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## **READINESS FOR READING AND WRITING IN PRE-SCHOOL PERIOD: TEACHERS' VIEWPOINTS ON CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND PRACTICES**

*Research article*

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## READINESS FOR READING AND WRITING IN PRE-SCHOOL PERIOD: TEACHERS' VIEWPOINTS ON CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND PRACTICES

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### Abstract

The study aimed to scrutinize the views of pre-school teachers on children's readiness for reading and writing in relation with the classroom environment and the practices. This case study adopted descriptive design based on the qualitative data. The participants of the study comprised 47 pre-school teachers, who were selected via purposive sampling method. The data were collected using a semi-structured interview form, and analyzed via content analysis technique. The results obtained from the study showed that in order to support children's readiness for reading and writing skills in the pre-school period, both classroom environment, and activities played a significant role in attracting the attention of children, and preparing them for their primary school period.

*Keywords:* Pre-school education, pre-school teachers, readiness of children, reading and writing, teachers viewpoints

### 1. Introduction

Knowledge and skills gained during pre-school period affect individuals' entire live. For this reason, awareness about and attention paid to pre-school education have been in a considerable increase day by day because pre-school education creates a human profile that a society needs (Polat Unutkan, 2006; Oktay, 2010). In addition, it aims to provide knowledge, skills and concepts that will make it easier for children to learn to read and write in the future. Reading and writing are skills that are acquired together and are the ability of children to understand what they read, write, speak, hear and be literate Morrison (1998). The foundations of the process of obtaining literacy are laid from infancy and continue throughout life (Robins, Treiman, & Rosales, 2014). This process is called readiness for reading and writing in the pre-school period, in readiness for school and is made to facilitate the transition of children to primary school. Readiness for reading and writing includes the skills that children develop before learning formal literacy (Elimelech & Aram, 2020). It is emphasized that verbal language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge should be supported in order to develop pre-school children's readiness for reading and writing skills (Cabell, Justice, Konold, & McGinty, 2011; Chambré, Ehri, & Ness, 2017; Warmington & Hulme, 2012). Readiness for reading and writing activities in pre-school education program implemented in Turkey said that these skills are applied in a similar manner.

In MEB (2013) Pre-school Education Program, it is emphasized that readiness for reading and writing activities take an important place in terms of preparing children for school and creating positive attitudes towards reading and writing. Within the scope of readiness for reading and writing activities, the program includes visual perception, auditory perception /

phonological awareness, attention - memory, basic concept, problem solving, hand skills, self-care skills, confidence and independent behavior skills, social and emotional maturity, sensory training, breathing and rhythm exercises. These skills are described below:

Visual and auditory perception represent [instructional scaffolding](#) of stimuli received by two different channels (Paivio, 2013). Visual perception is a way to receive information with a sense of sight. It helps children visually identify and classify information (Yu, 2012). Visual perception [acquisition](#) is important for children to distinguish objects according to their various characteristics, the direction of the print (left-to-right directionality), the arrangement of the alphabet, the alphabet and the words and not to lose its place during reading and writing (Healy, 2011). It is stated in the Pre-school Education Program that visual perception studies consist of eye-motor coordination, figure - ground distinction, perception of form constancy, perception of spatial relationships (MEB, 2013). Auditory perception is the ability to distinguish, perceive, integrate sounds. In addition, it also includes the skills of children to speak and to express [phonemes](#) correctly. It is emphasized that auditory perception studies should be included in order for children to learn reading without any problems during the formal literacy acquisition process (Vilela, Sanches, & Carvalho, 2020; White-Schwoch et al., 2015). In order for children to be able to fully perceive the stimuli they receive in various ways such as auditory and visual, to learn how to read and write correctly, they should include attention-enhancing and memory-enhancing activities (Bay, 2008). It is argued that children with poor attention and memory cannot benefit from readiness for reading and writing activities in pre-school period and have difficulties in learning to read and write in primary school period (Davidse, de Jong, Bus, Huijbregts, & Swaab, 2011). The children are prepared to read by learning some of the basic concepts for the pre-school period with the oral stimuli or written materials they encounter in their story books, their surroundings. Concept development is especially important in terms of increasing vocabulary and pronunciation skills of children (Coyne, McCoach, & Kapp, 2007). In addition, children use the language to exchange ideas with each other in order to solve the problems they face. Meanwhile, the words that children encounter contribute to their development of vocabulary (Dajani & Meier, 2019). Another skill that needs to be developed in children for reading and writing is manipulative skill. It is emphasized that the development of children's manipulative has an important place in readiness for writing. It is stated that this skill should be supported by including to the activities involving various manipulative skills in pre-school period (Bindman, Skibbe, Hindman, Aram, & Morrison, 2014; Koçak, 2018). In addition, the self-confidence of children in pre-school is high. In this period, children's self-confidence should be supported and independent behavior development (Bayhan & Artan, 2004) and social emotional skills should be supported (Tan & Dobbs-Oates, 2013). In this way, it can be said that children will be more willing and curious about readiness for reading and writing activities (Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor, & Otuteye, 2005).

These skills that children need to acquire in order to be ready to reading and writing during the pre-school period are more effective when presented with a qualified education program, appropriate materials and adult support. The studies conducted included teachers' having rich language with children to prepare them for reading and writing (Paatsch, Scull, & Nolan, 2019), activities related to all their readiness for reading and writing skills (Roskos, Christie, & Ricghels, 2003), reading books (Dickinson et al., 2019) and providing a rich classroom environment for children in terms of readiness for reading and writing materials (Guo, Justice, Kaderavek, & McGinty, 2012). In addition, in this content, the opinions of teachers about the readiness for reading and writing (Mather, Bos, & Babur, 2001; Yılmaz

Bolat, 2019) and their knowledge level (A. E. Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009; Vesay & Gischlar, 2013).

### **1.1. Current Study**

When the related literature is examined, it is seen that the opinions of the teachers, the type of skills developed in the children and the classroom environment have an important place in readiness for reading and writing. In this study, it is aimed to examine the practices and opinions of pre-school teachers on readiness for reading and writing. For this purpose, the research questions of the study can be stated as follows:

- What is the classroom environment like in pre-schools to support readiness for reading and writing? (learning centers, materials in the classroom, readiness to read and write materials are available, the names of children in their cabinets, belongings, etc., the visual and written environment of the class (there are inscriptions on various items, materials and materials on the boards, walls in the classroom))
- What is the frequency of the activities that pre-school teachers offer on readiness for reading and writing?
- Which skills do pre-school teachers support in the context of readiness for reading and writing?
- What do pre-school teachers think about the interests and concentrations of children during the activities of readiness for reading and writing?
- What do pre-school teachers think about the importance of the activities on readiness for reading and writing?
- What do pre-school teachers think about the consequences in primary schools when children are not prepared to read and write during their pre-school period?

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Research Model**

This case study adopted the descriptive design based on qualitative data. In qualitative research, perceptions and events are presented in a realistic and holistic way in natural environments. Case studies reveal results related to a situation. In case studies, an individual, group or an environment chosen for the purpose of the study can be included in the case study. In the typical case study, routine events, cases and situations encountered in daily life are described and interpreted for the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2011; Yin, 2003; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In the study, the examination of pre-school teachers' practices and opinions on readiness for reading and writing are considered as a case. In order to reveal the situation, pre-school teachers were interviewed.

### **2.2. Participants**

In selecting the participants of the research, appropriate sampling method from the purposive sampling methods based on the criteria of being useful, quick and easy access was used (Patton, 2018). As part of the research, 47 pre-school teachers working in the nursery classes and kindergartens affiliated to a kindergarten under Provincial Directorate of National Education were interviewed during the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. Teachers working with 60-72 months old children were included in the research. When the

demographic characteristics of the teachers are analyzed, 21.28% of teachers are 24-30 years old, 61.70% are 31-40 years old, 17.02% 41-50 years; It was observed that 44.68% of their professional experiences were between 0-10 years, 46.80% of 11-20 years, and 8.52% of them were between 21-30 years. All of the teachers are undergraduate graduates.

### 2.3. Data Collection

The research data were collected between March and June 2020, when the teachers were available, through interviews in their own schools. A semi-structured interview form was created in order to determine teachers' reading and writing practices and opinions. The interview form was presented to the opinion of three field experts in order to ensure validity, and arrangements were made in the forms in line with the recommendations of the experts. Two teachers who were not included in the research were interviewed within the scope of the pre-application. Afterwards, the interview form was given its final form. Interviews with teachers took 25-30 minutes. The answers given by the teachers to the questions were recorded in the interview form.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

Content analysis technique was used in the analysis of the data obtained. The data collected in the content analysis technique is first conceptualized, then organized in a logical manner according to the emerging concepts and themes that explain the data are determined (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Accordingly, the data were read by the researcher and codings were made. The data were also evaluated and coded by another researcher. Different codings were changed by renegotiating together. Themes were created by examining the created codes and codes were collected under themes. Codes and themes were compared and re-examined, and then codes and themes were finalized. Frequency percent tables related to codings were created.

### 2.5. Reliability

Within the scope of external reliability, the researcher explained the methods and stages of the research in a clear and understandable manner and kept the interview forms; In the context of internal reliability, asked the questions clearly, tried to collect the data in detail, and was coded by two separate researchers (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In order to determine the percentage of consistency between the encodings, reliability analysis was performed. In the reliability analysis, the Percentage of inter-rater reliability  $= [\text{Consensus} / (\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement})]$  was calculated using the formula. As a result of the reliability analysis, the agreement between the two researchers was determined as .83. In line with this result, it can be said that the agreement between the researchers is high (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## 3. Results

Results obtained in line with the purpose of the research are given below:

34.04% (f=16) of the teachers stated that there is a center readiness for reading and writing in their classrooms, and 65.96% (f=31) of them do not. Teachers were asked whether there were any materials for readiness for reading and writing in other learning centers in the classrooms, and all of the teachers stated that there were no materials for readiness for reading and writing in learning centers other than the book center. Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“There is no literacy preparation center in the classroom. There is a small area with only story books.”(T15)*

*“We have a center with letters and cards called the language center.”(T 21)*



*Figure 1. Images of readiness for reading and writing center in some kindergartens*

When Figure 1 is examined, it is seen that learning centers in kindergartens consist of materials such as letters, words, and matching materials.

*Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of readiness for reading and writing materials in the classroom*

	f	%
Book/story card	47	21,96
Kneading materials	45	21,03
Matching cards	24	11,21
Pen etc.	20	9,35
Board games about letters, sounds and words	19	8,88
Attention and memory games	12	5,61
Alphabet cards/patterns	10	4,67
Blackboard	6	2,80
Worksheet	6	2,80
Clipboard	5	2,34
Drawing activity games	4	1,87
Sandbox	4	1,87
Smart board applications	3	1,40
Writing boks	2	0,93
Other (shapes, ruler, paper, scissors, handmade materials)	7	3,27
Total	214	100,00

As seen in Table 1, teachers are concerned with book / story cards (f=47), kneading materials (f=45), concept matching cards (f=24), pen, paint materials etc. (f=20), letters, sounds and words board games (f=19) are among the most common materials in the classes. Later, when the teachers asked the children about their ability to access these materials and use them as they want during free play, most of the teachers (f=38) stated that children could use these materials in accordance with teacher's own plan and that the materials were not available to the children. Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“There are three-dimensional wooden materials for visual cards, pen types, drawing activity games, where the names of objects are written.”(T1)*

*“Writing board, pen types, attention and memory games, magnetic letters, worksheets, sound wheel” (T 27)*



*Figure 2. Images of readiness for reading and writing material in some kindergartens*

In Figure 2, examples of letters, words and materials supporting fine motor skills of the literacy preparation materials in kindergarten are presented.

%80,85 of the teachers (f=38) stated that their names are written in children's materials, belongings and cabinets and %19,15 (f=9) of them do not. Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“I pay attention to the fact that their names are written in their cabinets and personal belongings in order to create writing awareness.” (T14)*

*“Yes, he writes names both in the materials and in the cabinets of children.” (T29-T44)*



*Figure 3. Images of the written form of children in some kindergartens*

In Figure 3, images of the fields on which the names of the children are written are given.

%89,36 (f=42) of the teachers stated that there is environmental print related readiness for reading and writing in their classrooms and %10,64 (f=5) of them do not. The teachers, who stated that they were present, stated that there are inscriptions on the letters table, words and some materials on the boards. Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“Words are written on some pictures on the boards.” (T45)*

*“I do not hang anything so that the class does not look confused.” (T46)*



*Figure 4. Images related to the environmental print in some kindergartens*

In Figure 4 images related to the environmental print in some kindergartens are given.

Table 2. *Frequency and percentage distributions for children knowing how to write their names*

	f	%
Yes	16	34,04
A few of children	17	36,17
No	14	29,79
Total	47	100,00

When Table 2 is examined, 34.04% of the teachers stated that all of the children in their classes, 36.17% of a few of the children in their classes were able to write their names, and 29.79% of them could not write any children. Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

“They can write their names. In some studies, I want them to write their own names.” (T4)

“Only a few children can write.” (T7)

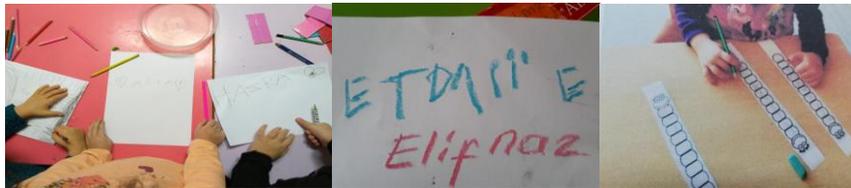


Figure 5. *Photos taken while writing the names of children in some kindergarten*

In Figure 5, photographs of the children were taken while writing their names.

Table 3. *Frequency and percentage distributions related to the frequency of teachers' readiness for reading and writing activities.*

	f	%
Everyday	25	47,17
3-4 days a week	23	43,40
1-2 days a week	5	9,43
Total	53	100,00

When Table 3 is examined, teachers include readiness for reading and writing activities the most common are daily (f=25) and 3-4 days a week (f=23); It is observed that they give place at least 1-2 days a week (f=5).

Table 4. *Frequency and percentage distributions related to the activities that teachers carried out in readiness for reading and writing*

	f	%
Manipulative skill	33	23,57
Auditory perception	31	22,14
Attention-memory studies	24	17,14
Visual perception	14	10,00
Basic concept	13	9,29
Alphabet knowledge	9	6,43
Print awareness	8	5,71
Vocabulary knowledge	6	4,29

Problem solving	2	1,43
Total	140	100,00

When Table 4 is examined, the manipulative skills (f=33), auditory perception (f=31) and attention memory (f=24) in the context of teachers' readiness for reading and writing; It is remarkable that they include the least problem solving (f=2), vocabulary knowledge (f=6) and print awareness (f=8) studies. Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“Phonological Awareness, I make them discovery, grasp and understand sounds.” (T3)*

*“We work on phoneme training, drawing activities, phonological awareness.” (T26)*



Figure 6. Photos of some teachers' works

Figure 6 shows the images regarding the readiness for reading and writing activities that teachers have done.

Table 5. Frequency and percentage distributions related to activities for teachers to evaluate their concentration and interest in children's readiness for reading and writing activities

	f	%
High	18	38,30
Low but rises when I integrate with other activities	17	36,17
Low	11	23,40
Medium	1	2,13
Total	47	100,00

In Table 5, the opinions of teachers regarding the evaluation of their interests and concentrations on children's readiness for reading and writing activities are given. Teachers evaluated children's interest and concentration in readiness for reading and writing activities as high (f=18) and low, but high when integrated into other activities (f=17), low (f=11) and moderate (f=1). Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“Their interest and concentration are weak.”(T8)*

*“At the top level. They participate very fondly, they are very enthusiastic. They want to read, write, write their own name and the things they love as soon as possible.”(T9)*

Table 6. Frequency and percentage distributions related to the opinions of teachers on the importance of readiness for reading and writing activities

	f	%
School readiness	32	21,77
Fine motor skills	26	17,69
Cognitive development	16	10,88
Not to have difficulty in primary school	11	7,48

Recognize the voices	9	6,12
Print awareness	9	6,12
Prepare for reading and writing	9	6,12
Recognize alphabet	8	5,44
Eye-motor coordination	6	4,08
Concept development	5	3,40
Social emotional development	3	2,04
Visual perception	3	2,04
Support all developmental areas	2	1,36
Used in daily life	2	1,36
Recognize his own name	2	1,36
Gain sub-skills to learn to read and write	1	0,68
Vocabulary set	1	0,68
Gives the ability to investigate events	1	0,68
Being regularness	1	0,68
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100,00</b>

When Table 6 is analyzed, it is seen that teachers' readiness for reading and writing in pre-school period are mostly School readiness (f=32), development of fine motor skills (f=26), supporting their cognitive development (f=16), not having difficulty in primary school (f=11); at least, they stated that it was important for the development of being regularness (f=1), the ability to investigate events (f=1), the development of vocabulary set (f=1), and the sub-skills to learn to read and write (f=1). Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“Readiness for reading and writing activities have an important place for children. Pen retention is important in order to teach paper from left to right, top to bottom, as a basis for reading, to recognize letters and sounds.” (T40)*

*“It helps children develop fine motor skills. Vocabulary set is developing with what they have learned. He recognizes phonemes and realizes the letters in his name. They realize the concepts. They learn syllables a little bit.” (T42)*

Table 7. Frequency and percentage distributions regarding the opinions of teachers about how children will have difficulties during the primary school period when their readiness for reading and writing activities are not presented to children

	f	%
Fail at primary school	22	20,75
Fine motor skills	23	14,15
Affects school readiness	15	14,15
Writing skills	10	9,43
cognitive development	10	9,43
Learning letters and phonemes	6	5,66
self-confidence	5	4,72
adapt to the class regular	4	3,77
Using the page correctly (turning it in the right direction, knowing the direction of the article)	3	2,83
Eye motor coordination	3	2,83
Learning basic concepts	3	2,83
No difficulty	2	1,89
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100,00</b>

When Table 7 is examined, when the teachers' readiness for reading and writing activities are not presented to the children, the highest are achievements of the children in primary school (f=22), fine motor skills (f=23), school readiness (f=15), writing skills (f=10), cognitive development (f=10); They stated at least that they will have difficulty in adapting to the classroom regular (f=4), using the page correctly (f=3), eye motor coordination (f=3), learning basic concepts (f=3). In addition, some teachers stated that they would not have difficulty (f=2). Some excerpts that can be an example of teachers' explanations are given below:

*“They definitely have difficulties. The children who are not provided with readiness for reading and writing activities before school are vaccinated in primary school because they do not recognize the letters, phonemes and writing. they can get bored quickly and can be difficult to learn letters. They can get tired and reluctant quickly.”(T18)*

*“Children who are not able to do these are more difficult to adapt because the children who do this kind of activities before school go to 1st grade in terms of cognitive development. I believe that the children participating in these activities can be more successful since the readiness for reading and writing activities support all areas of development in general.”(T33)*

#### **4. Discussion**

In this study, it is aimed to examine the practices and opinions of pre-school teachers on readiness for reading and writing. Accordingly, first of all, the opinions of the teachers regarding the readiness for reading and writing environment in the classroom were examined. (Dyňa et al., 2018) states that in the evaluation of the physical readiness for reading and writing environments of pre-school classes, the variety of materials presented to children in the classroom, their availability, and the evaluation of the written materials in the classroom together. In this study, teachers' opinions about whether there is a readiness for reading and writing center in the classroom, what materials are available for reading and writing, whether their names are written in children's cabinets and personal belongings, and environmental prints in the classroom were evaluated. It is determined that there is no separate readiness for reading and writing center in the classrooms and no material for reading and writing in other learning centers. In line with this result, it can be said that the lack of a readiness for reading and writing is a major deficiency in most classes. Learning centers are called centers where children create meaningful learning experiences for their interests (Kostelnik, M. J., Soderman, A. K., Whiren, A. P., & Rupiper, 2015). Accordingly, it is thought that a learning center created in this field will contribute to children in order to readiness for reading and writing. The learning centers, which are created for the development of early literacy skills or contain materials for early literacy, contribute to children's reading and writing, learning, listening, speaking, language, new concepts and skills (Christie & Roskos, 2006). In the study where the early literacy environment of seventeen pre-school classrooms were examined, it was concluded that the early literacy environments of the classes were low and medium quality and there were no materials in learning centers to improve children's early literacy skills (Tarım, 2015). In similar studies, it was observed that learning centers in pre-school classes lack early literacy materials (D. D. Cunningham, 2008; Wayne, DiCarlo, Burts, & Benedict, 2007). When the materials that are readiness for reading and writing in pre-school classes are examined, it is seen that there are various readiness for reading and writing materials in all classes. However, in line with the information received from the teachers, it was reported that children could not reach most of these materials as they wish during the free play time, and that the teachers could use them in the readiness for reading and writing activities as planned by the teacher. (Hope K. Gerde, Bingham, & Pendergast,

2015; Zhang, Hur, Diamond, & Powell, 2015) concluded that pre-school classes have rich materials related to readiness for reading and writing. Although it is very important to have readiness for reading and writing materials in the classroom, it is not sufficient [singlehandedly](#). In the studies conducted, it is stated that if the materials are easily accessible and used by children, they will contribute to the development of language and early literacy (Baroody & Diamond, 2016; Dynia et al., 2018). When the opinions of the teachers about their print environment practices in pre-school classes are examined, the names written in the children's lockers and belongings in most of the classes are; however, it was found that there were no prints (such as words, letters, etc.) on the materials, boards, learning centers in the classroom. Most studies state that the presence of articles in the classroom is an indication that the physical literacy environment is provided (Dynia et al., 2018; Neumann, Hood, & Ford, 2013; Vukelich, 1994). In the researches, when the children are presented with a visual and print environment, the ability of children to recognize the alphabet and words (Zhao, Zhao, Weng, & Li, 2014), early literacy skills (Diamond, Gerde, & Powell, 2008) and the success of the school in the future (Duncan et al., 2007), it was concluded that reading skills (Vukelich, 1994), writing names and letters (Neumann et al., 2013) improved.

It can be seen that the results obtained in evaluating the opinions of teachers about the readiness for reading and writing in the classroom are in parallel with the other research results. It can be said that it is important to create the classroom environment in a way to develop literacy preparation skills for children to readiness for reading and writing in pre-school period. Children can be prepared for visual and written stimuli for reading and writing, materials at free play times, in learning centers, elsewhere in the class (such as on boards, on materials), etc. It is thought that their attitudes towards readiness to read and write may be positive, their awareness will increase and they can learn these skills more easily. For this reason, it can be said that it is important to create a rich environment for reading and writing in pre-school classrooms, creating environments where children will be aware of stimuli in this environment.

In the research, teachers were asked to write their own names and it was determined that most of the children could write their names. The purpose of asking this question is not because of the necessity of writing the names of the children, but of the desire to evaluate the activities of writing the names of the children with interest in the context of readiness for reading and writing. Writing skill is the most important form of written communication (Lust & Donica, 2011). The first discoveries of children about writing are by their own names. Writing the names of children is related to copying, visualization, which does not require spelling, (Molfese et al., 2011; Tse, Siu, & Li-Tsang, 2019). However, the motivation and self-efficacy beliefs of children to learn to write their own names are high. Because children experience the pride of being able to write their representing names (Gerde, Bingham, & Wasik, 2012; Haney, 2002). Children mostly see, hear and learn the letters in their names (Aram & Levin, 2002; Treiman & Broderick, 1998; TREIMAN, KESSLER, & BOURASSA, 2001). Thus, children learn the letters in their names before other letters, pay attention to their phonemes and comprehend the letter-sound relationship (Puranik, Schreiber, Estabrook, & O'Donnell, 2014). For this reason, opportunities should be created in the pre-school period where children will encounter their spelling more frequently. Pre-school teachers should encourage children to write their own names and friends' names in their activities. They should be given the opportunity to experience writing through activities such as copying their names by looking at them in written form. In this way, it is thought that children's awareness and interest in writing, letters, words and phonemes may increase.

When asked how many days of readiness for reading and writing were given to teachers, it was concluded that most of their teachers included the activities every day and 3-4 days a

week. In the researches, it was determined that most of the pre-school teachers included readiness for reading and writing every day (Samsunlu, 2016; Yılmaz Bolat, 2019). It can be said that these activities should be included in the daily education flow systematically and regularly in order to develop children's readiness for reading and writing skills. Because an education can reach its purpose only if it is given regularly and in a planned manner. It is believed that the activities done by teachers within the scope of readiness for reading and writing is as important as the frequency of the readiness for reading and writing activities. There are many skills that are expected to be developed within the scope of readiness for reading and writing studies (MEB, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that these skills should be supported together so that children are readiness for reading and writing. When teachers were asked about the types of activities they included in the readiness for reading and writing activities, teachers' most manipulative skills, auditory perception and attention-memory; At least, it was concluded that they included problem solving, vocabulary, alphabet knowledge and print awareness studies. Similarly, the most manipulative skills, least problem solving and confidence and independent behavior development of teachers in similar studies (Yılmaz Bolat, 2019); most pen-holding and phonological awareness (Samsunlu, 2016); concept, drawing and phoneme (Akbaba Altun, Şimşek Çetin, & Bay, 2014). Manipulative skills are very important for children to prepare for writing. From this point of view, it can be said that teachers attach importance to preparation activities for writing. However, multidimensional support of children's readiness for reading and writing skills in pre-school period is the focus of pre-school education (Zhang, Bingham, & Quinn, 2017). It can be interpreted that the teachers' failure to include all skills equally is inadequate in this regard. In their study in Bingham, Quinn, & Gerde, 2017, is stated that the skills, methods and quality they use in pre-school teachers' reading and writing activities are low.

It is not enough to present an activity to children. It is important that the activity is interesting for the children, so that the children participate in the activity with high concentrations without being distracted. Ensuring children's participation in activities and high attention and concentration increase motivation to learn (Gentry & Gable, 2001). However, it is stated that children make more efforts to increase their potential (Molden & Dweck, 2000). In the study, teachers were asked to evaluate children's interests, attention and concentrations in readiness for reading and writing activities. The teachers' responses were mainly “high” and “low but high when integrated with other activities”. In a study, it was concluded that it was important for children to attend readiness for reading and writing activities by concentrating their attention, and it was suggested that pre-school teachers should prepare their readiness for reading and writing activities by attracting children's attention or integrating them with play activities (Zhang et al., 2017). (Bingham, Quinn, McRoy, Zhang, & Gerde, 2018) also emphasizes that teachers should be given priority to integrate their work in readiness for reading and writing. All these results can be said that teachers should support the children by focusing on the development of children's attention skills as much as they need to integrate the activities with the play in order to acquire children's readiness for reading and writing skills. Studies have suggested that with the support of attention and memory development, children become ready for reading and writing, their early literacy skills improve, their school readiness increases, they learn more easily and they interact more effectively with their teachers and peers (Gathercole et al., 2008; Gathercole, Tiffany, Briscoe, & Thorn, 2005; Hughes & Ensor, 2007; Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bierman, & Nelson, 2010).

It is thought that teachers offer a rich classroom environment in terms of readiness for reading and writing, include all the skills that improve readiness for reading and writing, keep children's attention and concentration alive, the importance they attach to readiness for

reading and writing, and the difficulties children experience in primary school. It is argued that pre-school teachers have marginal knowledge, skills and opinions that improve children's readiness for reading and writing skills (McGill-Franzen, 2010). In the study, teachers were asked why it is important to readiness for reading and writing. Most of the teachers stated that it is important for the preparation of children for primary school and development of their fine motor skills. In the studies conducted, it has been concluded that pre-school teachers' readiness for reading and writing activities are important for the development of children's pencil holding, drawing lines, fine motor skills, eye-motor coordination (Akbaba Altun et al., 2014; Yılmaz Bolat, 2019). National Early Literacy Panel Report stated that alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, concept knowledge, writing their own name and improving their memory should be developed for children to learn how to read and write easily (NELP, 2009). In addition to this, in another study, it was stated that print awareness and recognition of visual symbols should be developed as part of readiness for reading and writing (McLachlan, Arrow, & Watson, 2013). When the obtained results are analyzed, it is seen that the teachers expressed their opinions about the importance of the readiness for reading and writing activities. However, considering that the readiness for reading and writing activities have an important place for the development of many skills, it can be said that the level of knowledge of teachers on this subject is insufficient. (H. K. Gerde, Wright, Skibbe, & Douglas, 2016) concluded that pre-school teachers have limited knowledge in terms of supporting children's readiness for writing skills. In this respect, it can be said that teachers should be supported with various in-service trainings in order to develop their knowledge and skills in readiness for reading and writing. Similarly, in the study conducted to determine teachers' knowledge levels of early literacy, it was concluded that teachers had limited knowledge level, therefore it was stated that pre-school teachers should be supported in this regard (G. Phillips, McNaughton, & MacDonald, 2002). It was concluded that alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness education given to pre-school teachers improved in terms of early literacy skills and that the knowledge level of teachers increased in this subject compared to the control group of children aged 3-5 years (McLachlan et al., 2013).

Finally, when the children were not prepared to read and write, the teachers were asked what difficulties they might encounter in primary school. The teachers stated that children may fail at primary school, their school readiness will affect negatively, they may have difficulty in holding pen and writing skills. In studies conducted, it was concluded that pre-school teachers' readiness for reading and writing activities are important in preparation for primary school (Akbaba Altun et al., 2014; Dönmezler, 2016). Formal literacy learning processes of children whose readiness for reading and writing skills are supported are easier (B. M. Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008; Van Luit, 2011). In the studies conducted, children learned to reading easily when their alphabet knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary set and phonological awareness skills were supported (Arrow, 2010); reached the conclusions that readiness for reading and writing had positive effect on print awareness, phonological awareness and their literacy skills in primary school (Bayraktar & Temel, 2014). In line with these results, we can say that the readiness for reading and writing affect children's success in primary school, their readiness to primary school, and their acquisition of other skills.

## **5. Conclusion**

The study was carried out to examine the practices and views of pre-school teachers on readiness for reading and writing. The results obtained from the study show that in order to support children's readiness for reading and writing skills in the pre-school period, the importance of the classroom environment, the importance of pre-school teachers planning the

activities in a way that attracts the attention of the children and the importance of the teachers' readiness for reading and writing and their effects in primary school. Accordingly, the readiness for reading and writing environment of pre-school classes should be rich. In the rich environment prepared, children should be able to access the materials easily, use the materials, and their attention should be drawn to the prints in the classroom with various interventions (for example, giving a written menu prepared for children who cook in the dramatic play center, encouraging them to prepare a shopping list). In the program, readiness for reading and writing activities should be included in an equal number with other activities, and readiness for reading and writing should be prepared in a way to attract the attention of children. Various in-service trainings should be organized in order for teachers to comprehend the importance of readiness for reading and writing activities and to support all sub-skills of children in readiness for reading and writing.

## **6. Limitations and implications for practice**

The study is a qualitative research limited to interviews with pre-school teachers. Research results cannot be generalized due to the limited qualitative research. In this direction, it is recommended to be planned in a mixed method by taking samples in future research.

As a result of the research, it was seen that pre-school teachers carry out their readiness for reading and writing with a focus on certain skills. For this reason, it is recommended that pre-school teachers be provided with in-service training on readiness for reading and writing.

It is a limitation of the study that the information about the interests and concentrations of the children in the readiness for reading and writing activities was obtained from the teachers. Within the scope of this question, children can be observed during readiness for reading and writing, and it may be suggested to obtain more detailed results.

The skills included in the readiness for reading and writing were examined in line with the opinions of the teachers. It can be suggested to examine the activity plans applied by teachers and obtain more detailed results.

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