten, 2013). In that study, supportive practices were presented to the children of parents in accordance with the active, passive, and modeling sub-dimensions.

The interest of children in literacy is closely related to their participation in literacy activities from early childhood (ages 0-6) (López-Escribano, Escudero, & Pérez-López, 2021). Studies by many researchers show that the home environment plays an important role in facilitating both spoken and written language skills in various languages and cultural contexts (Bornstein, 2015; Gül, 2007; Krijnen et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2018; Mol, Bus, De Jong, & Smeets, 2008; Puranik, Philips, Lonigan, & Gibson, 2018; Silinskas, Sénéchal et al., 2020; Van Voorgis et al., 2013; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006). In addition, studies show that parent-child activities other than reading at home have multifaceted effects on the development of traditional oral and written language skills, as well as cognitive and social development (Griffin & Morrison, 1997; Hindman & Morrison, 2007, 2012; López-Escribano, Escudero, &



Pérez-López, 2021). As children learn some skills, the role of parents in home literacy work is expected to change (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Alston-Abel & Berninger, 2018). In this respect, there is a need for parents to diversify their home literacy activities and direct them to different activities that will be more interesting for children. Research on children's literacy development reveals that there are several home-based factors often associated with the development of children's early literacy skills. These factors include parents' beliefs about their role in their children's learning, literacy opportunities that parents provide for their children as well as parents who are role models for literacy and the quality of parent/child literacy interactions (Baker et al., 2001; Sénéchal, Sénéchal, & LeFevre, 2014; Serpell et al., 2005; Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002; Sonnenschein et al., 2016). The beliefs of parents on how to increase their children's interest in reading are related to the types of reading activities they offer to their children (Sonnenschein et al., 2000). The education of parents, the environment they live in, and their perspectives on education differ; thus, not every family's ability to cope with the education of their children is the same. However, according to a study conducted by Van Voorgis et al. (2013), parents, who were given guidance on home literacy, did more work at home to improve their children's literacy skills compared to families who were not guided, regardless of their backgrounds.

### **Involvement of Parents in Children's Education in the Home Environment**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning loss (Saavedra, 2020) and inequality of opportunity in accessing online education were two critical problems (Saran, 2020). In this process, families were caught unprepared for the home education process; and it was determined that there were difficulties in creating, maintaining, and developing distance learning (Sarı & Nayır, 2020). Due to the lack of sufficient technological and pedagogical readiness of students, teachers, and parents, many countries had to disrupt distance education processes (Li & Lalani, 2020). The process experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic firmly puts suggestions, such as increasing parental participation in education, empowering parents in this regard, strengthening the school-family bond, and involving parents in curriculum creation, on the agenda of the education system. One of the opportunities that can guide the new understanding of education in the research is to increase the participation of parents in the education process and to provide parents with proficiency in curriculum and educational functioning (Özdoğru, 2021; Sarı & Nayır, 2020; TEDMEM, 2020). Before the pandemic, it was considered a significant problem that families saw the education process as only school and did not have enough information about their children's learning processes and skill development (Sarı & Nayır, 2020). In the current process, the school-centered education process has evolved from home and distance education, and in this case, the need for parents to be more involved in the process has emerged (Özdoğru, 2021; Haşiloğlu, Durak & Arslan, 2020). UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020) recommends that parents be included in the process and supported in the use of educational technologies to ensure the effectiveness of education during the pandemic period.

Home literacy practices have important effects on the development of children's school literacy skills (Frijters, Barron & Brunello, 2000; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Suizzo & Soon, 2006). Much of the research conducted to date on home literacy practices focus on shared reading frequency and characteristics (e.g., amount of interaction; Mol, Bus, De Jong, & Smeets, 2008) and its relationship to children's oral language or reading skills. In the literature, it is noteworthy that there are few studies on the training of parents to develop home literacy and what kind of changes they provide at home. In line with this need, the aim of this study, together with the findings obtained from previous studies examining the relationship between home literacy practices and children's oral language, reading, and writing skills, is to contribute to the growing knowledge regarding the fact that home literacy practices have an important and multifaceted impact on development in the early childhood and primary education period. This study was conducted with the parents of 23 preschool and first-year primary school students, and the data were obtained through the surveys prepared by the researchers with the aim to develop the parents' home literacy skills. As a result of the analysis, it was aimed to provide clear and easily accessible information through various activities that parents could benefit from their children's literacy development at home and perform with their children, and inferences were made in



terms of conceptualizing home literacy practices in the light of the findings. In addition, in this period, when the pandemic is still being experienced, studying the circumstances encountered in the education process by applying scientific methods could enable us to be prepared for crisis and disaster situations that may occur in the future. In this direction, the research aims to develop home literacy skills that parents need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the purpose of the research, the sub-objectives were determined as follows:

1. In what ways do parents support their children at home?
  - 1.1. At what level do parents consider themselves capable of supporting their children's home activities/assignments?
  - 1.2. At what level do parents implement practices that support their children's basic language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and writing skills?
  - 1.3. At what level do parents engage in story-reading or listening activities with their children at home?
  - 1.4. At what level do parents use the drama method in their children's home activities/assignments?
  - 1.5. At what level do parents use digital teaching tools/games in their children's home activities/assignments?
2. What are the implications for “parent literacy education”?
  - 2.1. At what level do parents consider themselves capable of supporting their children's home activities/assignments after the training?
  - 2.2. At what level do parents practice their children's basic language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and writing skills after the training?
  - 2.3. After the training, parents can write stories/tales, etc. with their children at home. At what level do they perform reading or listening activities?
  - 2.4. At what level do parents use the drama method in their children's home activities/works after the training?
  - 2.5. At what level do parents use digital teaching tools/games in their children's home activities/assignments after the training?
3. What are the views of parents on “parental literacy training”?

## METHOD

Information on the research design, study group, data collection tools, data collection process, and data analysis related to the research are given in this section.

### Research Pattern

The study aimed to develop parents' home literacy skills. The research was designed according to the action research model. Action research is based on the critical and practical experiences of participants about the situation studied (Tezcan, Sefer, & Baysal, 2016). It is important for action research to reveal problems during the process or to solve problems by making sense of them. Action research develops teachers' practices in the classroom and how they learn new information by working with others (Özaslan, 2016). This research include processes for understanding, examining, and solving the problems that arise in practice. Practitioners can perform these processes alone or with a researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). There are different classifications of action research. Grundy (1988) classifies action research as “technical, practitioner, and liberating”, whereas McKernan (1991) classifies it as “scientific-technical and problem-solving-based, practical, and critical-emancipatory”. Holter and Schwartz-Barcott (1993) classify them as "depending on technical cooperation, mutual cooperation, and development". Berg (2001) brings these different approaches together and classifies action research into three types as “technical/scientific collaborative action research, practice/mutual collaboration/discussion-oriented action research, and liberating/developing/critical action research” (As cited in: Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 308-309). “A fourth type can be added to this classification



made by Berg, taking into account that the practitioner can also conduct action research. In the approach where the practitioner is also a researcher, the researcher should be able to collect data on the problem s/he has identified while continuing the practice” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, p. 308-309). In this study, the specified type was chosen because it was aimed to improve the home literacy skills of parents.

### Working Group

The participants of the study consisted of 43 parents of the students studying in two private schools (one (n=11) kindergarten and one primary school (n=32) in Buca, the central district of İzmir, Turkey) during the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. 11 of the preschool parents and 12 of the primary school parents, 23 in total, participated in all the studies, and the pre-and post-application data were obtained from these parents. The study group was determined according to the convenience sampling method. The convenience sampling method is among the most widely used methods in educational science (Jager et al., 2017). However, the nature of the sample limits the generalizability of the findings and causal explanations (Dearing & Zachrisson, 2019; Etikan et al., 2016). 23 parents, who participated in the study, took part voluntarily. The personal information of the parents is given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Personal information regarding parents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Woman	19	81
Man	4	19
Total	23	100

When the gender status of the 23 parents, who participated in the pre- and final application of the research, was examined, it consisted of 19 women and 4 men. In addition, the number of children of the parents was also asked; and it was seen that the parents usually had 1 or 2 children and that there was only 1 parent with 6 children.

### Data Collection Tools

To collect the research data, semi-structured surveys were prepared by the researchers. The semi-structured survey is a type of survey that includes closed and open-ended questions and tries to reveal opinions based on purpose (Sarantakos, 2005, cited in Çermik, 2013, p. 141). After the surveys were prepared, experts were asked to evaluate the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions and their adequacy in the subject. The arrangement was made based on the suggestions and opinions of the experts. In the semi-structured surveys, a total of six questions (1 open-ended and 5 closed-ended questions) were asked, based on personal information about the gender of the parents and the number of children, as well as the purpose of the research. One of the semi-structured surveys was used to determine the current status of the parents’ knowledge and skills on home literacy before the study, whereas the other one was used after the training to determine the views of the parents on spending more effective time with their children and to evaluate their level of implementation after the training they received. The data were obtained through the “Google Form.”

### Data Collection Process

In the COVID-19 process, concepts such as mother-father-child interaction, in-home educational activities, family participation, home literacy, etc., which are known to be very important in the days when the rate of spending time together with their children at home increases, has gained even more importance (Daşçı Sönmez & Cemaloğlu, 2021). From this point of view, the research problem was determined, the causes of the problem were revealed, the literature was searched for the solution, and the data were collected. After the due diligence was made, an action plan was prepared by preparing a training program in order to improve the skills of the parents, known as home literacy, in order to solve the research problem. The prepared action plan was implemented and evaluated after the implementation. The action plan of the research consisted of a five-week process, with one training per week. The details of the training program are given below. The participants were informed about the training program by the researchers.



1. With the training given, it was aimed to improve the home literacy skills of the parents and to spend the time they spend at home with their children more efficiently.

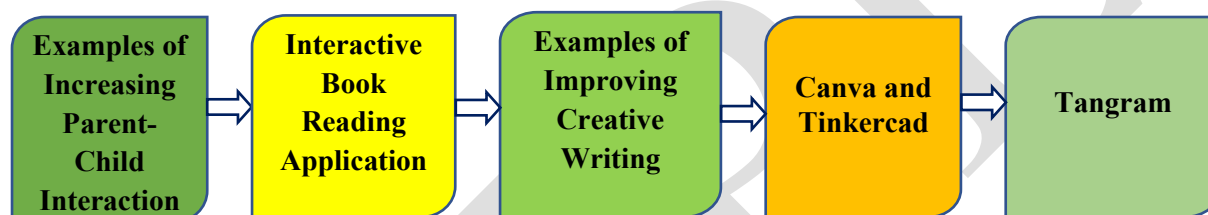
2. Technological infrastructure, tools, and equipment were prepared, and the training was held online (Zoom).

3. The training was given in a single session (60 minutes) or within two sessions (45+45) following the plan.

4. The training started in November and ended in December.

**Table 2.** Action plan of the research

Weeks	Training Content	Expert	Training Duration
1	Teaching Makes a Difference!	Expert1- (Associate professor)	60 min.
2	Interactive Book Reading Program	Expert2- (Teacher, PhD Student)	60 min.
3	Every Child is a Writer!	Expert3- (Assistant professor)	60 min.
4	Supporting Home Literacy with Digital Tools	Expert4- (Teacher)	45 min.+ 45 min.
5	Mathematics with Creative Drama	Expert5- (Associate professor)	60 min.



**Figure 1.** Applications made in educational content

The applications made in the training content were carried out in line with the prepared action plan (Table 2) and the action plans are shown, respectively (Figure 1). Information on the training given each week is given below:

**Week 1-** Within the scope of the “Teaching Makes a Difference!” training, information on activities, materials, and practices that would increase the interaction between the parent and the child was given.

**Week 2-** Within the scope of the "Interactive Book Reading Program" training, the interactive reading program was introduced to the parents, the stages of the process were explained, and examples were given. In addition, an application was made using the "Little Rain Drop" book.

**Week 3-** Within the scope of the “Every Child is a Writer!” training, the subject of creative writing was explained, and the process was supported with examples from the activities.

**Week 4-** Within the scope of the "Supporting Home Literacy with Digital Tools" training, “Canva” and “Tinkercad” programs, which are among Web 2.0 tools, were introduced to the parents. The features of the programs were explained, examples were shown, and applications were made.

**Week 5-** Within the scope of the "Mathematics with Creative Drama" training, how drama could be used was explained with examples and associated with Mathematics using Tangram, and an application was made.

During the practice, it was observed that the participants were interested in, and willingly participated in the training. At the end of the action research conducted to develop the parents' home literacy skills, a semi-structured survey prepared by the researchers was applied to enable the parents to evaluate the process in order to reveal how they experienced this process. In this semi-structured survey, after the training they received, the participants were asked to evaluate their level of practice and to share their views on the training.



### Analysis of Data

In this research, which was conducted to improve the home literacy skills of parents, the data were applied before and after the action plan was carried out through the developed survey. Five closed-ended questions in the semi-structured surveys were prepared in accordance with triple grading. The rating ranges of the questions consisted of “no”, “partly”, and “yes” options. Responses to positive statements were scored by giving numerical values from "no" to "yes" and from 1 to 3. Considering the coefficient  $(3-1=2)$  and  $(2/3=.66)$  in the calculation of the score range of the survey, the evaluation range of the weighted arithmetic averages was formed, as in Table 3 (Kaya, 2008).

**Table 3.** Rating ranges

Evaluation Intervals	Rating Items
Between 1.00 – 1.66	No
Between 1.67 – 2.33	Partly
Between 2.34 – 3.00	Yes

Cramer's V test was used to determine the significance of the difference between the mean scores of the data obtained from the surveys regarding the pre-and post-survey applications. Cramer's V coefficient is the correlation coefficient used to determine the relationship between classifiable variables (Cramer, 1946; Karagöz, 2018). The answers given by the parents to the open-ended question about the training provided were analyzed through descriptive analysis. In the descriptive analysis, direct quotations are frequently used in order to reflect the views of the individual interviewed or observed in a striking way (Altunışık et al., 2012).

## FINDINGS and INTERPRETATION

### Findings Related to the First Aim

Before the parental literacy training, it was aimed to find out the level of the parents' self-efficacy in supporting their children's home activities/homework and to determine in which subjects the parents, who considered themselves competent, supported their children. Activities that the parents did with their children are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Other activities parents did with their children

Names of Other Activities	Frequency	%
Homework	37	86
Activity books	20	47
Literacy preparation	32	74
Board games	3	7
Family participation books	7	16

When Table 4 is examined in the case of the other activities that the parents did with their children, it is seen that the parents (86%) helped with homework (47%), used activity books (74%), and did literacy preparation studies (7%). It is also seen that 6% played board games and 16% used family participation books. The descriptive analyzes made in accordance with the sub-aims are given below.

### Findings Related to the 1.1. Sub-Aim

1.1. The descriptive analyzes were made in accordance with 1.1. sub-aim is given in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Level of support for home activities

Home Activities	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	Median	Range	Min and Max Values
Level of Support	43	2.37	.57	2.00	2.00	1.00-3.00

Considering the level of the parents' support for their children's home activities/homework before the parental literacy training, it was determined that the average was 2.37. When this level was examined



within the scope of the evaluation intervals, it was determined that the rate was at the level of "yes". According to this, it can be stated that the majority of the parents participating in the study supported their children's home activities/homework.

### Findings Related to the 1.2. Sub-Aim

In 1.2. sub-aim of the study, the level of the parents' support for their children's basic language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and writing skills were evaluated. The analyzes carried out in accordance with the purpose are given in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Basic language and authoring skills level of support

Basic language and writing skills	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	Median	Range	Min and Max values
Level of Support	43	1.62	.92	1.00	2.00	1.00-3.00

Considering the level of support of the parents in basic language and writing skills before the parental literacy training, it was determined that the average was 1.62. When this level was examined within the scope of the evaluation intervals, it was determined that the rate was at the "no" level. According to this, it can be stated that the majority of the parents participating in the study did not carry out activities to develop basic language and writing skills.

### Findings Related to the 1.3. Sub-Aim

In the 1.3. sub-aim of the research, the cases of the parents making applications that supported reading or listening skills with their children at home were evaluated. The analyzes made in accordance with the purpose are given in Table 7.

**Table 7.** The level of making practices that supported reading and listening skills together

Applications that support reading and listening skills together	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	Median	Range	Min and Max values
Level of doing	43	2.58	.58	3.00	2.00	1.00-3.00

Considering the level of making applications that support reading and listening skills before the parenting literacy training, it was determined that the average was 2.58. When this level was examined within the scope of the evaluation intervals, it was determined that the rate was at the level of "yes". According to this, it can be stated that the majority of the parents participating in the study used applications that supported reading and listening skills.

### Findings Related to the 1.4. Sub-Aim

In the 1.4. sub-aim of the study, the use of the drama method of the parents in their children's home activities/homework was evaluated. The analyzes carried out in accordance with the purpose are given in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Level of using drama method in activities and games

Drama in Activities and Games	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	Median	Range	Min and Max values
Level of using	43	2.18	.73	2.00	2.00	1.00-3.00

Considering the level of the parents' use of the drama method in activities and games before the parental literacy training, it was determined that the average was 2.18. When this level is examined within the scope of the evaluation intervals, it was determined that the rate was at the "partly" level.





### Findings Related to the 1.5. Sub-Aim

In the 1.5. sub-aim of the study, the use of digital teaching tools/games of the parents in their children's home activities/homework was evaluated. The analyzes carried out in accordance with the purpose are given in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Level of the utilization of digital teaching tools

Digital teaching tools	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	Median	Range	Min and Max values
Level of utilization	43	1.88	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00-3.00

Considering the level of the parents' use of digital teaching tools before the parental literacy training, it was determined that the average was 1.88. When this level is examined within the scope of the evaluation intervals, it was determined that the rate was at the "partly" level.

### Findings Related to the Second Sub-Aims

Answers were searched about the implications of parental literacy training in relation to 2.1., 2.2., 2.3., 2.4., 2.5. sub-aims of the research. Cramer V analysis was conducted to test the relationship between the initial and final educational competencies of 23 parents participating in the pre-and post-application regarding the initial and final competences before and after the training, and the results are given in Table 10.

**Table 10.** The relationship coefficients between the activity participation status of children and test types

Activity type	Subcategory	Test		$\chi^2$	Cramer V
		Pre-Test	Final Test		
Indoor Activity (IA)	No	1	1	18.45*	.63*
	Partly	13	0		
	Yes	9	22		
Basic Language and Authorship (BLA)	No	14	0	22.26*	.70*
	Partly	1	0		
	Yes	8	23		
Drama-Game (DG)	No	3	0	21.04*	.68*
	Partly	13	1		
	Yes	7	22		
Interactive Reading (IA)	No	2	1	1.24	.16
	Partly	4	2		
	Yes	17	20		
Digital Teaching Tools/Games (DTT)	No	11	0	16.58*	.60*
	Partly	0	4		
	Yes	12	19		

\* Significant value at the  $p < .001$  level.

In Table 10, the chi-square origin correlation coefficients between the pre-and post-test related to the children's home activity, language writing, drama activity, book reading, and digital literacy participation status are given. Accordingly, it was decided that the children's home activity participation status was not independent of the test type; in other words, there was a relationship between them ( $\chi^2=18.45$ ,  $V=.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ). When the results of another activity were examined, it was determined that the language authorship participation status of the children was not independent of the test type and that there was a relationship between them ( $\chi^2=22.26$ ,  $V=.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was determined that the drama activity participation status of the children was not independent of the test type; in other words, there



was a relationship between them ( $\chi^2=21.04$ ,  $V=.68$ ,  $p<.001$ ). It was decided that the digital literacy activity participation status of the children was not independent of the test type; in other words, there was a relationship between them ( $\chi^2=16.58$ ,  $V=.60$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Finally, it was decided that the children's participation in reading activities was independent of the test type; in other words, there was no relationship between them ( $\chi^2=1.24$ ,  $V=.16$ ,  $p>.001$ ). It was observed that there was an increase in all averages after the applications. The mean scores of the 23 parents who participated in the pre-and post-tests were ( $\bar{X}_{IA}=2.37$ ;  $\bar{X}_{BLA}=1.62$ ;  $\bar{X}_{DG}=2.58$ ;  $\bar{X}_{IR}=2.18$ ;  $\bar{X}_{DTT}= 1.88$ ), respectively, while the final application average scores were ( $\bar{X}_{IA}=2.91$ ;  $\bar{X}_{BLA}=3.00$ ;  $\bar{X}_{DG}=2.82$ ;  $\bar{X}_{IR}=2.95$ ;  $\bar{X}_{DTT}=2.82$ ), respectively. It is seen that there is an increase in all average scores after the applications.

### Findings Related to the Third Aim

In the last aim of the study, it was aimed to determine the views of the parents on "parental literacy training". The obtained data were subjected to descriptive analysis, and the results are given in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Views of parents

		F	%
Views	Positive	23	100
	Negative	0	0

*P2: We have seen many activities and creative idea applications that we were not aware of. It was a good training for more effective and memorable lessons.*

*P3: I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this opportunity, which is very beautiful and will not come easily anywhere. Kind regards.*

*P6: As a result of the training received, we observed that by developing effective communication ways with our child, we developed the positive aspects of our child's behavior within the family and in the social environment.*

*P7: I was very satisfied with these trainings. While I was reading a book, I was not doing a straight reading, I was doing interactive work, but after Elif teacher's interactive book reading training, my awareness increased. While reading the book, I realized that I did not pay attention to some issues, and we continued our reading by correcting them. Thank you.*

*P8: We used to spend time together with my child before the training. Thank you very much to our teachers who contributed. I saw how efficiently time could be used, especially by experiencing the difference in reading comprehension.*

*P9: I am very happy to have attended your training. With the Canva program, we write English story-reading and listening texts, add the words that my daughter does not know in the text, and get printouts. We have a lot of fun and learn at the same time. Thank you.*

*P10: Having learned the information that we did not know, I learned how to follow a path for my child. Thank you.*

*P15: In one word, thank you very much for such training.*

*P16: After the training I received, we had much more enjoyable reading hours thanks to the interactive book. I was very satisfied with the training.*

*P19: It makes reading children's books more enjoyable for us.*

*P21: First of all, I would like to thank you for the training. I started to do the activities we did before, reading and understanding books more consciously. My awareness has increased. The time I spend with the child is now more valuable and quality. Thanks to these trainings, both my wife and I are more careful when criticizing the child or listening to the truth.*



*P23: I got a lot out of the presentations I attended and started to practice them at home with my son. We all appreciate your efforts...*

When the answers given by the parents to the research question were examined, all of the parents (f:19, 100% frequency) reported positive opinions about the effectiveness of the parental literacy training. The opinions of the parents numbered 2, 3, 10, 15, and 23 show that the training was effective and efficient and that the parents were satisfied with the training provided. It can be stated that the words of the parents numbered 7, 16, and 19 about the interactive book reading training positively affected the reading practices that the parents had with their children, increased the awareness of the parents, and contributed to the reading hours being more enjoyable. According to the opinion of the parent numbered 6, the examples, which increased the parent-child interaction given in the training called "Teaching Makes a Difference!", suggest that there were positive reflections on the parent-child communication. The opinion of the parent numbered 9 shows that the application (Canva) introduced in the "Supporting Home Literacy with Digital Tools" training was used for both learning and entertainment purposes. The parents numbered 8 and 21 reported positive views on awareness of reading comprehension activities. These views given in the "Every Child is a Writer!" training suggest that the examples, which improved creative writing skills, had a positive contribution.

## CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study aimed to improve the home literacy skills of parents during the COVID-19 pandemic process. In addition, it was aimed to contribute to the growing knowledge regarding the fact that home literacy practices have an important and multifaceted effect on development at the beginning of preschool and primary education. According to the results obtained, before the parental literacy training, the majority of the parents stated that they participated in their children's "home activities/homework" and supported their "reading or listening skills". This support was mostly in the form of helping with homework, supporting the literacy process, completing activity books, and reading stories, respectively. Before the parental literacy training, the majority of the parents stated that they could support their children "partially, at a limited level" in terms of using the drama method in activities and games and using digital teaching tools/games in home activities/homework. Finally, the parents stated that they were insufficient in supporting their children's basic language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and writing skills. As a result of the five-week action research, it was concluded that the parents' views on their children's skills from pre-test to post-test changed positively in cases of supporting their children in home activities, striving to develop basic language and writing skills, using drama-games in activities, interactive reading together, and using digital teaching tools/games in activities. In the interviews with the parents, all of the parents stated that the training was beneficial; therefore, according to this result, it can be concluded that if parents are educated, they help their children more. Considering that the most common problem in the pandemic process in many studies is reported as not having the digital competencies to use online education applications used in the distance education process sufficiently (Arslan, Görgülü Arı, & Hayır Kanat, 2021; Akın & Aslan, 2021; TEDMEM, 2020), it can be stated that this research achieved its purpose. It is thought that the effective execution of the education process during the pandemic depends on the support and active participation of parents (Duban & Şen, 2020; Özdoğru, 2021; Haşiloğlu, Durak, & Arslan, (2020). Özdoğru (2021) stated that some of the responsibilities of parents regarding the effectiveness of the distance education process were to support the continuity of learning at home, to provide the necessary support to students when they do not understand a subject in the distance education, to provide students with additional content, and to provide technical support to students on educational technologies. It can be stated that the results of this research aim to develop the skills needed by parents, which are included in the research findings of Özdoğru (2021) and provide a data source regarding the importance of educating parents on home literacy in a similar pandemic process. In addition, the finding of the TEDMEM (2020) regarding the limited ability of students and parents to use technological tools coincides with the educational effort of parents to increase their ability to use technological tools in this study.



This study provided the initial data that could be used as a starting point to conduct longitudinal studies and to explore how the home literacy landscape changed during the pandemic and what families could do. In the study, although we asked the parents how they applied and got efficiency in, home literacy activities after receiving supportive training for themselves and their children, these interactions could not be observed. Therefore, it was not concluded whether or how the training provided was conclusively related to the growth in literacy skills. Our findings were not based on actual children's activities, but on parents' reports of their children's activity. In addition, no questions were asked about the income of the families, their marital status, and other psychosocial situations. Such information and observation of families could be incorporated into future research. Another point is that there are many studies that criticize parents' taking responsibility in supporting children's home-school activities, which as their homework (Gürlevik, 2006; Öcal, 2009). In those studies, it was argued that the relationship between the child and the teacher should continue without the intervention of the parent. However, what has suggested in this study was that appropriate activities and materials for the development of parental home literacy skills and the intellectual development of the child should be available to children at home and that parents should be role models for them. In this research, home literacy skills are expressed as practicing the collective learning process in learning and experiencing with their children, unlike the parents playing the role of teacher at home. In this context, guidance activities can be carried out by conducting a needs analysis in order to identify the obstacles to the active participation of parents in the education process without taking on the role of teacher. In addition, training activities can be organized to raise awareness of parents about the roles expected from parents in the home education process where distance education takes place. Since comprehensive action research was conducted, the researchers selected the study group from two voluntary private schools, one kindergarten, and one primary school, considering the accessibility and continuity criteria of the research. The fact that the study group was easily accessible and that there were only a few studies on the pandemic process in private schools was thought to be important to understand how this process is experienced in private schools. Because of this limitation, the findings may not apply to less-educated parents or low-income families. Since low-income families are less likely to have digital tools and internet access than wealthier families, families need time not only to access digital devices and the internet but also to help their children. This may vary according to family income. Despite the limitations of this study, it is thought that it will contribute to the understanding of children's learning environments at home due to COVID-19, increase our understanding of domestic literacy activities, and improve parental skills in Turkey and all countries experiencing the pandemic process.

### **Ethics and Conflict of Interest**

All authors of this study confirm that they have contributed sufficiently to the research to be included as authors. They also acted in accordance with ethical rules at all stages of the research as stated in the approval granted by the Ethics Committee of Dokuz Eylül University (Date:07.07.2021, number: E-10042736-900.99-85130). We declare that there is no conflict of interest between the authors in the study.

### **Acknowledgment**

For their support for the action plans prepared during the research process, and we would like to thank Assoc.Prof.Dr. Esen ERSOY and Teacher Mehmet TELLİOĞLU.

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