

# Examining Pre-Service Preschool Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs Regarding Family Involvement Activities According to Their Status of Taking Family Education Courses and Various Variables

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## Abstract

This study, which aims to examine the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities based on their status of taking family education and involvement courses and various variables, is designed in a descriptive survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The study group consists of 78 pre-service preschool teachers who were selected through convenience sampling from a state university's Preschool Teacher Education Program. The data for the study were obtained through the "Demographic Information Form," created to determine the demographic information of the pre-service teachers, and the "Preschool Teacher Candidates' Self-Efficacy Belief Scale Regarding Parents Participation Activities," used to determine their self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities. The results obtained from the research are as follows: The self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement of pre-service teachers who have taken the family education and involvement course are higher than those who have not taken the course. The self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement of third-year pre-service teachers are higher than those of second-year pre-service teachers. The self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement do not differ statistically significantly according to the participation in a seminar on family education.

**Keywords:** Family involvement, self-efficacy belief, family education course, pre-service preschool teachers

## INTRODUCTION

The early childhood period is a critical phase during which the foundations of children's cognitive, language, motor, emotional, and social development are laid. During this period, the active involvement of families in their children's education plays a significant role in their development (Pomerantz & Moorman, 2010). The experiences and skills acquired during this time form the basis for children's future educational and life success (McWayne et al., 2004a). The active participation of families in this process is of great importance for children to show healthy development and to make a positive start to their educational journey.

Family involvement refers to the direct and indirect participation of families in children's educational processes (Georgiou, 1996). The contribution of parents and other family members to children's learning experiences, and their participation in educational activities at home and school, helps children grow into self-confident, curious, and eager learners (Berk, 2001). Research shows that family involvement increases children's academic achievements (Downey, 2002; Hacısalihođlu Karadeniz et al., 2012), enhances their social skills (McWayne et al., 2004b; Yue et al., 2024), and boosts their enjoyment and motivation in school (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012).

Family involvement generally helps children adopt a more positive approach to their educational processes (El Nokali et al., 2010). Ensuring family involvement in early childhood is important not

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only for children's development but also for strengthening the family-teacher collaboration. This collaboration allows teachers to better understand the individual needs of children and develop appropriate educational programs (Nitecki, 2015). Additionally, it increases parents' awareness of their children's education, making them more informed and effective supporters (Henrich & Blackman-Jones, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial for early childhood education institutions and teachers to develop strategies that encourage family involvement and actively engage families in this process (Pelletier & Brent, 2002). Strong family involvement at the initial step of the educational process lays a solid foundation for children's future educational journey and contributes to their development as successful individuals both academically and socially (Van Voorhis et al., 2013). The self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding this process can significantly impact the success of family involvement activities (Elaldi & Yerliyurt, 2016).

Self-efficacy belief can be defined as the confidence a person has in their capacity to perform a specific task (Maddux, 1995). This belief is an important factor that affects a person's motivation, performance, and overall level of success (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016). When considering the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities, self-efficacy belief plays a significant role in overcoming difficulties encountered in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of family involvement activities (Pelletier & Brent, 2002).

The higher the pre-service teacher's self-efficacy belief regarding family involvement activities, the more developed their skills in effective communication with families, foreseeing potential issues, and resolving problems proactively will be (Alaçam & Olgan, 2019). Moreover, teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs can develop supportive strategies to involve families in family involvement activities and encourage active participation in the education process (Mancenido & Pello, 2020). Pre-service teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are confident in communicating effectively with families. These candidates can encourage families to actively participate in their children's education by adopting an open, understanding, and empathetic communication style (Brannon, 2013). Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs trust themselves to develop creative and effective strategies to increase family involvement. They can plan activities tailored to various needs and expectations of families (Demirtas, 2018). For instance, they can organize classroom and extracurricular activities, workshops, home visits, or utilize technology to promote collaboration and participation among families. Pre-service teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are more successful in coping with challenges they may encounter in the family involvement process. These candidates approach negative situations in a solution-focused manner and effectively utilize stress management skills (Lin & Gorrell, 1997). Consequently, high self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities are crucial as they strengthen relationships with families and enable them to make greater contributions to children's education.

When reviewing the literature, it is evident that Ateş and Kalburan (2016) examined the self-efficacy beliefs of fourth-year pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities. Additionally, Başkan and Kutluca (2020) investigated the self-efficacy beliefs of both preschool teachers and teacher candidates regarding family involvement. Their study concluded that preschool teachers had higher self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement. Alaçam and Olgan (2017) examined the self-efficacy beliefs of third and fourth-year teacher candidates concerning family involvement, finding that candidates who perceived themselves as competent scored higher on the scale. Lastly, Apaydın Demirci and Arslan (2020) conducted a study to determine the relationship between pre-service preschool teachers' professional anxieties and their self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities. Their research found that as candidates' anxieties increased, their self-efficacy beliefs decreased. All these studies indicate a limitation in examining the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family participation activities according to the variables of taking family education and involvement

courses and attending seminars on family education. It is known that the skills acquired during higher education will be useful in their professional lives.

### ***Purpose of the Research***

Based on this, this research aims to deeply examine the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities and investigate the potential effects of taking family education course and various variables on these beliefs. It is considered that this study is important for promoting family involvement in early childhood education and enhancing the preparation of teacher candidates in this area. Examining the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities is crucial to support their professional development and contribute more effectively to children's education.

Thus, the primary aim of this study is to examine the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities based on their status of taking family education and involvement courses and various variables. Based on this aim, the following sub-objectives were pursued:

- 1) Do the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities significantly differ based on their status of taking family education and involvement courses?
- 2) Do the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities significantly differ based on the class level variable?
- 3) Do the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities significantly differ based on participation in seminars on family education?

### **METHOD**

This section includes information regarding the research design, study group, data collection instruments, methods of data collection, and analysis. This study is designed in a descriptive survey model using quantitative research methods to examine the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities based on their status of taking family education and involvement courses and various variables. Within the scope of survey models, apart from the implementation of measurement tools planned for use in the research, no other interventions, directives, or similar actions are conducted (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017).

#### ***Study Group***

The study group consists of 78 pre-service preschool teachers enrolled in a state university's Preschool Teacher Education Program, determined using convenient sampling method, who volunteered to participate in the research. Convenient sampling method is one of the non-probability or non-random sampling methods used when the participants in the study group meet certain criteria such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, or willingness to participate voluntarily (Dörnyei, 2007). Information regarding the demographic characteristics of the study group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Study Group

Demographic Information		N	%
Gender	Female	70	89.7
	Male	8	10.3
Class level	1st Grade	22	28.2
	2nd Grade	25	32.1
	3rd Grade	31	39.7
Status of taking family education and involvement course	Took	48	61.54
	Did not take	30	38.46
Participation in seminars on family education	Participated	15	19.2
	Did not participate	63	80.8
Total		78	100

As seen in Table 1, the study group consists of 89.7% female participants, 39.7% at the 3rd grade level, 61.54% who have taken the family education and involvement course, and 80.8% who have not participated in seminars on family education.

### **Data Collection Tools**

In this study aimed at examining the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service preschool teachers regarding family involvement activities based on their status of taking family education and involvement courses and various variables, the researcher used a "Demographic Information Form" prepared to obtain demographic information of teacher candidates, and the "Preschool Teacher Candidates' Self-Efficacy Belief Scale Regarding Parents Participation Activities" was employed to determine their self-efficacy beliefs related to family involvement activities.

#### *Demographic information form*

The demographic information form prepared by the researcher to access demographic information of teacher candidates includes questions regarding gender, class level, status of taking family education and involvement courses, and participation in seminars on family education.

#### *The preschool teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs scale regarding parents participation activities*

Developed by Ateş and Kalburan (2016), this scale aims to assess pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement. Each statement in the scale is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "feel very inadequate" to (7) "feel very adequate." The scale comprises a total of 21 items. The highest possible score on the scale is 141, while the lowest is 0. A higher score indicates more positive self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities. The validity and reliability studies of the scale reported a Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of .94 (Ateş and Kalburan, 2016). Formal permission to use the scale was obtained from the developers via email for this research. Within the scope of this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency of the scale was calculated as .96.

### **Process**

Before commencing the research, ethical approval was obtained from the Artvin Çoruh University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (E-18457941-050.99-129600- 14.03.2024). Subsequently, the measurement instruments were prepared as online forms using Google Forms. Visits were made to the classrooms of pre-service preschool teachers at suitable days and times. The purpose and significance of the research were explained to the participants by the researcher. The forms were sent to the participants via email. Participants voluntarily completed and submitted the forms online. Data collection took place between June 4th and June 24th, 2024.

### Analysis of Data

The data collected through the data collection tools in this study were analyzed using the statistical software package SPSS 21. Normality of the data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Table 2), and it was determined that the data follow a normal distribution. Therefore, parametric analyses were conducted. A significance level of .05 was accepted for statistical significance.

Table 2. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Data Distribution

		Preschool Teacher Candidates' Self-Efficacy Belief Scale Regarding Parents Participation Activities
<b>N</b>		78
<b>Normal parameters</b>	<b>Mean</b>	104.83
	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	25.86
	<b>Absolute</b>	.058
<b>Most Extreme Differences</b>	<b>Positive</b>	.058
	<b>Negative</b>	-.058
<b>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</b>		.516
<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</b>		.953

### RESULTS

The results regarding the examination of pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for family involvement activities by their participation in family education and involvement courses and various variables are presented in this section.

Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test Results on Differences in Pre-Service Preschool Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs for Family Involvement Activities According to Participation in Family Education and Involvement Courses

Scale	Status of taking family education and involvement course	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t Test		
					t	df	p
Preschool Teacher Candidates' Self-Efficacy Belief Scale Regarding Parents Participation Activities	Took	48	109.85	25.69	2.080	75	.041*
	Did not take	29	97.48	24.58			

\* $p < .05$

In Table 3, the independent samples t-Test conducted on the differentiation of pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for family involvement activities according to participation in family education and involvement courses revealed a significant difference between groups ( $p = .041$ ). It was found that pre-service teachers who took family education and involvement courses had higher self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities compared to those who did not take such courses.

Table 4. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test Results on Regarding the Differentiation of Pre-Service Preschool Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs for Family Involvement Activities by Class Level

<i>f, <math>\bar{X}</math> and SD Values</i>					ANOVA Results					
Scale	Class level	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	Source of Variance	Sum of squares	df	MS	F	p
Preschool Teacher Candidates' Self-Efficacy Belief Scale Regarding Parents Participation Activities	1st Grade	22	100.95	31.18	B. Groups	8909.084	2	4454.542	7.845	.001***
	2nd Grade	25	92.68	22.82	W.Groups	42587.749	75	567.837		
	3rd Grade	31	117.38	17.94	Total	51496.833	77			
	Total	78	104.83	25.86						

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 4 shows the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test regarding the differentiation of pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for family involvement activities by class level. Significant differences were found among groups ( $p = .001$ ). The differences between groups were further analyzed using the Scheffe Test, revealing that third-year teacher candidates had significantly higher self-efficacy beliefs for family involvement activities compared to second year ( $p = .001$ ) candidates.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-Test Results on the Differentiation of Pre-Service Preschool Teachers' Self-Efficacy Beliefs for Family Involvement Activities Based on Participation in Seminars on Family Education

Scale	Participation seminars on family education	in N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t Test		
					t	df	p
Preschool Teacher Candidates' Self-Efficacy Belief Scale Regarding Parents Participation Activities	Participated	15	93.13	26.00	-1.987	76	.065
	Did not participate	63	107.61	25.23			

In Table 5, the independent samples t-Test results indicated that there was no significant difference between groups in terms of pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities based on participation in seminars on family education ( $p = .065$ ). It was found that pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for family involvement activities did not significantly differ based on participation in seminars on family education.

## CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In this study, which examined pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities based on their participation in family education and involvement courses and various variables, it was found that teacher candidates who took the family education and involvement course had higher self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities compared to those who did not. In her research examining the self-efficacy of prospective teachers, Yim (2023) states that professional teacher education should develop students' academic and social skills in a collaborative context, emphasizing the importance of conducting this process through practical courses. This finding highlights the potential effectiveness of teacher education programs in improving pre-service teachers' competence in family involvement. Family involvement plays a crucial role in children's educational processes, and its effective implementation is directly related to teachers' feelings of self-efficacy in this area (Epstein, 2018). Courses on family education and involvement help pre-service teachers acquire



knowledge and skills in effective communication, collaboration with families, and promoting family engagement (Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009). These courses assist in enhancing teachers' confidence, allowing them to be more proactive and effective in family involvement activities (Evans, 2018; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Indeed, the findings of the present study also reveal the positive impact of courses on family education and involvement on pre-service teachers. Strengthening self-efficacy beliefs through these courses can positively affect future professional success and student achievement.

The study found that teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities varied according to grade level, with third-year candidates having higher self-efficacy beliefs compared to first and second-year candidates. Alaçam and Olğan (2017) also concluded that third and fourth-year pre-service preschool teachers exhibit high self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement. Conversely, Ateş and Kalburan (2016) identified moderate levels of self-efficacy beliefs among fourth-year teacher candidates regarding family involvement activities. This finding suggests that teacher candidates begin to feel more competent in family involvement activities as they progress through their education.

Several reasons may account for third-year teacher candidates having higher self-efficacy beliefs. Firstly, these candidates are in more advanced stages of their education, thus possessing more theoretical knowledge and practical experience. The experiences gained during practical classes and internship programs enhance their confidence in family involvement and reinforce their skills in this area (Bandura & Wessels, 1997). Additionally, upper-level students have developed better abilities to manage different situations and challenges encountered during their educational journey, which is believed to positively influence their self-efficacy beliefs. The results from this study indicate that teacher education programs should integrate training on family involvement throughout candidates' entire educational experience.

Finally, it was determined that pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities did not differ according to attendance in seminars on family education topics. Similarly, Başkan & Kutluca (2020) reached the conclusion that pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement activities do not differ based on whether they receive training on family involvement. This result from the current study may indicate that seminar attendance does not significantly impact teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs in family involvement activities. The finding suggests that seminars on family education topics may need to be reviewed if they are not achieving the expected impact of enhancing teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs. Seminars may need to include more practical application, interactive activities, and real-life scenarios beyond theoretical knowledge transfer. Additionally, the duration and frequency of seminars may not be sufficient for enhancing teacher candidates' skills in this area (Joyce & Showers, 2002). More effective and practice-based training programs could enhance teacher candidates' competence in family involvement and help them feel more confident and competent in this area.

The results of this study indicate that family education and involvement courses make a difference in pre-service preschool teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement. It was found that third-year teacher candidates have higher self-efficacy beliefs in this regard compared to second-year candidates. These findings underscore the importance of family education and involvement courses in equipping teacher candidates to become more competent in family involvement. At the same time, the lack of significant impact from factors such as taking family education and involvement courses and seminar attendance on self-efficacy beliefs suggests the need for education programs in these areas to be more inclusive and comprehensive.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are offered to teachers, teacher candidates, and researchers. To strengthen teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs regarding family involvement, it is suggested that family education and involvement courses should be more prominently featured in the curriculum. The content of these courses can be enriched to include effective communication with families, collaboration, and encouraging active participation of

families in the educational process. Given that third-year teacher candidates exhibit higher self-efficacy beliefs in family involvement, mentorship programs could be established for them to share their experiences with lower-level students. These programs can help lower-level students feel more secure and enhance their confidence in family involvement activities. Such research could provide valuable insights into which factors are more effective in shaping teacher candidates' education.

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