

## Article

# Kindergartens' School Readiness: Teachers And Parents' Expectations

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**Abstract:** This study examines the alignment between teachers' and parents' expectations and perceptions of kindergarten readiness, focusing on key academic, social, and behavioral skills deemed essential for a child's successful transition to school. Using a quantitative descriptive correlational research design, data were gathered from teachers and parents at Mactan Elementary School via a modified survey instrument. Findings reveal a generally high level of expectation from both groups regarding kindergarten readiness, with parents (mean score 4.47) exhibiting significantly higher expectations compared to teachers (mean score 4.03). However, no statistically significant difference was found between their perceptions of essential readiness qualities, indicating a shared understanding of the attributes needed for school success. The disparity in overall expectations underscores the importance of fostering stronger communication and collaboration between parents and teachers to align goals for early childhood education. These insights suggest that a unified approach could enhance support for children's academic and social development, promoting smoother kindergarten transitions.

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**Keywords:** Kindergarten readiness, Teacher expectations, Parent expectations, Teacher-parent collaboration

## Introduction

Entering kindergarten from preschool represents a pivotal step in a child's education, with "school readiness" emerging as a central focus for both families and educators. This concept covers a broad range of essential skills, including language and literacy development, early numeracy, self-regulation, and social-emotional skills, which together build the foundation for a child's future academic and personal development (Jones et al., 2023). The importance of preparing children for the academic and social demands of kindergarten has long been acknowledged, with well-prepared children showing higher



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levels of engagement and achievement in early schooling (Hughes et al., 2022).

Although parents and teachers share the objective of enhancing school readiness, their views on what constitutes readiness often diverge. Teachers, drawing from their professional experience, tend to prioritize academic and behavioral skills aligned with curriculum requirements, while parents may focus more on social maturity and overall well-being (Simmons & Greaves, 2020). This difference in focus can shape children's kindergarten experience, sometimes introducing challenges in adjustment and engagement (Lee & Chen, 2023). Research emphasizes the need to synchronize parent and teacher expectations to build a cohesive support network for young children as they enter formal education (Brown & Kim, 2024).

A large-scale survey of kindergarten teachers found that a substantial number of students are viewed as underprepared, especially in areas such as language development, emotional regulation, and social skills (Nguyen & Harris, 2021). Supporting these findings, Brown and Kim (2024) reported that both parents and teachers emphasize literacy and adaptability as essential for school readiness, although they often differ in which skills they prioritize. These variations in focus could significantly impact children's successful adjustment to school, underscoring the need for better alignment between teacher and parent expectations to support early academic and social success.

Children often enter kindergarten with varying skill levels, largely shaped by their early experiences and parental involvement (Hernandez et al., 2023). Given that parents are primary figures in early childhood development, understanding readiness from their perspective provides crucial insights. While much research has been conducted on teacher perceptions, fewer studies have investigated school readiness from the viewpoint of parents, representing an area for further exploration to inform educational strategies (Wilson & Park, 2021).

Traditionally, school readiness has been assessed by cognitive abilities and age, but there is an increasing recognition that social and behavioral competencies are just as critical for success. Research shows that children who demonstrate good emotional regulation and attentional control are more likely to succeed academically (Pan et al., 2019). However, many young children face developmental challenges in at least one key area by the time they reach kindergarten, underscoring the need to address these disparities to promote a smoother transition (Davis et al., 2021; Tran & Lee, 2022).

Today's kindergarteners face increased academic expectations, structured routines, and performance benchmarks. A clear understanding of how both teachers and parents view readiness can inform strategies to better align these perspectives and ensure children are adequately supported. By examining both parent and teacher

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perspectives, this study aims to contribute to current knowledge on school readiness and inform the development of effective strategies for kindergarten transitions (Huang & Thompson, 2021). It will further propose a school readiness action plan designed to close the gap between teacher and parent expectations, ultimately fostering a more cohesive approach to early childhood education (Liu et al., 2023; Miller & Rivera, 2023).

## Methodology

This study employs a quantitative descriptive correlational design to examine the expectations of teachers and parents concerning kindergarten readiness. This methodology allows for objective measurement and statistical analysis of relationships between variables, making it ideal for assessing the perceptions and expectations of both groups. Data is collected using a structured survey adapted from the Kindergarten Teacher Survey on Student Readiness (Welch & Welch, 1999), modified to capture specific information about each group's expectations. The survey addresses key areas such as levels of expectation, the significance of various readiness qualities, and the perceived roles of parents and teachers in preparing children for kindergarten. Conducted at Mactan Elementary School in Lapu-Lapu City, the study involves kindergarten teachers and parents as respondents. The data is analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson's  $r$ ), a statistical tool chosen to assess the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables. With a significance level set at 0.05, the analysis aims to identify any significant correlations between teacher and parent expectations. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from "Very Low" (1.00-1.80) to "Very High" (4.21-5.00), reflecting the degree of agreement with various statements.

## Results and Discussion

The teachers profile reveals that all 10 are female, with the majority (50%) between the ages of 33 and 38, followed by 30% who are 45 years and above, and 20% within the 39-44 age range. The educational attainment of these respondents, showing that 80% hold master's units, while the remaining 20% have pursued doctorate-level units, indicating a high level of advanced education among the teachers. In terms of teaching experience, half of the respondents (50%) have 11 to 15 years of service, while the other half (50%) have been teaching for 6 to 10 years. Moreover, the demographic profile of parent-respondents reveals a predominantly young adult group, with nearly half (48%) aged 22-31 and a majority (84%) being female. Most parents have attained high school education (42%) or some college experience (26%), with a smaller percentage holding higher qualifications, such as

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master's units (4%). In terms of family size, the majority of respondents (58%) have one or two children, suggesting that most families are relatively small, potentially allowing for greater attention to each child's educational needs. Overall, this demographic reflects a young, moderately educated parent population with smaller family sizes.

Table 1. Extent of the teachers' expectations on ensuring kindergarteners' readiness in school

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten.	4.80	Very High
2	Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school.	4.80	Very High
3	Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten.	4.70	Very High
4	If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling.	2.40	Low
5	Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need.	4.60	Very High
6	Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it.	4.10	High
7	I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills.	4.10	High
8	Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork.	4.80	Very High
9	Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day.	2.40	Low
10	I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade.	3.60	High
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.03	High

The data in Table 1 reflects teachers' expectations regarding kindergarten readiness, revealing a predominantly high level of expectation with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.03, categorized as "High." Teachers place significant importance on early preparation, with top ratings for indicators such as attending preschool (4.80) and beginning formal reading and math instruction before kindergarten (4.80). Similarly, teachers strongly agree that parents should ensure their children know the alphabet before starting school (4.70) and dedicate time daily to practicing schoolwork (4.80), highlighting the perceived role of parents in fostering readiness. Teachers also prioritize timely enrollment for children with readiness challenges, believing that exposure to the school environment will support development (4.60). However, expectations regarding readiness as a developmental milestone (4.10) and their role in enhancing it (4.10) are rated slightly lower, though still "High," indicating a balanced view of readiness as both innate and cultivable. Notably, daily homework (2.40) and delaying enrollment for unready children (2.40) received "Low" ratings, suggesting that teachers do not universally support daily homework or postponement as effective readiness strategies. Overall, the data reflects strong teacher support for early foundational skills and

parental involvement, balanced with an understanding of readiness as a developmental process.

Table 2. Extent of the parents' expectations on ensuring kindergarteners' readiness in school

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten.	4.82	Very High
2	Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school.	4.65	Very High
3	Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten.	4.77	Very High
4	If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling.	3.86	High
5	Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need.	4.61	Very High
6	Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it.	4.36	Very High
7	I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills.	4.67	Very High
8	Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork.	4.89	Very High
9	Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day.	3.50	High
10	I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade.	4.58	Very High
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.47	Very High

The data in Table 2 highlights parents' high expectations for kindergarten readiness, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.47, categorized as "Very High." Parents place significant emphasis on attending preschool as a foundation for success in kindergarten, reflected in the highest rating of 4.82. Similarly, they strongly support ensuring that children know the alphabet before starting school (4.77) and believe in daily practice at home for their children to reinforce readiness skills (4.89). There is also strong agreement on the benefit of early exposure to formal reading and math (4.65) and the need for timely school entry for children with readiness challenges (4.61), indicating a preference for structured early learning. Parents also view readiness as a developmental milestone (4.36), recognizing the importance of maturation. However, daily homework in kindergarten received a lower, yet still "High," rating (3.50), suggesting a more moderate stance on this requirement. Overall, the data reflects that parents have a strong focus on early academic skills and proactive preparation, with substantial importance placed on both home involvement and gradual readiness development.

The data in Table 3 indicates that teachers place a high degree of importance on various qualities they believe kindergarteners should possess to be ready for school, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.52, categorized as "Highly Important."

Table 3. Degree of importance of the qualities of the kindergarteners should possess to be ready for school as perceived by teachers

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished.	4.60	Highly Important
2	Finishes tasks.	4.90	Highly Important
3	Can count to 20 or more.	3.90	Highly Important
4	Takes-turns and shares.	4.60	Highly Important
5	Has good problem-solving skills.	3.90	Important
6	Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.	4.50	Highly Important
7	Is able to use pencils or paint brushes.	4.50	Highly Important
8	Is not disruptive of the class.	3.80	Important
9	Knows the English language.	4.30	Important
10	Is sensitive to other children's feelings.	4.50	Highly Important
11	Sits still and pays attention.	4.30	Important
12	Knows the letters of the alphabet.	4.70	Highly Important
13	Can follow directions.	4.70	Highly Important
14	Identifies primary colors and basic shapes.	4.60	Highly Important
15	Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language.	4.40	Highly Important
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.52	Highly Important

Teachers particularly value task completion, rated at 4.90, underscoring their emphasis on developing persistence and focus in young learners. Foundational academic skills, such as knowing the alphabet and following directions, are also highly prioritized, with both receiving a mean of 4.70. Social skills, such as the ability to take turns, share, and show sensitivity to others' feelings, also received high ratings (4.60 and 4.50), suggesting that teachers view social-emotional readiness as integral to school preparedness. Physical health and enthusiasm for new activities are equally important, both rated at 4.60 and 4.50, respectively. While some skills, such as counting to 20, good problem-solving skills, and sitting still, were rated slightly lower, they are still deemed important.

Table 4. Degree of importance of the qualities of the kindergarteners should possess to be ready for school as perceived by parents

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished.	4.79	Highly Important
2	Finishes tasks.	4.68	Highly Important
3	Can count to 20 or more.	4.44	Highly Important
4	Takes-turns and shares.	4.54	Highly Important
5	Has good problem solving skills.	4.44	Highly Important
6	Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.	4.59	Highly Important
7	Is able to use pencils or paint brushes.	4.44	Highly Important
8	Is not disruptive of the class.	4.45	Highly Important
9	Knows the English language.	4.40	Highly Important
10	Is sensitive to other children's feelings.	4.58	Highly Important
11	Sits still and pays attention.	4.72	Highly Important
12	Knows the letters of the alphabet.	4.76	Highly Important
13	Can follow directions.	4.78	Highly Important
14	Identifies primary colors and basic shapes.	4.77	Highly Important
15	Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language.	4.81	Highly Important
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.46	4.61
			Highly Important



The data in Table 4 reflects that parents view a wide range of qualities as "Highly Important" for kindergarten readiness, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.61. Parents place the most emphasis on their children's ability to communicate needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in their primary language, which received the highest rating of 4.81. Other highly prioritized qualities include being physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished (4.79) and following directions (4.78), highlighting the importance parents place on both physical well-being and the ability to cooperate in a structured environment. Academic skills such as knowing the alphabet (4.76) and identifying colors and shapes (4.77) are also rated very highly, indicating that parents value foundational academic preparation. Social skills, such as taking turns, sharing (4.54), and being sensitive to others' feelings (4.58), are seen as crucial, as are attention and focus, with "sitting still and paying attention" rated at 4.72. Overall, these findings suggest that parents prioritize a comprehensive mix of communication, physical health, academic basics, and social-emotional skills as essential for a child's successful transition into kindergarten.

Table 5. Test of difference between the parents and teachers' expectations on ensuring kindergarteners' readiness in school

Source of Difference	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Computed t-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Teachers	4.03	0.23	0.44	-5.196*	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Parents	4.47	0.43					

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$

The results in Table 5 demonstrate a statistically significant difference between the expectations of teachers and parents regarding kindergarten readiness. Teachers report an average expectation score of 4.03 (SD = 0.23), while parents indicate a notably higher score of 4.47 (SD = 0.43), leading to a mean difference of 0.44. With a computed t-value of -5.196 and a p-value of 0.000 (below the significance threshold of 0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant gap in expectations. This finding highlights that parents generally hold higher expectations than teachers for the skills and behaviors their children should demonstrate before entering kindergarten. This disparity may reflect parents' greater emphasis on early academic and behavioral preparation, suggesting that they view kindergarten readiness as involving robust foundational skills across multiple areas. Parents may prioritize readiness indicators such as basic literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional competencies, which they believe will help their children adapt more quickly to formal education settings. Conversely, teachers might approach readiness more flexibly, focusing on development that can continue to evolve once children enter the school environment.

The significant difference in expectations underscores a need for stronger alignment and communication between parents and teachers regarding school readiness criteria. Bridging this gap could involve collaborative discussions or workshops to harmonize expectations, helping to ensure that children receive consistent support both at home and in school. This alignment would promote a more seamless transition for children, helping to address any potential readiness challenges and creating a unified support system between parents and educators.

Table 6. Test of difference between the parents and teachers' perceptions on the qualities of the kindergarteners should possess to be ready for school

Source of Difference	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Computed t- value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Teachers	4.41	0.58	0.20	-1.335	0.185	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant
Parents	4.61	0.44					

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$

The data in Table 6 reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between teachers' and parents' perceptions of the quality's kindergarteners should possess for school readiness. Teachers have a mean perception score of 4.41 (SD = 0.58), while parents have a slightly higher mean of 4.61 (SD = 0.44), resulting in a mean difference of 0.20. The computed t-value of -1.335 and a p-value of 0.185 (above the significance level of 0.05) indicate that the null hypothesis is not rejected, confirming that the difference in perceptions is not statistically significant. This suggests that both teachers and parents generally align in their views on the essential skills and attributes children should develop before entering kindergarten. The close alignment in perception scores suggests a shared understanding between parents and teachers regarding the importance of specific skills and behaviors, such as basic literacy, numeracy, social-emotional competence, and self-regulation. Both groups likely value qualities like physical health, task completion, turn-taking, and basic academic knowledge, recognizing that these foundational skills support children's successful adaptation to the structured school environment. While parents rated these qualities slightly higher, the lack of a significant difference implies that the two groups have similar expectations for children's preparedness, which could foster collaborative support for school readiness initiatives. This agreement between parents and teachers indicates that kindergarten readiness programs and communication strategies could capitalize on this shared understanding, focusing on reinforcing these critical qualities in children. By leveraging this alignment, educators and families can jointly prioritize and support the development of key readiness attributes, ensuring a smoother and more cohesive transition for children into kindergarten.



## Discussion

The findings suggest that while both teachers and parents hold similar high expectations regarding kindergarten readiness, there is a distinct difference in the degree of emphasis each group places on specific readiness aspects. Parents have higher overall expectations for readiness, particularly in terms of early foundational academic skills, as evidenced by their emphasis on daily practice, formal preschool exposure, and early literacy and numeracy skills. This aligns with research indicating that parents often prioritize early academic preparation as a means to support long-term educational outcomes (Baker et al., 2020). Parents may perceive early learning as essential for reducing future academic challenges, which could explain the relatively higher expectations they hold compared to teachers. This finding underscores the importance of aligning parental expectations with teachers' more developmental-focused approaches to avoid potential misunderstandings that may impact the child's transition to formal schooling (Nguyen & Harris, 2021).

In contrast, teachers appear to balance their expectations by incorporating both structured academic preparation and developmental readiness factors, such as task completion, social skills, and physical well-being. The alignment in teacher and parent perceptions of readiness attributes, with no significant differences, reflects a shared understanding of critical readiness qualities, such as self-regulation, cooperation, and basic academic knowledge (Jones & Clark, 2022). This agreement highlights an opportunity for collaborative engagement between parents and educators to reinforce these skills in a unified manner. The literature emphasizes that when parents and teachers have aligned perceptions of readiness qualities, children experience more consistent support and improved adjustment in the transition to school, as they encounter a cohesive approach both at home and in school (Rodriguez et al., 2023). Programs that promote communication and shared strategies between parents and teachers could foster a holistic readiness environment, ensuring that children are well-equipped with both academic and social-emotional skills crucial for kindergarten success.

## Conclusion

This study highlights a generally high level of alignment between teachers' and parents' expectations and perceptions regarding kindergarten readiness, though with some notable differences in emphasis. Parents tend to prioritize early foundational skills, such as literacy and numeracy, and value structured home practice as essential components for preparing children for kindergarten. Teachers, on the other hand, balance these academic expectations with an understanding of developmental readiness, emphasizing attributes like

task completion, social skills, and emotional regulation. The significant difference found in overall expectations suggests a need for stronger communication and collaboration between parents and teachers to harmonize readiness goals. Both groups agree on the importance of qualities such as cooperation, self-regulation, and basic academic knowledge, signaling a shared foundation that could be further leveraged to support children's transition into kindergarten. By fostering collaborative approaches to readiness, educators and parents can create a cohesive support system that prepares children for both the academic and social demands of formal schooling.

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