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Journal of General Education and Humanities
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ISSN 2963-7147

Parenting Practices Supporting Children's Readiness for Elementary School: A Qualitative Case Study in Surabaya, Indonesia

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Article Info

Article history:

Received 2026-08-13
Revised 2026-09-07
Accepted 2026-09-13

Keywords:

Early Childhood Education
Indonesia
Parental Involvement
Parenting Practices
Qualitative Research
School Readiness
School Transition

ABSTRACT

Children's readiness for the transition from early childhood education (PAUD) to elementary school (SD) is an important aspect that may influence their subsequent educational experiences. Parenting practices are an important factor associated with children's school readiness. This study aims to describe children's readiness for entering elementary school in relation to parental parenting practices and to formulate the stages of parenting practices implemented by parents.
This study employed a qualitative approach using a multiple-case study design. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and consisted of five mothers of Kindergarten B children who demonstrated good school readiness based on an initial assessment, along with two teachers as significant others for data triangulation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using an inductive thematic process based on Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings describe children's school readiness across eight aspects: social skills, independence, emotional skills, cognitive skills, language and communication skills, motor skills, reading and writing skills, and physical development. Sixteen forms of parenting practices were identified and organized into three stages: the initial stage, involving the fulfillment of developmental milestones through home-based stimulation, the adaptation preparation stage, involving guidance and introduction to the school environment, and the academic preparation stage, involving learning assistance.
These findings provide an empirical description of patterns and stages of parenting practices associated with children's school readiness. The identified three-stage pattern may serve as a reference for schools in developing home-based partnership programs that involve parents in supporting children's readiness for the transition to elementary school.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The transition from early childhood education (PAUD) to elementary school (SD) is a critical developmental period in which children are expected to adapt to new academic,

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social, and emotional demands that differ from those encountered in preschool settings [4], [57]. School readiness refers to children's capacity to meet these demands and encompasses multiple developmental domains, including physical health, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication and general knowledge. Recent research [11] emphasizes that school readiness should not be viewed solely as an individual characteristic of the child, but as a multidimensional outcome shaped by interactions among children, families, schools, and communities. Consequently, children's readiness for school is influenced not only by their developmental characteristics but also by the environments and experiences that support their development.

Inadequate school readiness may have immediate consequences for children's adjustment to the classroom, including difficulties in following instructions and performing tasks independently [48]. It may also be associated with longer-term educational outcomes, such as lower academic achievement and an increased risk of school dropout [8], [18]. Recent large-scale cohort research further indicates that school readiness is associated with subsequent school attendance, with children demonstrating lower readiness being at greater risk of chronic absenteeism at later educational levels [55]. These findings highlight the importance of understanding the factors and processes that support children's readiness before they enter elementary school. In Indonesia, age remains an important criterion in elementary school admission under the Regulation of the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Number 3 of 2025. However, age alone does not necessarily represent children's developmental readiness for school. A 2022 survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel reported that several developmental aspects, including physical, social, emotional, literacy, and numeracy skills, had not yet been optimally achieved by some PAUD children preparing to transition to elementary school [2]. Studies conducted in Indonesia also indicate variation in children's school-readiness profiles. Research across 12 provinces found that deficiencies in preschool competencies across the assessed domains remained evident in a substantial proportion of children [43], while another study reported that many children aged 5–6 years had not yet achieved optimal school readiness [46]. Conversely, other studies reported relatively good levels of school readiness within their respective contexts [17], [59]. This variation suggests that school readiness cannot be adequately explained by age or child characteristics alone.

From an ecological perspective, children's development occurs through interactions between the child and multiple environmental systems, with the family constituting one of the most immediate contexts of development [14], [41]. Parents are among children's earliest and most significant socialization figures [7], and their interactions with children may contribute to the development of cognitive, social, emotional, language, and self-regulation skills that are relevant to the transition to elementary school [54]. Previous studies have reported that parenting and parental involvement are associated with children's school readiness beyond certain family characteristics, such as family structure, family size, and parental education [35]. Parental involvement at home has also been found to account for part of the relationship between socioeconomic status and children's readiness for school [23], [56]. However, these findings should not be interpreted as indicating that the family is

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the single or greatest determinant of school readiness. Rather, they indicate that the family is an important proximal context in which children's developmental experiences are shaped.

Within this ecological context, it is important to distinguish several related but conceptually different terms. Parenting style generally refers to the broader emotional and behavioral climate in which parents raise their children, whereas parenting practices refer to specific behaviors through which parents pursue particular socialization and developmental goals [12]. Parental involvement refers more specifically to parents' participation in children's learning and educational experiences, while home-learning activities constitute particular forms of involvement, such as reading together, educational play, singing, talking about school routines, and providing learning support at home [6]. Thus, parental involvement and home-learning activities can be understood as potential manifestations of parenting practices, rather than as concepts that are interchangeable with parenting practices as a whole.

Evidence consistently indicates that home-based parental involvement is associated with children's educational and developmental outcomes. Activities such as reading books with children, participating in learning activities, playing together, and discussing problems and school routines have been positively associated with children's academic success [6]. A meta-analysis [28] further demonstrated that parents' direct involvement in home-based learning activities—including shared reading, educational play, cognitive stimulation, interaction, and learning support—was strongly associated with children's school readiness. These findings provide support for examining parenting practices as a proximal mechanism through which parents create developmental and learning experiences at home. In this sense, parenting practices provide a more appropriate analytical focus for understanding *what parents actually do* to support children's readiness than examining parenting style or parental characteristics alone.

The ecological perspective and the concept of parenting practices are therefore particularly relevant to this study. Ecological theory provides a framework for understanding children's school readiness as emerging from interactions between children and their immediate social environments, particularly the family [14], [41]. Meanwhile, the concept of parenting practices allows these environmental influences to be examined at the level of concrete parental behaviors and activities. Combining these perspectives makes it possible to move beyond the question of whether parents are associated with school readiness toward a more process-oriented question: what parenting practices are implemented at home, how are these practices organized, and how do parents describe their role in preparing children for the transition to elementary school?

Previous studies have examined parenting and children's school readiness in various settings [13], [14], [27], [29], [35], [44], [53]. However, an important gap remains regarding the detailed description of how parenting practices are enacted and organized in the context of children's preparation for elementary school, particularly in Indonesia. Some studies have primarily examined the role of parents from a theoretical perspective [14], while studies conducted in the United States, Australia, and Turkey have examined parenting and school readiness within sociocultural contexts that differ from Indonesia [27], [29], [35], [44], [53]. This contextual variation is relevant because parenting beliefs, goals, and practices are

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shaped by cultural and temporal contexts [15], [30]. Therefore, findings from other cultural settings cannot simply be assumed to represent the forms and processes of parenting practices occurring in Indonesian families.

Research in Indonesia has also examined the relationship between parenting practices and children's school readiness using quantitative approaches [17]. Although such studies provide evidence regarding associations between parenting and school readiness, they provide limited insight into the specific forms of parenting practices, the way these practices are implemented in everyday family life, and the sequence or stages through which parents perceive their preparation of children for school. Consequently, what remains insufficiently understood is not merely whether parenting is related to school readiness, but how parents who support children with good school readiness enact their parenting practices and how these practices are organized in preparation for the transition to elementary school. Addressing this gap requires an approach capable of capturing parents' experiences, meanings, and descriptions of their practices in context.

Beyond the ecological perspective and the concept of parenting practices, the way these practices unfold and are organized over time can also be understood through developmental-task theory and the concept of developmental trajectories. Developmental-task theory holds that each phase of a child's life is associated with specific developmental tasks that must be mastered before the child can successfully move to the tasks of the next phase (Havighurst, 1953, as cited in [3]). Relatedly, the concept of developmental trajectory describes change as following a certain sequence, timing, and direction, rather than occurring as isolated, unconnected events [39]. These perspectives suggest that parenting practices supporting children's school readiness may not occur as a single set of actions, but as a sequence of practices organized around developmental demands that shift as children approach the transition to elementary school.

Accordingly, this study focuses on parenting practices among parents of Kindergarten B children who demonstrate good school readiness. Using a qualitative multiple-case study approach, the study aims to: (1) describe children's readiness to enter elementary school in relation to the parenting practices experienced at home, and (2) identify and formulate the stages or patterns of parenting practices that parents describe in preparing their children for elementary school. By focusing on the practices and processes described by parents, this study seeks to provide a contextualized understanding of how home-based parenting practices support children's readiness for the transition to elementary school. The findings are expected to provide an empirical reference for schools in developing home-based partnership programs that involve parents in supporting children's school readiness.

2. METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore parenting practices that support children's readiness for the transition from early childhood education (PAUD) to elementary school (SD). Given that the study involved five families and examined the parenting practices within each family as well as patterns across the cases, the design is more appropriately described as a multiple-case study rather than an intrinsic single-case study.

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Each family constituted a bounded case, with parenting practices within the family serving as the primary unit of analysis. A multiple-case design enabled the researchers to examine each case in depth and subsequently identify similarities and variations in parenting practices across cases [5], [47], [50], [58].

The study specifically focused on families whose children demonstrated good school readiness at the time of the initial assessment. Therefore, the cases were purposively selected as readiness-positive cases, rather than as representative of families or children in the general population. The purpose of this case selection was to explore the forms and stages of parenting practices present in cases where children demonstrated relatively favorable school-readiness profiles.

Participants

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion criteria. The primary participants were mothers who: (1) had a child aged 4–6 years (up to 6 years 11 months), (2) had a child enrolled in Kindergarten B, and (3) had a child who demonstrated a good level of school readiness based on the initial assessment. Five mothers who met these criteria participated as the primary informants.

Two Kindergarten B homeroom teachers from the PAUD institution where the initial assessment was conducted were also recruited as teacher informants for data triangulation. Their role was to confirm and enrich information obtained from the mothers, particularly regarding children's observable school-readiness characteristics and parenting practices that were relevant to children's preparation for school. Thus, the study involved seven informants in total: five mothers as primary informants and two teachers as secondary informants.

The selection of five primary participants was based on the availability of information-rich cases that met the predefined inclusion criteria. The sample size was determined by the number of cases meeting these criteria rather than by data saturation. This sample was considered adequate given the narrow study aim, the specificity of participants' experiences, and the depth of the interview data. Data collection and analysis were nonetheless conducted iteratively, with subsequent interviews informed by emerging categories and themes.

Participant and Child Profiles

Table 1 presents the demographic and school-readiness profiles of the children of the participating mothers. To protect participants' confidentiality, children's initials are used instead of their full names.

Table 1. Participant's Child Profile

Initials	Child's Age	Sex	Family Structure	Birth Order	A	B	C	Category
IY	6 years 10 months	F	Core family, 3 children, mother as main caregiver	2 of 3	58	93	100	Pretty Good
ZM	5 years 7 months	F	Core family, 2 children, mother as main caregiver	1 of 2	92	97	100	Good

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Initials	Child's Age	Sex	Family Structure	Birth Order	A	B	C	Category
FP	6 years 7 months	M	Core family, 3 children, mother as main caregiver	3 of 4	100	97	100	Good
CD	6 years 4 months	F	Core family, 3 children, mother as main caregiver	3 of 3	67	87	100	Pretty Good
SL	6 years 4 months	M	Core family, 4 children, mother as main caregiver	3 of 4	100	87	100	Good

Description: A = Physical Aspect, B = Cognitive & Language Aspects, C = Social & Emotional Aspects.

School-Readiness Screening

Children's school-readiness status was determined through an initial assessment using the Early Development Instrument (EDI) Assessment Sheet, originally developed by Janus and Offord [25], as reproduced in [16, p. 93]. The assessment was completed by Kindergarten B teachers through direct observation of the children.

The assessment covered three broad domains reported in the initial assessment: physical aspects, cognitive and language aspects, and social and emotional aspects. The percentage for each domain represented the proportion of assessed indicators achieved by the child. The threshold of at least 75% fulfillment in each assessed domain was jointly established by the researcher and the homeroom teachers, based on the consideration that this percentage represents attainment substantially above half of the total items within each domain. This threshold was further supported by the teachers' judgments regarding the children's condition, obtained through informal interviews, rather than being a standardized criterion specified in the EDI instrument itself. It should be noted that the Indonesian-language adaptation of the EDI Assessment Sheet used in this study has not undergone a separate psychometric validation process, its use here was intended as a practical screening tool to identify information-rich cases for this qualitative study, rather than as a validated diagnostic measure.

Based on this threshold, two categories were distinguished: children classified as "Good" met the ≥75% criterion across all three domains, while children classified as "Pretty Good" fell below this threshold on the physical aspect only, while still meeting the threshold on the cognitive/language and social/emotional domains. Children in the "Pretty Good" category were still considered to meet the study's inclusion criterion of demonstrating a good level of school readiness, because the observed shortfall was confined to the physical domain and was corroborated by the homeroom teacher's independent judgment that the child was otherwise ready to enter elementary school. The use of a criterion based on each assessed domain was intended to ensure that the selected cases demonstrated relatively favorable school-readiness profiles across the developmental areas assessed in the initial screening.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the five mothers. The interview guide was developed from the grand-tour questions and research sub-questions and was adjusted according to the participants' responses and the conditions

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encountered during data collection. The interviews focused on parents' experiences, beliefs, activities, and strategies in preparing children for elementary school, including home-based developmental stimulation, preparation for school routines and environments, and learning assistance.

Triangulation was conducted by interviewing two Kindergarten B teachers as secondary informants [45]. Information obtained from the teachers was used to corroborate and enrich the mothers' accounts, particularly with respect to children's school-readiness characteristics observed in the educational setting. The teachers were not treated as equivalent to the primary participants but served as external sources of information for triangulation. Participant quotations are labeled using a code indicating the participant's initials, the date of the interview session (DDMMYY format), and the corresponding line number in the interview transcript. For example, the code SL070524, 148 refers to a statement by participant SL from the interview conducted on 7 May 2024, transcript line 148.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman [51], consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the research process rather than only after all interviews had been completed.

During data reduction, interview transcripts were reviewed and relevant statements concerning parenting practices and children's school readiness were identified and coded. Codes with related meanings were grouped into categories, from which broader themes were developed inductively from the field data. Data displays were then used to organize the emerging categories and compare parenting practices within and across cases. Conclusions were subsequently drawn and continuously verified against the interview data and triangulation information.

Because the study involved five family cases, the analysis proceeded at two levels: within-case analysis, which examined the parenting practices of each family in depth, followed by cross-case analysis, which compared the cases to identify recurring patterns, similarities, and variations. The resulting categories were then organized into a pattern of parenting-practice stages based on the participants' accounts.

The credibility of the data in this study was strengthened through data triangulation, namely by involving teacher informants as secondary informants to corroborate and enrich the information obtained from the primary participants [45].

Research Ethics

This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Airlangga, under certificate number No. 2127/B/UN3.FPSI/III/TA.00.03/2024. Participation was voluntary, and the identities of the participants and their children were protected through the use of initials in reporting the findings.

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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion in a combined format. Within each subsection below, empirical findings are first described, followed by supporting participant evidence, interpretation in light of the relevant theoretical framework, and comparison with previous research.

3.1. Participant Profile

The five participants were housewives aged 31-39 years old who lived in the East Surabaya area. Their educational backgrounds ranged from senior high school to undergraduate degrees in various fields. All participants served as the main caregiver for the child included in this study (see Table 1 for family structure and birth order).

In addition to the five parents as the main participants, this study also involved two significant others, namely teachers who are the homeroom teachers of the children during the learning process in each PAUD. WI teachers are homeroom teachers of ZM, FP, and SL participants, while RA teachers are homeroom teachers of IY and CD participants.

3.2. Overview of Children's School Readiness

The results of cross-case analysis of the five subjects identified eight aspects of school readiness for children entering elementary school, namely social, independent, emotional, cognitive, language-communication, motor, reading and writing skills, and physical.

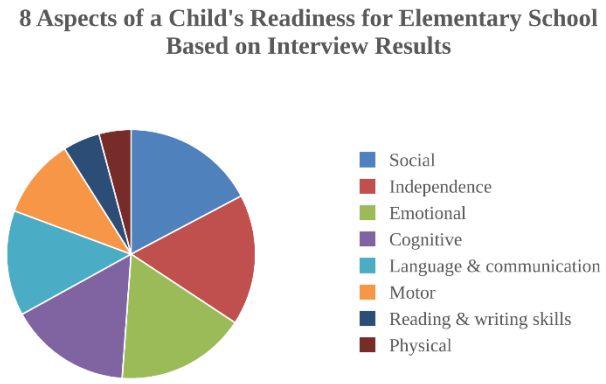

Figure 1. Overview of 8 Aspects of Children's Readiness to Enter Elementary School

Based on Figure 1, the five participants showed that parents tended to focus on social, independence, emotional, cognitive, and language and communication aspects in preparing their children for elementary school, while the other three aspects, namely physical, motor, and reading and writing skills, tended to be considered safe because they had been achieved by themselves through daily routines, consistent with findings in other cultural contexts. For example, parents in Denmark view social learning as the most important skill for a child's school readiness, while academic competence is thought to develop naturally [31]. This is in line with the definition [25] that school readiness is the minimum ability that every child has to adapt to meet the demands of the school.

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The results of this study also show that parents do not pay equal attention to each aspect, especially social aspects, independence, emotional, cognitive, as well as language and communication which are consistently the main targets of parenting. This can be seen from the target indicators on the aspects that each participant wants to achieve in preparing children to enter elementary school. The description of each indicator is described as follows:

In the social aspect, readiness is shown through the ability of children to interact with friends, teachers, and new people, as well as obey rules. The SL subject emphasized the importance of adherence to the rules because the learning atmosphere of elementary school is different from kindergarten: "...We've already explained to him that there will be rules once he's in 1st grade, I think he's already willing [to follow them], because at home we've also applied rules" (SL070524, 148). FP added that the new environment in elementary school, friends, teachers, and new demands. Both make social skills the key to children's adaptation. In accordance with the indicators of readiness in the social aspect according to [25], that social competence includes competence and cooperation with others, the ability to obey rules, curiosity, learning approach and problem solving.

In the aspect of independence, parents interpret it differently. IY and ZM emphasize self-development (bathing, eating, toilet training independently), while FP and CD interpret it as responsibility for personal belongings and tasks. CD specifically highlights independence in the form of children's initiative to deliver school instruction without being asked, "... At school, there is a task, for example, today what is it, he can already order there, at school, it is automatically delivered by himself without me asking" (CD060524, 186). This variation in meaning shows that independence is not a single construct, but is interpreted according to the context of each family, in line with the view that parenting is contextual [15].

In the emotional aspect, readiness is reflected in the child's ability to recognize, express, and control emotions, children are able to listen and follow instructions from school, and children are able to follow the learning process without being accompanied by close figures such as parents, older brothers, or relatives and so on. ZM described her daughter as being able to validate her own grief while still holding back tears, "... He said it was sad, he just said sometimes it's because he's so sad that he's still in custody..." (ZM040524, 56). Meanwhile, FP emphasizes more mature self-regulation in elementary schools because children will face new and demanding situations. [25] explains that emotional maturity, encompasses prosocial behavior, behavior, aggression, lack of attention and hyperactivity, and anxiety behaviors.

In the cognitive aspect, indicators include critical thinking skills, curiosity, and problem-solving, it can be seen that cognitive abilities are not always synonymous with calistung skills. One of the subject children is not fluent in reading, but the teacher considers that the child has good ability to interpret words and reading, showing that cognitive maturity can be achieved through different literacy paths. IY said that his son was critical and the selection was contextual, "He is not this bad, he is quite critical too, likes to ask questions" (IY020524, 38). According to [25] indicators of general knowledge skills, include the child's ability to

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express thoughts in a way that is understandable to adults and other children, the ability to understand others and aspects of general knowledge.

In the aspect of language and communication, readiness is shown through the ability of children to communicate orally, such as expressing opinions, telling stories in their own language, discussing current topics or around the surrounding environment, telling daily activities, and retelling a picture in their own language. The five children of the participants both showed a love of storytelling as an indicator of this readiness. CD emphasizes the importance of this aspect because children must be able to deliver learning instructions in elementary school, while SL emphasizes the importance of building children's openness with parents through continuous communication. According to [25] indicators of language and cognitive development, refer to the child's ability to use language correctly, cognitive aspects of language and numeracy as well as basic reading and numeracy skills, interests and memory, and more complex literacy.

In the physical aspect, indicators of the physical health and well-being of school-ready children are shown by the child's age-appropriate growth such as high growth and normal weight, no history of severe illness. The physical aspect is an aspect that is rarely reviewed by parents. Because parents consider their children to be physically ready judging from the child's normal age and growth, both height and weight. Meanwhile, it is seen from the motor ability of children such as gross motor skills such as walking, jumping, running, and fine motor skills such as scissors, folding, squeezing, the ability to coordinate eyes with hands (visio-motor), and children are able to concentrate or focus when learning takes place. [25] Explaining readiness from the aspect of physical health and well-being refers to the physical readiness of children to enter school, gross and fine motor skills, readiness to participate in all learning activities in school and physical independence.

For the parents in this study, the physical, motor, and reading and writing aspects were seen as achievements that were automatically fulfilled through daily routines, not the result of special intervention efforts. This pattern indicates that parents implicitly distinguish between aspects that require active intervention (the social-emotional-cognitive domain) and those that are considered to develop naturally as they grow (the physical-motor domain). A finding that enriches the understanding of how Indonesian parents prioritize their parenting resources, and has not been widely revealed by previous quantitative research [17]. The findings on these eight aspects of readiness show a different pattern from the general misconceptions of the research results [10], [52] It is often inherent in parents that children's readiness to enter primary school is synonymous with academic ability, especially reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The findings of this study show that parents actually place the aspect of reading and writing as one of the three aspects that are considered "safe", while their main attention is directed to the social, independence, emotional, cognitive, and language and communication aspects. This pattern indicates that parents in this study have a fairly comprehensive understanding of school readiness as a multidimensional construct, so that they are able to accompany children more holistically in facing the transition period to elementary school, rather than just encouraging early academic achievement as many have reported in previous studies.

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3.3. Parenting Practices in Optimizing Children's School Readiness Aspects

Darling and Steinberg define parenting practices as the means by which parents use to achieve certain socialization goals [15]. In the context of preparing children to enter elementary school, the purpose of the socialization is the aspects of readiness, namely the minimum ability needed by children to adapt to meet school demands, as described in the section Overview of Children's School Readiness Aspects. Thus, every effort made by parents to accompany the growth and development of children from the age of 0 years to the end of preschool age can be seen as a series of parenting practices aimed at preparing children to enter elementary school. The results of the analysis found 16 forms of parenting practices carried out by parents in preparing children to enter elementary school, as elaborated on their relationship with the tendency of aspects of children's school readiness targeted by parents. An overview of parenting practices can be seen in Table 2.

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that practices that are routine and based on daily interactions, such as establishing family routines, monitoring children's growth and development, involving children in daily activities, and building communication with children are recorded to contribute the most, covering almost all aspects of school readiness in almost all subjects. These findings are consistent with the results of the study [19], [21], [42] that home-based stimulation effectively hones the social-emotional aspects of children through daily activities, regardless of their specific form, while language-based routines before bed correlate with children's academic and health outcomes later in life [20].

Even in families with low SES in the study [53] it was found that family routines, particularly those that are interactive and actively involve children, are associated with different domains of school readiness. This pattern shows that children's school readiness is not solely the result of specifically targeted interventions, but rather is formed through the accumulation of seemingly simple but consistently practiced daily parenting practices. Whereas, some practices that are more specific and directed at one specific goal, such as introducing school rules or conducting learning assistance, tend to contribute only to certain aspects and do not appear in all subjects. These findings reinforce the view [15]. that parenting practices are basically daily ways aimed at achieving certain socialization goals. In the context of this study, children's readiness for school is not built through a separate intervention program, but is integrated into the parenting routine itself.

Table 2. Elaboration of the Relationship between Parenting Practices and Aspects of Children's School Readiness

No	Parenting Practices	Physical	Motor skills	Social	Emotional	Language & Communication	Cognitive	Independence	Reading & Writing
1	Engaging in outdoor activities	-	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,4	4,5	4,5	1,2,4,5	5
2	Accompanying the child in play	-	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	2,3,4,5	-	2
3	Engaging in daily activities	-	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	-

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4	Establishing family routines	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5
5	Providing nutritious food	1,2,3,4,5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Monitoring the child's growth and development	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	-
7	Building communication with the child	-	-	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	-
8	Providing guidance to the child	-	-	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	-	1,2,3,4,5	-
9	Giving examples	-	4	2,4	3,4,5	2,4,5	2	1,3,4	1,2,3,4,5
10	Giving the child rewards	-	-	-	2,3,4,5	-	-	-	-
11	Providing facilities and infrastructure	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,4	2,4	-	2,3,4,5	-	1,2,4,5
12	Providing learning assistance	-	-	-	-	2	1,2,3,4,5	-	1,2,3,4,5
13	Motivating the child to prepare for school	-	-	1,2,3,4	1,3,4	4,5	3,5	1,2,3,4,5	3,5
14	Introducing the child to the intended elementary school	-	-	1,3	3	4	2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	-
15	Introducing school rules	-	-	-	-	-	4,5	3,4,5	-
16	Building the child's courage	-	-	1,2,3,4,5	3	4	-	1,2,3,4,5	-

Descriptions: The number indicates the subject number that indicates the practice in that aspect — 1 = Subject IY, 2 = ZM subject, 3 = FP subject, 4 = CD subject, 5 = Subject SL. The "-" sign means that no subject has demonstrated this practice in that aspect.

3.4 Stages of Parenting Practice in Optimizing School Readiness for Children Entering Elementary School

The sixteen parenting practices, after further elaboration, showed certain patterns so as to produce a scheme of parenting practice stages in preparing children to enter elementary school. Decision-making in the categorization process is carried out based on the aspects targeted by parents of parenting practices carried out to prepare children for primary school as seen in Table 3.

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Table 3. Categorization of Parenting Practices

No	Parenting Practices	fi	mo	so	em	ba	ko	ke	ca	Initial	Adaptation	Academic
1	Establishing family routines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Monitoring the child's growth and development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-
3	Engaging in daily activities	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-
4	Accompanying the child in play	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-
5	Building communication with the child	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
6	Providing facilities and infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Engaging in outdoor activities	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
8	Providing guidance to the child	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	-
9	Giving examples	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
10	Motivating the child to prepare for school	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓
11	Introducing the child to the intended elementary school	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-
12	Building the child's courage	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-
13	Providing learning assistance	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓
14	Providing nutritious food	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-
15	Introducing school rules	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-
16	Giving the child rewards	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-

Description: fi = physical, mo = motor, so = social, em = emotional, ba = language & communication, ko = cognitive, ke = independence, ca = reading and writing.

Table 3 illustrates how parenting practices carried out by parents have an impact on certain aspects of school readiness which further forms a pattern of stages in each age range of children. The results of interviews from the five parents stated that they tend to focus on completing physical, motor, social, emotional, language, and cognitive aspects through routine and daily parenting practices in the early stages of children's growth and development. The pattern that is formed is then categorized as the Initial Stage.

It is important to note that, because this study relied on retrospective, in-depth interviews rather than longitudinal observation, the initial, adaptation-preparation, and academic-preparation stages described below should be understood as an interpretive pattern derived from parents' retrospective accounts of their parenting practices, rather than as a temporally verified developmental sequence confirmed for each family over time.

Initial Stage. The initial stage is the first step taken by parents who focus on achieving aspects of children's development according to their age. Santrock argues that children's school readiness is closely coexist with development [37]. Therefore, parents' efforts to meet the achievement of child development milestones in each phase of their age are indirectly an effort by parents to prepare their children to enter elementary school from an early age. There are nine parenting practices at this stage ranging from providing nutritious food and monitoring children's growth and development, to accompanying children to play and building communication, to being directed to achieve physical-motor, social, emotional, language, and cognitive aspects simultaneously, without separate targets between aspects. The practice of monitoring children's growth and development is in line with the theory of developmental tasks. Parents' approaches to motor stimulation illustrated this contrast: some combined it with specific activities such as cycling and outdoor play while also attending to daily nutrition, *"...maybe it's more like stimulation, like for the motor skills, motor*

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stimulation, [we] often take him along to do things like play, cycling, and then playing outside. As for the rest, well, [our] effort was just trying to serve nutritious food for the kids" (IY020524, 66), while others regarded it as arising naturally from daily activities, *"...as for the other motor skills, they just come along on their own, because we have activities every day anyway" (ZM040524, 102)*. The practice of monitoring children's growth and development is in line with the theory of developmental tasks. This was illustrated by FP's use of community health services (Posyandu) to monitor her child's growth: *"Yes, at first I used a journal... [then after] joining Posyandu, it became something we'd do in the morning too, like, 'Come on sweetie, let's check your height, your weight'" (FP050524, 96),* consistent with evidence that family routines support children's social-emotional school readiness regardless of their specific form [42].

Havighurst (1953, in [3]), who asserts that each phase of life has a certain developmental task that the child needs to master according to his age, and the success of completing it becomes the foundation for success in facing the developmental task in the next phase. This foundation is what makes the Initial Stage the starting point of a step-by-step developmental process, reflecting the principle of sequence, which is the completion of basic needs as a condition before parents move to a more specific target in the next stage [39].

Meanwhile, in some other parenting practices, it can be seen that parents are starting to target certain aspects of school readiness. This marks an important turning point, when parents begin to consciously direct their parenting to the competencies they consider essential for the child's readiness to face the demands of formal schooling, no longer simply responding to general developmental needs as in the previous stage. Although practices vary between parents, this orientation reflects the way parents interpret school readiness. School readiness itself is conceptually more accurately understood as the result of the interaction between the characteristics of children, families, schools, and the environment [38] rather than solely the result of parental orientation. This turning point illustrates the principle of timing in a developmental process, as the orientation of parenting changes as the transition time of the child enters elementary school [39]. The patterns found at this stage are further categorized as the Preparation Stage.

The Preparation Stage. The preparation stage is a parenting practice that focuses on honing children's adaptability and academics before entering elementary school. Parenting practices at this stage are a combination of initial preparation and preparing children to have social skills, emotional maturity, and language and cognitive skills as a provision to go through the transition period and the demands of elementary school. School readiness is related to a child's minimum level of development to respond to school demands through cognitive, social and emotional qualities [33]. Social competence facilitates adaptation to school [22]. The results of the elaboration in Table 3, based on the focus, the preparation stage is differentiated into adaptation preparation and academic preparation.

The adaptation preparation stage is the next step that parents strive to hone their children's adaptability. The forms of parenting practices at this stage are a combination of initial preparation and preparing children to have social skills, emotional maturity, and language and cognitive skills as provisions to go through the transition period and the

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demands of elementary school. Routine and daily activities in the initial stage are still implemented with a higher target in each aspect than the previous stage. For example, in establishing routines in the family, parents begin to make rules as a form of positive discipline for children, accustoming children to be responsible for themselves in terms of independence such as procedures when coming home from school, as well as responsibilities with some household chores. As SL explained, referring to the rules her child would encounter in elementary school, *"We've already explained to him that there will be rules once he's in 1st grade, I think he's already willing [to follow them], because at home we've also applied rules" (SL070524, 148).* In accordance with research [53] which shows that routine in the family plays a role in shaping children's independence to develop in school, including the ability to understand and follow rules. The various efforts above are home-based stimulation. This is consistent with [49], which found that home-based stimulation has a positive impact on a child's social-emotional development and helps children become better prepared to enter primary school.

The form of parenting practice that differs at this stage from the previous stage is the parents' efforts to provide direction to the child through discussions, interactive communication related to responsibilities to the child, ownership of goods, and schoolwork. In addition, parents also set an example for children both in behavior, communication, self-control and emotions, and the learning process. This effort to build communication and provide direction shows a positive relationship between the child and the parent. Positive and warm parenting practices through stimulation of learning, discipline, and control in children can affect children's readiness for school well [8], [9].

In addition, in this adaptation preparation stage, children are introduced to the picture of the environment and learning atmosphere in elementary school. Parenting practices carried out by parents include motivating, introducing and visiting the intended elementary school by giving an overview of their school environment. Parents also began to introduce rules at school by getting used to the rules at home, such as rules about limits on outdoor play hours, worship routines, and study schedules. The purpose of this activity is for children to get used to the more serious rules and demands of learning at the formal level. In line with the results of the study [29] that creating a daily routine, scheduling playtime with children of the same age, enrolling their children in sports activities, and monitoring siblings' games are some of the ways Korean families support their children's social skills and approach to learning or self-regulation. Parents' approaches to building this readiness varied: some relied on direct physical exposure, taking children to visit the school in advance, *"...so that he wouldn't be afraid of the new environment, so he'd know what school would be like — the environment is different from kindergarten... after being taken to the school a few times, it turns out he became brave enough to go to school" (IY020524, 88*), while others let children build courage independently, without direct parental intervention: *"...while we kept reinforcing [the idea] that none of his friends had their parents staying at school with them... so we didn't push him to the point of fear, we let him be brave on his own, we let him go through the process himself" (ZM040524, 22).* Other participants emphasized a different dimension of adaptation, namely the child's mental readiness to face the social diversity they would encounter in elementary school: *"...once he's about to enter the elementary school*

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phase, he'll definitely see his friends, see new communities, see a new atmosphere, new teachers, and a new learning style" (FP050524, 84).

The Academic Preparation Stage. The academic preparation stage is the practice of parenting focusing on the child's readiness in a more formal learning environment before entering elementary school. Forms of parenting practices increasingly have a more specific focus on emotional, cognitive, and reading and writing aspects. Specific parenting practices are characterized by the emergence of the most explicit academically oriented practices, namely intensely conducting learning assistance, in addition to continuing the practice of getting used to routines, building communication, providing facilities, setting examples, and motivating children. Learning assistance at this stage takes place as a routine that is consistently directed by parents. This was illustrated, for example, by teacher RA, who described checking in on the child's daily reading practice: *"...I personally ask Miss R., 'Do you practice reading every day?' [She says] 'Yes, we practice.' So for studying — the Qur'an-recitation practice too — it was done the same way" (RA170524, 84)*. CD similarly personalized this support to her child's specific needs, for instance by gradually correcting his pronunciation rather than forcing his full attention on it: *"...I held back a bit. I didn't focus on this directly, but I kept repeating it, repeating it during his schoolwork... and it turned out he picked it up faster" (CD060524, 166*). Parenting practices in the form of home learning support are basically an award and a challenge to be able to make children grow and develop well so as to encourage children's readiness for school [17]. The results of the study [17] show that children's cognitive abilities are low because parents tend to only provide learning tools for children, such as stationery and educational games, but do not use them optimally to stimulate children from their cognitive aspects. This shows the lack of quality time between parents and children in terms of playing and reading stories.

In contrast to these findings, parents in this study tend to maximize efforts to mentor their children even though they have limited facilities. If there are parents who are able to provide facilities such as providing equipment to hone their children's potential, including children by participating in clubs or online classes is carried out on the basis of suitability with the child's interests. In other words, the facilities provided to children are accompanied by parental responsibility to accompany the child's learning process. Another effort made by parents at this stage is to motivate children to prepare for elementary school by continuing to build communication with their children. Parents give an overview of the learning environment and atmosphere in elementary school that is different from kindergarten, what can be done when they are in elementary school such as participating extra, having the opportunity to ask questions and get gifts in class as their brother did before, and honing their children's ability to be able to give learning feedback and communicate the tasks given at school to parents independently.

At the academic preparation stage, parents understand the importance of readiness in learning and independence that children need to have when in elementary school. In accordance with research [27], data was obtained that the role of parents is motivation and instills many 'readiness' skills to their children in the form of life skills such as independence shown by the ability of children to do toilet training, the ability to interact with new

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environments, and the courage to express opinions. These two focuses of parenting, namely direct academic assistance and the cultivation of life skills for independence, remain tied to a common awareness that the demands of elementary schools are higher than kindergarten. SL summed up this heightened expectation: *"...with those rules, with those lessons, of course at home he also has to study more, right, not play as much. In kindergarten there was a lot of playing, but in elementary school he has to be more diligent" (SL070524, 154).* The narrowing of focus in this last stage makes sense chronologically when the child is really about to enter elementary school, reflecting the shape of the developmental trajectory that is narrowing towards an increasingly specific target [39], however, because this ordering was inferred from participants' retrospective accounts rather than observed directly over time, it should be interpreted as an emergent pattern rather than a confirmed chronological sequence. Parents, regardless of their mentoring style, divert most of their parenting energy to strengthening academic readiness as a competency that will be immediately tested once the child enters a formal learning environment. This is consistent with the findings that stimulation of learning at home contributes significantly to improving children's cognitive abilities, thus making the role of parenting a strong factor in school readiness [26], [32], [35], [36].

Overall, it can be seen that the practice of parenting from the beginning of children's growth to the transition period into elementary school does not stand alone, but rather connect each other to form a unified process. These three stages describe a developmental process, which is a pattern of change that has a certain sequence, time linkage, and trajectory [39]. Parenting practices carried out by parents in preparing their children to enter elementary school optimally are not just a series of separate parenting activities. Overall, this pattern is progressive and tiered, starting from meeting general basic developmental needs, extending to the formation of more directed social adaptation skills, and finally narrowing back to strengthening specific academic readiness before children enter elementary school. Although following the same pattern of stages, the way parents achieve the target of each stage is individual and not singular, as can be seen from the variety of active intervention pathways and directed neglect found in this study, depending on the beliefs, experiences, and characteristics of each family. An overview of the stages of parenting practice in optimizing children's readiness to enter elementary school can be seen in Figure 2.

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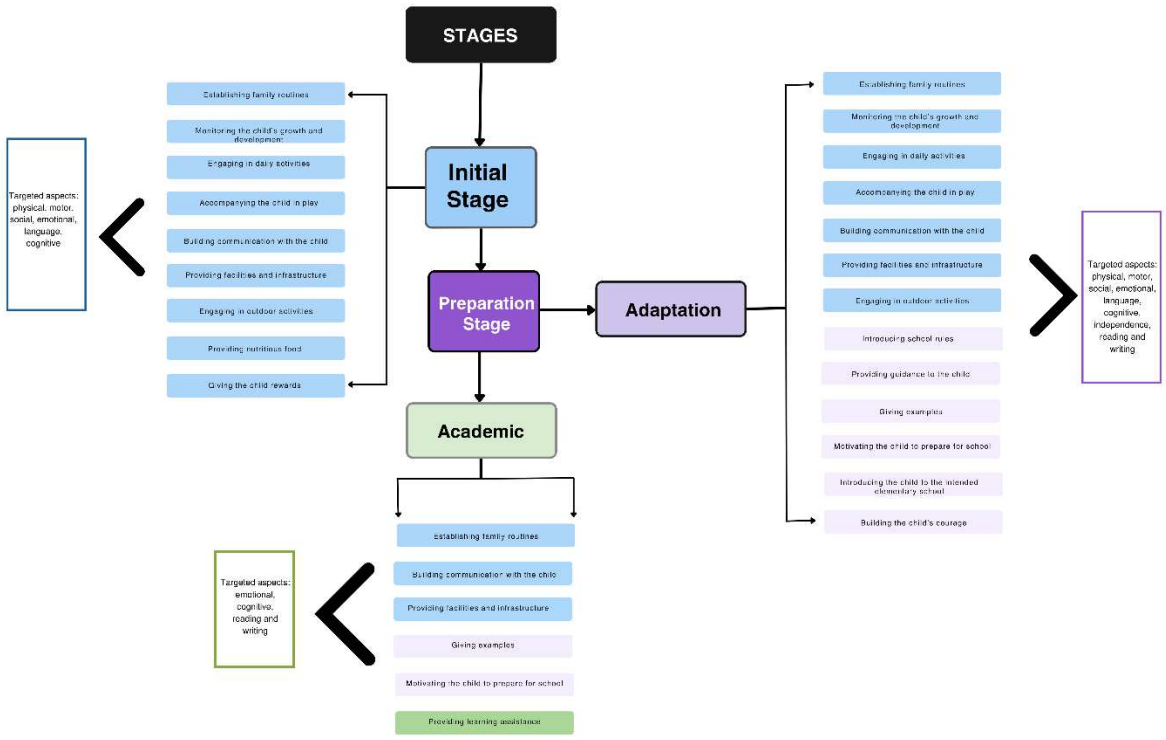

Figure 2. Scheme to Prepare Children for Elementary School

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that children's readiness to enter elementary school is reflected in the achievement of eight developmental aspects, namely physical, motor, social skills, emotional maturity, independence, language and communication skills, cognitive abilities, and reading and writing skills, which are consistently the focus of parenting practices in the five cases in this study.

Parents' efforts in achieving school readiness through parenting practices are quite varied, with a focus on targeted aspects. The sixteen forms of parenting practices identified are patterned into three sequential stages, namely the initial stage that focuses on the stimulation of home-based development, the adaptation preparation stage that emphasizes direction and introduction to the school environment, and the academic preparation stage that prepares children to face a more formal learning environment. These three stages describe a developmental process, not just a series of separate parenting activities. Preparing children to enter elementary school is not a single activity ahead of school registration, but a continuous process that begins long before children enter formal school age, and shifts its focus as the transition time approaches.

Although following the same pattern of stages, the way parents achieve the target of each stage is individual and not singular, as can be seen from the variety of active intervention pathways and directed neglect found in this study, depending on the beliefs, experiences, and characteristics of each family. The mapping of these stages is the main contribution of the research, complementing the understanding that has been gained more from quantitative research that identifies the types of parenting practices separately, without describing how the practices develop and shift their focus over time.

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In practical terms, these findings may inform how PAUD institutions and elementary schools support parents during the transition period. Schools could consider developing differentiated parent-school partnership programs aligned with each stage: encouraging general home-based developmental stimulation during the initial stage, providing guidance on classroom rules and school-environment orientation during the adaptation-preparation stage, and offering structured learning-assistance resources for parents during the academic-preparation stage as children approach school entry.

LIMITATIONS

This study has limitations in the scope of participants which is limited to the perspective of mothers in the Surabaya area with cases of children who are well school readiness, so generalization of findings needs to be done carefully. Further research is suggested to involve the perspectives of fathers and other family members, compare parenting patterns in cases with variations in school readiness levels, as well as further explore the factors that shape such variation in parenting practices, including the role of the digital environment in contemporary parenting.

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