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# Investigating the Impact of Parent-Teachers Partnership on Pre-School Learners in Osun State, Nigeria

# Obiagwu, Rebecca Bosede

Department of Early Childhood Care Education, Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun.

# Abstract

This study investigated the impact of Parent-Teacher Partnership on Pre-School Education. It has been observed that pre-schools in developed countries enjoy partnership with the parents of children. It also assessed the extent and ways Parents and Teachers Partner in pre-primary education. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all parents and teachers of pre-schoolers in Osun State. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting one hundred and fifty teachers and one hundred and fifty parents in Boluwaduro, Ifelodun and Ila Local Government Areas of Osun State, Nigeria. The instrument used was a self designed questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Impact of Parents-Teachers Partnership on Early Childhood Education (QIPTPECE) Data collected was analysed using percentage, mean and standard deviation. The results showed that parents and teachers have positive perception of the impact of parents-teachers partnership on Early Childhood Education (X = 3.21), and the extent to which parents and teachers partner in the area of child development is high (X = 2.95), while in the area of resources (X = 2.57). The ways by which parents and teachers partner in Early Childhood Education in sharing of ideas (X = 2.87), provision of resources (X = 2.74). It was concluded that parents and teachers have strong perception on the need to work collectively for the success of pre-school education, some of which are

sharing ideas on how could be discipline and providing conducive environment which will boost the performances of the children. Also, parents do not really have the time to involve effectively, some are not well informed on the need to partner with teachers, some are not skilled to give the expected assistance while some is inability to communicate with the teachers and do not have the needful resources. Parents-Teachers Partnership is a vital tool that can help to realize the goals and objectives of Early Childhood Education.

**Keywords:** Parents, Teachers, Partnership, Pre-School, Learners.

## Introduction

Early Childhood Education considered by many societies and individuals to be beneficial to young children for their educational development from school-entry age. Modern societies show serious concern for the education of their young ones for obvious reasons. It is common practice in most societies to make provision for early-childhood or pre-school education programmes of various sorts for children below the official school-going age mainly to prepare them for education in primary schools. Early Childhood Education in the form of nursery school or preprimary education as we know it today in Nigeria is largely a post-colonial development This type of education was given official recognition by the Federal Government of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2004). In the policy document, provision is

made for a policy on pre-primary education stating its objectives and the measures to be taken by government to facilitate the achievement of the policy objectives. The provision also allowed for private participation in the provision of pre-primary education. Preschool education is the provision of learning to children before the commencement of statutory obligatory education. It is this type of education that gives the child opportunity for self-worth, fun, freedom, enjoyment, choice, belonging, respect, love and basis for healthy development and life-long learning. This is the period in which learning takes place by observing and doing. According to Ibiam and Ugwu (2009), this education is designed to develop the habits, attitudes and skills needed primary education. for Maduewesi (2005) believes that it

encompasses the care, development and education of children below the age of six years. This is of course true since the earliest years of a child's life are very critical; they influence how the rest of childhood and adolescence unfold.

It has been recognized that early year's period is very crucial in laying the foundation for the future development of children. Researchers have observed that children from conception to six years of age undergo radical mental and physical development. In addition, children, if given good care during early childhood, are more likely to benefit from later education and other social services and become more productive, healthy, and law abiding citizens (Ibiam & Ugwu, 2009). As such, children need more stimulation and learning opportunities beyond the scope of their parents and ordinary teachers. This therefore emphasise the importance of pre-school education to children.

The Cost Quality and Child Outcomes study as cited in Sacks and Ruzzi (2005) showed a clear impact of the quality of the preschool on children's performance through second grade. Children attending higher quality preschools had better language, Math and social skills than those attending a lower quality one. Those at risk of school failure benefited the most from attending a higher quality preschool and were most negatively affected by attending a lower quality one. Sacks and Ruzzi stated that studies have shown that attending a high quality preschool programme not only increases children's readiness for kindergarten, but also causes positive long- term improvements in participants' school performance and social outcomes. Among the documented results of preschool education are lower rates of grade retention, increased rates of high school graduation and less likelihood of being convicted of a crime for both juveniles and adults (Sacks and Ruzzi, 2005). Research further shows that children who attend preschool programmes that emphasize child-directed activities do significantly better academically in later schooling than children whose preschool experience is more academic and teacher-directed (Marcon, 2002). With the understanding that parent involvement is highly individualized, a broad approach to defining parent involvement is more likely to encompass the full extent of beliefs and expectations presently held by families and providers. To that end, Epstein (2001) suggests that the relationships and interactions among family members, educators, community, and students are similar to partnerships. Dunst (1990) presents a family-centred approach, one where a child's growth and development is nurtured by the overlapping supports of parents, family, community, and child learning opportunities, as most effective

for successful outcomes. Both Epstein and Dunst present the partnerships between families and providers as an opportunity for shared responsibility for facilitating the growth and development of children as well achieving educational goals and objectives.

According to Aistear (2011), partnership in Early Childhood Education involves parents, families and practitioners working together to benefit children. Each partner recognises respects and values what the other does and says. Partnership involves responsibility on both sides. Aistear (2011) noted further that the early care and education of young children is increasingly shared among parents, families and practitioners. A partnership approach between these people is very important, at times of change in children's lives. These times might include settling into a new setting, getting to know a new practitioner, or getting used to a new baby at home. Other critical times might be when children experience bereavement, are upset or worried, or feel left out or different in a negative way. By working together and sharing information parents and practitioners can help make these times in children's lives easier. Good partnerships are built on trust. Practitioners need to respect the confidentiality of information they receive about children, while understanding that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for example in cases involving child protection issues.

Parent-teacher partnership has been said to offer immense benefit to parents, teachers and children (Jekayinfa, 2009; Aistear, 2011; Fagbeminiyi, 2011). As for parents, they feel valued and respected, they are more involved in their children's learning and development, they can share information about their children, feel their family's values, practices, traditions, and beliefs are understood and taken into account, feel comfortable visiting the setting, talking to, and planning with practitioners, know more about their children's experiences outside the home and use this information to support their learning and development more effectively, understand why early childhood care and education is important and have increased confidence in their own parenting skills (Jekayinfa, 2009; Aistear, 2011; Fagbeminiyi, 2011, Koech, 2012).

Practitioners also stand to gain a lot from partnering with parents. They understand better the children and families in their settings and use this information to make learning more enjoyable and rewarding for all children,

they can help children develop a sense of identity and belonging in the setting by actively engaging with and finding out about family values, traditions and beliefs, and building on these where appropriate, benefit from parents' skills and expertise and they can provide a more emotionally, secure environment for children (Aistear, 2011; Fagbeminiyi, 2011, Koech, 2012).

Children also stand to gain a lot from parent-teacher partnership. They feel more secure and benefit more from the educational opportunities given to them, they move from one setting to another with greater confidence, they see learning as more enjoyable when their home life is 'visible' in the setting, they can enjoy hearing and seeing their home language in the setting and experience more connections between the different services that support them skills (Jekayinfa, 2009; Aistear, 2011; Fagbeminiyi, 2011, Koech, 2012).

There are lots of things that teachers should do to effectively partner with parents. Teachers should make contact with parents. The more teachers get to know parents, the better their suggestion for the student's improvement. Teachers must be positive. Whenever parents get a call they are reluctant to come to school thinking it is going to be another complaint session. When teachers turn this around and say good things about children. Then parents will be willing to hear the wrong side of their children too. Teachers must also give them the chance to speak. Teachers should hear their opinions, fears, concerns and they will learn a lot about the child's family environment. Teachers need to organize regular meetings as this ensures that parents are kept informed about the child's activities (Aistear, 2011).

Teachers need to send notes as often as possible to parents. They need to keep parents posted whether it is the child's activities, tests, projects, scores, meetings, forthcoming events, keep them posted. They also need to give parenting tips. Parents these days are under tremendous pressure to bring up children in a competitive world and they will need plenty of parenting guidance. This can be done in the form of informal discussions, seminar or newsletters. They should equip parents to handle studies. Helping the parents know what skills are required to support studies at home makes for improved grades. One of the things that teachers should do also is to create a resource centre. They can ask parents to come over and share resources such as skills for better parenting, CDs, Cassettes, library, seminars, Parent Teacher Association meetings and

expert talks on family values among others, skills (Aistear, 2011; Fagbeminiyi, 2011, Koech, 2012).

By developing partnerships with parents, preschool and teachers and administrators can set the stage for positive educational experiences for young children and their parents. Effective partnerships are built on mutual respect, reciprocal communication and common goals. The primary goal is young children's healthy growth and development. To achieve that goal, adults must set aside irrelevant differences and come together for children's sake (Hujala, Turja, Caspar, Veisson & Waniganayake, 2009). Because preschool teachers are often young children's first significant caregivers other than family members, they have the critical task of joining with parents to facilitate the child's growth and development. As submitted by Hujala et. al., (2009), three areas of child development are particularly enhanced by positive parent-teacher partnerships: sense of trust, sense of belonging and sense of security. In the area of sense of trust, children who trust the world around them meet the challenges of life with enthusiasm and confidence. Parents and teachers can promote trust in young children by providing appropriate and adequate care, protection, and nurture. They can also foster trust in young children by working together to provide safe, fun, and developmentally appropriate environments.

Elkind (1994) asserts that "a child who does not develop a strong sense of belonging during this period (three to four year old period) may develop a sense of alienation that will later make it difficult for the person to become an active group member and make it more likely that he or she will be something of a loner." He said further that families who value and model cooperation encourage young children's sense of belonging to and acceptance by peer groups. Teachers and parents can be strong role models of cooperation as they partner to work through problems and plan preschool activities. For sense of security, Winnicott (1993) discusses security as necessary to children's development of self-control. He submits that good conditions in the early stages lead to a sense of security, and a sense of security leads on to self-control. Therefore parents and teachers should be aware that children's sense of security is reinforced as they test the set by parents limits and teachers. By setting limits, adults promote children's self-control. As children internalize limits, self-control replaces external control. Parents and teachers can support each other

by developing appropriate, consistent limits and by reassuring each other of the necessity to hold firm.

Healthy development in the areas of trust, belonging and security promotes social, emotional, and behavioural growth. For example, young children who feel a sense of belonging with peers energetically initiate cooperative play and communication. Some children who do not have a sense of belonging to a group of friends might withdraw, while others might act out. Parents and teachers support a healthy sense of trust, belonging, and security when they form partnerships to provide children with consistency that transcends home and school boundaries (Fagbeminiyi, 2011, Koech, 2012). As it has, been noted, effective early years programmes are a matter of partnership between parents and teachers. As outlined in the Children's Act in Republic of Kenya, (2001), parents are expected to maintain and provide the child with adequate diet, shelter, clothing, and medical care, including immunization, education and guidance.

Ebbeck and Waniganavake (2003) and Woodruff and O'Brien (2005) opine that understanding the significance of parent-teacher partnerships and ways of enhancing collaborations between families and professionals have emerged as an essential topic of professional development for early childhood educators. There is now strong research that demonstrates that involvement of parents in pre-school education and early intervention services has positive effects on children's achievements (McCutchen 2002; Sand and Skoug 2002). The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (2003) for instance, emphasise partnerships with parents as a key quality issue in service provision. In Portugal, the National Framework Plan (1997), which describes pre-school education for three to six years olds as the first stage of life-long learning, also emphasises co-operation with families, including opportunities for parent participation in decision-making. Researchers at the University of Oxford found that children whose parents are involved in parent teacher partnership made significantly greater progress in their learning than children whose parents did not participate. These strides were found in children ages 3-5, and included progress in vocabulary, language comprehension, understanding of books and print and number concepts. In addition, these children also exhibited higher self-esteem in comparison to children of non-participating parents (Evangelou & Sylva, 2003). Teachers' partnership with parents in the classroom can also improve schools in general. Understanding parents' concerns and being proactive in addressing them is a positive way to engage parents and establish productive parent teacher relationships. Most parents want to be engaged in their child's learning, and many are able to establish and maintain ongoing and productive communication with teachers on a regular basis (Machen, Wilson & Notar, 2005).

In a study by Fagbeminiyi (2011), it was concluded that involvement is very essential in early childhood education as it helps to broaden the child's horizon, enhance social relationships, and promote a sense of self-esteem and selfefficacy. In another study by Adeyemo (2009), parent-teacher partnership was strongly advocated. In his paper Jekayinfa (2009) submitted that families and schools play interconnected roles in the crucial mission of educating children. He added that these two parties must find ways to work together as educational partners. The submission of all these authors in their studies further proved that parent-teacher partnership is an effective way by which early childhood education could be effectively delivered to the child, parents and the society.

## **Research Questions**

- 1. What is the perception of parents and teachers on the impact of parentteacher partnership on preschool education?
- 2. To what extent do parents and teachers partner in pre-primary education in Osun?
- 3. How do parents and teachers partner in pre-primary education?

# Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample of one hundred and fifty parents and one hundred and fifty teachers were purposively selected from three local government areas of Osun State. Five pre-schools were taken from each local government to make a total of fifteen pre-schools in three local government of Osun State. The local government are: Boluwaduro, Ifelodun and Ila local government.

One self-designed instrument was used for this study. The instrument was a questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Impact of Parent-Teacher Partnership on Early Childhood Education (QIPTPECE)'. The questionnaire had three sections. Section A contained 10 items based on parents and teachers perception on impact of parents-teachers partnership on early childhood education. The second section, (Section B) contained five items on the extent of parents-teachers partnership. The third section (section C) contained eight items and was based on ways of partnership between parents and teachers.

For all the sections, the Likert's Summated rating scale and response was adopted. For section A and C, the response was 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree, while for section B, the response sets was Never (N), Rarely (R), Occasionally (O) and Always (A).

Data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistics of percentage, mean and standard deviation. The instrument was validated by expert in the field of Early Childhood Education. Using inter rating scale, the instrument was subjected to cronbach alpha and a reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained.

**Results Research Question 1:** What is the Perception of Parents and Teachers on the impact of parent-teacher partnership on Pre-school Education?

Table 1: Parents and Teachers' Perception of the Impact of Parents-Teachers Partnership

S/N	Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Std.D
1.	,	21 (7.0)	6 (2.0)	110 (36.7)	163 (54.3)	3.38	<i>0.84</i>
2.	Parent-teacher partnership can help to contribute to effective administration of early childhood education.	5 (1.7)	4 (1.3)	166 (53.3)	125 (41.7)	3.37	0.60
3.	Early childhood education curriculum become better implemented when parents and teachers partner.	16 (5.3)	12 (4.0)	167 (55.7)	105 (35.0)	3.20	<i>0.75</i>
4.	When parents and teachers partner, early childhood education policy become better interpreted and implemented.	13 (4.3)	9 (3.0)	180 (60.0)	98 (32.7)	3.21	<i>0.70</i>

5.	Early childhood education serves children better when parents and teachers partner.	2 (0.6)	20 (6.7)	138 (46.0)	140 (46.7)	3.39	0.64
Б.	Society benefits more from early childhood education where there is partnership between parents and teachers.	21 (7.0)	29 (9.6)	185 (61.7)	65 (21.7)	2.98	<i>0.77</i>
7.	When parents and teachers partner, resources are made available to effectively implement early childhood education.	10 (3.3)	48 (16.0)	156 (52.0)	86 (28.7)	3.06	<i>0.76</i>
8.	Parents derive satisfaction from what early childhood education offers their children when they partner with teachers.	5 (1.7)	43 (14.3)	180 (59.3)	72 (24.7)	3.06	0.67
Я.	Parent-teacher partnership results in making teachers more competent in implementing early childhood education programmes.	3 (1.0)	23 (7.7)	181 (60.3)	93 (31.0)	3.21	<i>0.62</i>

Weighted Average (Mean)

3.21

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

**Key:** 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

The result from table 1 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that early childhood education goals and objectives can be achieved when parents and teachers partner (x = 3.38), that Parent-teacher partnership can help to contribute to effective administration of early childhood education (x = 3.37), that Early childhood education curriculum become better implemented when parents and teachers partner (x = 3.20), that when parents and teachers partner, early childhood education policy become better interpreted and implemented (x = 3.21), that Early childhood education serves children better when parents and teachers partner (x = 3.39), that Society benefits more from early childhood education where there is partnership between parents and teachers (x = 2.98), that when parents and teacher partner, resources are made available to effectively implement early childhood education (x = 3.06), that parents derive

satisfaction from what early childhood education offers their children when they partner with teachers (x = 3.06), and that parent-teacher partnership results in making teachers more competent in implementing early childhood education programmes (x = 3.21)

Meanwhile, since the weighted average, as shown in the table, is 3.21 which is an indication that the perception is positive, it can be concluded that parents and teachers have positive perceptions of the impact of parent-teacher partnership on Early Childhood Education.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent do parents and teachers partner in preschool education in Osun State?

**Table 2: Extent of Parents-Teachers Partnership on Pre-School Education** in Osun State

S/N	EXTENT OF PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP	N	R	<b>[</b> ]	A	Mean	Std.D
	CHILD DEVELOPMENT						
П.	Parents and teachers share observation about children.	10 (3.3)	75 (25.0)	135 (45.0)	80 (26.7)	2.95	<i>0.81</i>
<i>II.</i>	Parents and teachers share report about children's progress at home and in school.	22 (7.3)	62 (20.7)	146 (48.7)	70 (23.3)	2.88	0.85
12.	Parents and teachers share ideas and information on how best children can be handled.	25 (8.3)	80 (26.7)	113 (37.7)	82 (27.3)	2.84	0.92
<i>13.</i>	Parents assist teachers to teach the child further at home.	10 (3.3)	53 (17.7)	132 (44.0)	105 (35.0)	3.11	<i>0.81</i>
	Weighted Average	2.95				'	
	RESOURCES						
14.	Parents and teachers work together to agree on best materials that can be used to teach children.	51 (17.0)	97 (32.3)	81 (27.0)	7l (23.7)	2.57	<i>1.03</i>

2.57

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

**Key:** N=Never, R= Rarely, O = Occasionally, A = Always

Table 2 shows the extent of parents-teachers partnership in pre-school education. The table shows that in the area of child development, the respondents indicated that occasionally, parents and teachers share observation about children (x = 2.95), they share report about children's progress at home and in school (x = 2.88), that parents and teachers occasionally share ideas and information on how best children can be handled (x = 2.84) and that parents assist teacher, to teach children further at home (x = 3.11). However, since the weighted average as shown in the table is 2.95 which is an indication that extent of parent-teacher is good, it can be concluded that the extent of parent-teacher partnership in the area of child development is occasionally happening.

Again towards resources, parents and teachers occasionally work together to agree on best materials that can be used to teach children (x=2.57).

Based on the weighted average in this area, it can also be concluded that parentteacher partnership in the area of resources is low.

**Research Question 3:** How do parents and Teachers partner in pre-primary education.

Table 3: Ways by which Parents and Teachers Partner in Pre-School Education.

S/N	WAYS OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHER	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Std.D
	SHARING IDEAS						
<i>15.</i>	Parents and teachers share ideas on	20	40	175	6.5	2.95	<i>0.78</i>
	how best children can be supported at	(6.7)	(13.3)	(58.3)	(21.7)		
	home and in school.						
<i>16.</i>	Ideas are exchanged between parents	35	55	140	70	2.82	0.92
	and teachers on how discipline can be	(11.7)	(18.3)	(46.7)	(23.3)		
	instilled in children.						

17.	Parents and teachers share ideas on how environment in school and at home can be made educationally rich for children.	30 (10.0)	60 (20.0)	130 (43.3)	80 (26.7)	2.87	<i>0.92</i>
<i>18.</i>	Parents and teachers share ideas on how Early Childhood curriculum can be interpreted and implemented.	30 (10.0)	70 (23.3)	120 (40.0)	80 (26.7)	2.83	0.93
19.	Parents and teachers share ideas on how right nutrition and health care can be provided for children Weighted Average	25 (8.3) <i>2.87</i>	52 (17.3)	164 (54.7)	59 (19.7)	2.86	<i>0.87</i>
	PROVISION OF RESOURCES						
20.	Parents and teachers agree on educational toys that can be used in teaching children.	29 (9.7)	70 (23.3)	120 (40.0)	81 (27.0)	2.84	0.93
21.	Parents and teachers join hands to donate useful books and other materials for children to learn.	43 (14.3)	65 (21.7)	110 (36.7)	82 (27.3)	2.77	1.00
22.	Parents and teachers collaborate to make furniture and book shelves available for use in children's classrooms.	48 (16.0)	94 (31.3)	84 (28.0)	74 (24.7)	2.61	1.02

**Weighted Average** 

2.74

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

**Key:** 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.

Table 3 revealed the ways of partnership between parents and teachers. The table shows that parents and teachers share ideas on how best children can be supported at home and in school (x = 2.95), ideas are exchanged between parents and teachers on how discipline can be instilled in children (x = 2.82), parents and teachers also share ideas on how environment in schools and at home can be made educationally rich for children (x = 2.87), parents and

teachers share ideas on how early childhood curriculum can be interpreted and implemented (x = 2.83) and that parents and teacher shared ideas on how right nutrition and health care can be provide for children. However, since the weighted average as shown in the table is (x = 2.87) which is an indication that the ways by which parents and teachers partner in the area of sharing of ideas is high.

In the area of resources, parents and teachers agree on educational toys that can be used in teaching children (x = 2.84), parents and teachers join hands to donate useful books and other materials for children to learn (x = 2.77), parents and teachers collaborate to make furniture and book shelves available for use in children's classrooms (x = 2.61). However, since the weighted average as shown in the table is 2.74, it can be concluded that the ways by which parents and teachers partner in the area of resources is high.

From the table, it can be concluded that parents and teachers partner in these areas: sharing of ideas and provision of resources.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study shows that parents do not really have the time to involve effectively in Early Childhood Education and some are not well informed on the need to partner with the teachers, some of the parents are not skilled to give the expected assistance while to some is inability to communicate with the teachers and do not have the needful resources.

### Recommendations

Therefore, in order to bring about improvement on Parents-Teachers partnership in pre-schools.

1. Schools can plan activities early in the school year that serve to introduce families and school personnel in a positive setting, rather than waiting until problems arise. This gives parents the opportunity to become familiar with school staff and the school building, and to meet other

- parents. It also gives teachers a chance to meet parents without the stress of a conference or disciplinary issue.
- 2. Teachers can provide parents with periodic updates of class activities, assignments and expectations. This gives parents ongoing information about their child's school experience and provides the opportunity to seek more information about what is being taught and how their child is performing.
- 3. Schools should organize training for the teachers on how to partner with parents. In doing this, experts in Early Childhood should be invited to give lectures on what Parents-Teachers partnership should entail and how to effectively partner with parents.
- 4. Teachers should develop attitudes that welcome parents and conduct activities that invite them into the school; this can be done by introducing parental partnership course in the pre-service and in-service teacher training curriculum.
- 5. School management should provide opportunities for parents and staff to interact in informal ways by:
- (i) having graduation parties for the pre- scholars
- (ii) open-door policy
- (iii) organizing family night or cultural night
- (iv) organizing a carnival
- (v) organizing dinner
- (vi) parents supporting groups.
- 6. The Parents-Teacher Partnership of all preschools should be strengthened since they are the parental voice in the partnership process. As a result, Early Childhood Education policy will be better informed, of higher quality, have a greater acceptability among the public and achieve greater participation.
- 7. Teachers should make the parents feel free to discuss issues related to the children, school and any other general matter.

- 8. Parents should show genuine interest in the overall progress of children by:
- (i) visiting the school to assist teachers in teaching children,
- (ii) volunteering to stand in as resource person,
- (iii) discussing with teachers on how best pre-school curriculum can be implemented.
- 9. School should organize Parents-Teachers conference or Parent-Teacher Association to inform the parents on their children progress and allow them to actively participate in educational process.
- 10. Teacher can conduct home visits. Visiting the children at home will encourage Parents-Teachers partnership.
- 11. Government should encourage preschools in public schools so as to encourage Parents-Teachers partnership.

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