

**FAMILY DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AS
PREDICTOR OF SCHOOL READINESS AMONG
PRIMARY ONE SCHOOL PUPILS IN
SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA**

By

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Abstract

Learning starts from birth and parents have a critical role to play to inculcate basic knowledge in children as well as getting them ready for school because they are their children's first teacher. This study explored how various aspects of a child's family such as family income, parents' 'educational level and home locations predict their readiness for primary school. Previous research findings on some of the family variables

indicated a relationship with children's readiness, while others revealed no relationship. Thus, there is a need to investigate further into these family variables (family income, parental educational level and home location) to enable one to establish the extent to which, each of them predicts school readiness among primary one pupils within Southeastern Nigeria. This study situated on Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System theory. The survey design of the correlation type was used for this study. The population of this study covered all the parents whose pupils are in primary one in public schools in Southeastern Nigeria. Simple random sample technique was used to select three states in Southeastern Nigeria namely Abia, 320; Anambra' 416 and Imo, 418. The disproportionate sampling technique was used to pick four Local Government Areas (LGAs) from each of the selected states making 12 LGAs. Five public primary schools that were within the LGAs' used for the study were explicitly selected through the use of purposive sampling from each LGA. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one whole primary one class from each school, all having 1,200 pupils and the parents of these pupils were used for this study. Research instruments used were Family Demographic Factors Questionnaire. Analysis of data was conducted with the aid of PPMC-Pearson-Product-Moment-Correlation, and linear regression (multiple) at 0.05 significance level. The monthly FI of majority of

parents (65.0%) was between N10,000-N50,000, while HL of 53.0% was urban and 75.0% did not have more than secondary education. FDF had a significant composite contribution on pupils' school readiness ($F_{(3;1195)} = 24.65$) and accounted for 5.6% of its variance. The PEL ($\beta = 0.18$; $t = 6.27$), HL ($\beta = 0.16$; $t = 5.68$) and FI ($\beta = 0.13$; $t = 4.50$) had significant relative contributions to school readiness. It is recommended that State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in Southeastern, Nigeria should from time to time, organise a forum where all the stakeholders especially parents of pre- primary school children would gather and enlightened about their roles toward school readiness of their children.

Keywords: Family Demographic factor, Family income, parental education level, home location, School readiness, Predictor, Primary one pupils

Introduction

Learning starts from birth and it is the role of the parents to start early in life to inculcate basic knowledge to their children even before they start pre-primary school because they are their children's first teacher and their role model. It is believed that children entering into primary level of education should develop the basic knowledge needed to make them succeed in life and ready for school. For example, children entering primary school should acquire basic knowledge like: know

different colours, shapes, identify letters/ numbers and answer simple questions (cognitive); being able to hold pencil/ chalk and write/ draw, catch or throw objects, climb, run, jump (physical development); express themselves, sing songs, listen to stories and recite rhymes (language development); interact with others, take turns, share, follow direction from caregivers and other adults in school (social development), feed themselves, wash hands and wave to parent(s) when drop at school without crying (emotional development). This early experience of developing knowledge and skills, start from home through pre- primary school.

Pre- primary education is described as education given in the educational institution from 5 to 6 years before the child joins primary school (FGN, 2013). The main objective of introducing one year free and compulsory pre-primary level of education in Nigeria is to prepare children for primary school (FGN, 2013). It also aimed at developing the holistic development of children, in terms of cognitive, physical, language, social, emotional skills that will help them to succeed in primary school and beyond. Thus, children given quality early childhood experiences need to obtain basic skills, behaviour and knowledge necessary to enable them transit effectively to primary education and this learning starts from home even before the child starts pre- primary school. Thus, early childhood education is the most significance years

in the formation of intelligence, moral and social behaviour of a child. This period has great impact on the holistic development of children (Olowe, Kutelu & Majebi, 2014; Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016) supported that early childhood education promote the holistic development of children from birth to age eight. Thus, there is need for children to be ready for school before they enter primary school for them to succeed.

The National Policy on Education defines primary education as the knowledge provided in a school to kids between the ages of six and eleven (FGN, 2013). Its main objective is to create, establish, and provide an avenue where children, regardless of their gender, age, or country of origin, can attain holistic development. Formal education starts at this level (Ajala, 2015). It gives children the fundamental abilities that will serve as the cornerstones of their academic careers and beyond because other formal levels of education depend on it. The primary-one pupils were selected for this study because it is presumed that they have finished the one-year, free and compulsory pre-primary school programme, and it is necessary to examine the extent to which family demographic factors predict their school readiness. Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) outlines a summary of the National Policy on Educational objectives for primary education: to develop in the child a strong foundation for scientific and

reflective thinking; to instill lifelong literacy, numeracy, and the capacity for effective communication; to offer civic education as a foundation for successful societal engagement and participation; to shape the personalities and foster the development of a good attitude and morality in children; to create in the child, the capacity for scientific and reflective thinking. The above-listed objectives might not be achievable if the child is not well-equipped for primary school tasks. The child's preparedness for this primary level of education is referred to as school readiness.

Snow (2006) describes school readiness as the competencies children need to succeed in life. It means that a child has reached a developmental stage at which formal schooling will be extremely beneficial to him or her. De Witi & Booysen (2007) view school readiness as a definite state of development, including the child's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. The prerequisites for a child to successfully move from preschool to the official school setting, the primary school constitute school readiness (Zhang, Sun & Gai, 2008). Children who are adequately prepared and ready for school are more likely to go through school without much stress adjusting to the teaching and learning environment. Thus, preparing the child's school readiness involves both the family members and the school.

The family greatly influences a kid's preparedness for school due to how it affects them at this level of education either positively or negatively. A child is greatly influenced by their family and environment; this effect is most pronounced in their early years and persists throughout their life time. Preschoolers' learning and development, particularly their preparedness for school, are significantly influenced by the quality of parenting and their interaction with their parents (Weiss & Stephen, 2009). The connection and relationship children have with their parent's has huge impact on the way they learn (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2012). The child's growth and level of school preparedness depend on the home environment in which the child is brought up. Parents are incredibly important in promoting early learning and school preparation because, before ever attending school, children start learning at home (Bierman, Morris & Abenavoli, 2017). Children from disadvantaged family backgrounds have fewer school readiness skills than their peers from advantageous family backgrounds (Isaac, 2012).

The home is among the determinant factors that affect the child's preparation for schooling. Within the home, some variables can predict school readiness. These include: socio-economic position, parental education,

and family size (Adeyemi & Adebajo, 2018). In this study, family demographic factors have been considered in relation to child readiness. Family demographic factors mean family characteristics such as parental age, family income, parental educational status and home location. Three of these family demographic factors are of interest to this study: family income, parental educational level and home location. The choice of these factors is based on the fact that they are very vital among the family variables listed above. So, the extent to which family demographic factors (family income, parents' education and home location) predicts school readiness of primary one pupil in Southeastern Nigeria needed to be established empirically.

Family income, as one of the family demographic factors in this study, refers to the purchasing power of the parents where the child belongs. Simiyu (2001) noted that family income can be in the form of salaries, wages, rents, profits and other cash inflow such as worker's compensation for the work done like pension, interest and family financial assistance. Family income can determine children's readiness for school in a number of ways. Economically speaking, low-income families lack resources for a child's healthy growth, such as nourishing meals, enriching living spaces, top-notch daycare facilities and quality health care services (Isaacs, 2012). Residing in a place where crime is more prevalent, air

pollution and noise pollution can harm children from homes where parents make extremely modest salaries (Evans, 2004). A research report by kindergarten teachers in a study indicated that half of low-income kids are not "school-ready." (Bierman, Morris & Abenavoli, 2017).

Previous studies also examined the impacts of household income on kids' preparation for school. Kudaisi & Martins (2014) examined how family income status influences school children's educational attainment. The study's conclusions revealed that parental income did not affect their children's progress in school. In another study, Ololube, Onyekwere & Agbor, (2015) examined the influence of family income on children's school readiness; the investigation found that family income determined children's school readiness. These authors concluded that a family's socioeconomic status affects the ability of the family to meet the immediate educational needs as well as other indirect needs of children. When these needs are unmet, the extent to which children will benefit from educational opportunities will be greatly low. There is a need to examine the extent to which family income determines a child's preparation for primary school in Southeastern Nigeria. The categories of learners investigated in the previous studies were not primary one pupils, which

form the first level for formal education. All these gaps underscore the need for this study.

Parental educational level is another family demographic factor that may predict children's school readiness. In this study, the parent's educational level refers to educational attainment of the parents of the pupils. The parents' degree of education is important in explaining why some children begin school with better levels of preparation, as seen by their reading and Mathematics abilities. This may be largely due to the fact that educated parents take time to introduce their kids to some fundamental school work even before they enroll them in classes. Additionally, empirical evidence shows that kids with parents who have completed more years of schooling are likely to have academic capabilities at a younger age (Carneiro, Crawford & Goodman, 2007; Jiang, 2014). Davis-Kean (2005) also provides evidence that the educational status of parent(s) has overwhelming influence on the educational outcome of children, including school readiness. Furthermore, Greeman, Bodovski & Reed, (2014) investigated the influence of parental characteristics including their educational status on pupil's school outcomes in the primary grades. Research findings showed that children from homes where parents have lower educational levels had poorer school outcomes than their peers whose parents have higher educational levels. In spite of the various

researches covered on parents educational status and its influence on children learning, as far as the researcher is aware, the degree to which parents' educational status predicts their kids level of school readiness, has not yet been fully established in Southeastern, Nigeria. The results of the previous studies prompted the need to carry out a study to ascertain if the same is applicable among primary one pupil in Southeastern, Nigeria.

Home location is another family demographic factor considered to play a significant part in preparing kids for school. In this study, home location is the residential area of the child either rural or urban setting. There has been a rising concern among decision-makers and individuals with expertise in education on notable gaps in the educational attainment and achievement of learners in urban and rural location (Essays, 2018). These differences could actually be linked to the fact that learners in these locations were ready for school at the point of entry. Some authors have observed that children in rural location may not have quality pre-school setting, health facilities, conducive home and learning facilities to get them ready for schooling (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005; Kluzniok, 2017). Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bieman & Nelson, (2010) revealed in another study that there are significant accomplishment discrepancies between urban and rural children at the beginning of school, which results in differences in learning

difficulties and academic advancement. This result concurs with that of Greenman (2014) who investigated the predictive effect of residential location on American elementary school children's performance outcomes. The finding of the study reveals that children living in rural areas reported poorer school outcomes compared to those who lived in urban locations.

Alokan & Arijesuyo (2013) examine the effect of place of residence on pupils' academic performance in rural and urban areas of Ondo State, Nigeria. The results of the investigation showed that there was no discernible difference between urban and rural schools' academic performance. Although various studies have proven that home location affects the learning of the child. The extent to which home location predicts their readiness for school has not yet been clearly established within the Southeastern, Nigeria. This is because none of these studies has made an attempt to look at the influence of home location on primary-one pupils' school readiness. These gaps created necessitated the reason to carry out this study. The objective of this study is to know how family demographic factors predict school readiness of primary one pupils in Southeastern, Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

The theory used for this study was propounded by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). It emphasizes the benefit of the environment in shaping the child's development either positively or negatively as regard to school readiness as well as holistic development of the child. He divided the environment into five different stages namely micro system, mesosystem, exosystem, macro system and chronosystem. This study is based on micro system. This system is the immediate environment in which the child lives. It comprises of parents, siblings, peer groups, community and neighbourhood. These groups of people have either positive or negative effect on child development as well as the school readiness. The way they interact with the child will determine how ready the child will be ready for school because they are the child's first teacher and role model. The ecological principle of human development is pertinent to this research because it provides insight into all the factors that play a crucial part in a child's preparedness for school. Family demographics (family income, parental education, home location) can significantly affect how prepared a pupil is for school. It also shows how all the components are intertwined and related to a child's school readiness.

The following research questions were asked in this study:

What is the composite contribution of family demographic factors (family income, parental educational level and home location) to school readiness among primary-one pupils in South-eastern Nigeria?

What are the relative contributions of family demographic factors (family income, parental educational level and home location) to school readiness among primary-one pupils in South-eastern Nigeria?

Method

This study used a survey design of the correlation type. According to Fawole, Egbokhare, Itiole & Okyinka, (2006) this design is adopted when a researcher's intention is to study variables, their relationships and how they naturally occur. All the parents of primary-one school pupils in public primary schools in Southeastern Nigeria made up the population for this study. These categories of parents were chosen because their children belong to the foundational stage of the formal level of education. Therefore, it became necessary to examine how family demographic factors used in this study predict their children level of readiness at this stage. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the selection of parents for this study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) states namely Abia state, Anambra state and Imo state out of the five states in Southeastern, Nigeria for this study. Disproportionate sampling technique was used to select four (4) Local Government Areas in each of the state selected for this study making a total of twelve (12)

Local Government Areas covered within the Southeastern, Nigeria for this study.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select five (5) public primary schools from each of the Local Government Area in each State selected. The criteria used for the selection of the schools were as follows: the schools were in each of the LGA selected and the schools were public primary school. Thus, twenty (20) schools were selected from each state, which made a total of sixty (60) schools for this study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a class from the existing primary one class arms and the whole class was used. Thus, the total number of parents from the three states selected was 1,200 parents of these pupils.

The research instrument used for this study was family Demographic Factors Questionnaire (FDFQ). It was a self-designed research instrument. The research instrument was used to elicit information on the pupils' family demographic factors. The research instrument had only one section, which contained background information about the parents of the pupils such as name of the school, Local Government Area, gender, employment status, educational level, family income and home location. The questionnaire was filled by the parents' of the pupils in primary one class. This was gotten to them through their children in various schools. The draft research instrument was given to three professionals in the Department of Early Childhood and

Educational Foundations, University of Ibadan, for development in order to guarantee that it had face and content validity.

Results

Analysis of data was conducted with the aid of PPMC- Pearson- Product- Moment- Correlation, and linear regression (Multiple) at 0.05 significance level.

Demographic data analysis

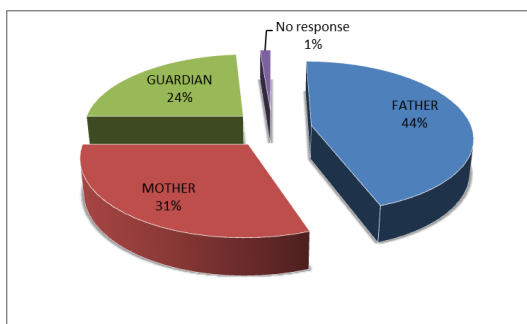


Fig. 1.1: Parents distribution by Role

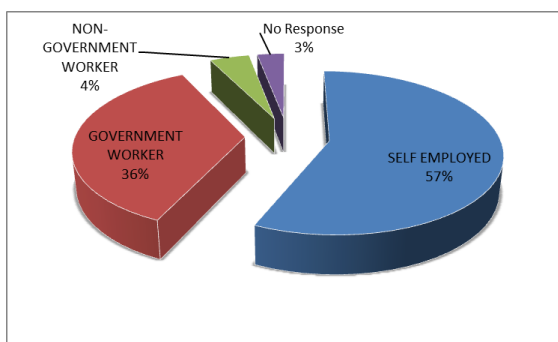


Fig. 1.2: Employment Status of the Parents

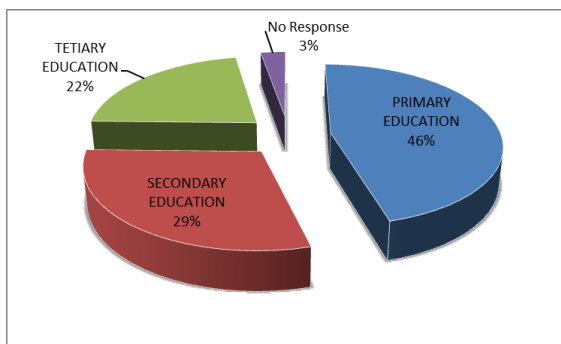


Fig. 1.3: Educational Attainment of the Parents

Figure 1.1 shows that parents who responded to this study are fathers (44.0%), mothers (32.0%) and guardians (24.0%). This implies that both male and female parents responded to these instruments hence, the responses could not be gender biased.

Figure 1.2 shows the employment status of the parents as self-employed (57.0%), government worker (36.0%), non-government worker (4.0%) while very few (3.0%) failed to indicate their employment status. Again, this shows that majority of the parents are employed or have source of income.

Figure 1.3 reveals the educational attainment of the parents as Primary School leavers (46.0%), OLevel Certificate holders (29.0%), and tertiary education (22.0%) while very few (3.0%) did not indicate their educational attainment. With this, it can be inferred that

majority (51.0%) of the parents had post primary education, hence, they cannot be said to be illiterate.

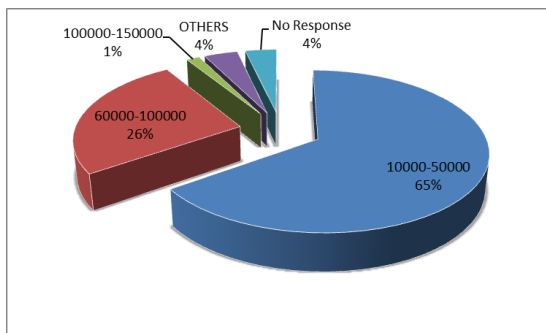


Fig. 1.4: Distribution of Parents Based on Family Income

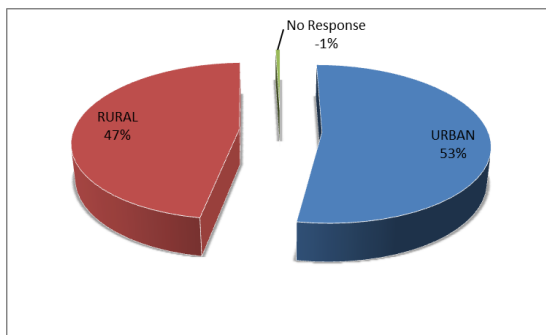


Fig. 1.5: Distribution of Parents Based on Home Location

Figure 1.4 shows the range of family income of the parents as being between N10, 000-N50, 000 (65.0%), N60, 000-N100, 000 (26.0%), N100, 000-N150, 000

(1.0%) and others (4.0%) while (4.0%) failed to indicate their level of income. This indicates that majority of the (1.0%) and others (4.0%) while (4.0%) failed to indicate their level of income. This indicate that majority of the family earn less than or equal to N50, 000 per month.

Figure 1.5 shows the location of the parents to be urban (52.0%), rural (47.0%) while only (1.0%) failed to indicate their home location. This shows that both urban and rural location are almost equally considered in this study.

Table 1: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Composite Contributions of Family Demographic Factors

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7673.886		2557.962	4.653	.000 ^b
Residual	108716.995	195	557.523		
Total	116390.881	198			
	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²		
	.241	.058	.056		

a. Dependent Variable: school readiness

Table 1 reveals that there is a joint relationship between all the family Demographic factors (family income, parental educational level and home location) and the

Model	M	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	B	S
		td. Error	eta					
Constant	19.842	.838		2.231		.0		.00
Family income	.927	.872	.127	4.502		.0		.00
Parents Education	.018	.801	.181	6.266		.0		.00
Home location	.454	.312	.163	5.683		.0		.00

Coefficients^a

A. Dependent Variable: school readiness

b. Predictors: (Constant) family income, parents educational level and home location

pupils' school readiness ($R = 0.24$). This led to the fact that the family demographic factors accounted for 5.6% of the total variance in the pupils' school readiness (Adjusted $R^2 = .056$). This composite contribution is

shown to be statistically significant ($F_{(3; 1195)} = 24.65$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the answer to research question 1 is that there is a significant composite contribution of family demographic factors on the pupils' school readiness in Southeastern, Nigeria. The factors accounted for 5.6% of the variance in the pupils' school readiness

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Relative Contributions of Family Demographic Factors.

Table 2: shows that educational level of the parents has the highest significant relative contributions to the school readiness of the pupils ($\beta = 0.18$; $t = 6.27$; $p < 0.05$); this is followed by home location ($\beta = 0.16$; $t = 5.68$; $p < 0.05$) while family income has the lowest significant contribution ($\beta = 0.13$; $t = 4.50$; $p < 0.05$).

With these, the answer to research question 2 is that the three family demographic factors have significant relative contributions to the school readiness of the Primary one pupils. Parents' educational attainment has the highest contribution, followed by home location while the family income has the lowest significant contribution.

Discussion of Findings

The result revealed that there is a joint relationship between all the family Demographic factors (family income, parental educational level and home location)

and the pupils' school readiness. This composite contribution of all the family Demographic factors (family income, parental educational level and home location) is statistically significant on the pupils' school readiness in Southeastern, Nigeria. The reason could be that all the family demographic factors and school readiness are interrelated towards getting these children ready for school. School readiness is not centered on a child alone been ready, the family factors involved in getting these children ready for school by inculcating basic knowledge that helped them to succeed in school. This result is in line with the study of (Harman & Çelikler, 2012) which showed that within the home, some variables such as home environment, socio-economic status of the family, communication with the parents, childcare, educational level of parents and positive peer relations are all factors affecting school readiness. Also, home variables such as socio-economic status, level of parental education and family size account for pupils school readiness (Adeyemi & Adebajo, 2018). Also, Greeman, Bodovski & Reed, (2014) examined the influence of parental educational status on pupil's school outcomes in elementary school. The result of the study showed that children from homes where parents have lower educational levels had poorer school outcomes than their peers whose parents have higher educational levels. For home location, the result of study negate the report of Alokun & Arijesuyo (2013)

who investigated the influence of residential location on academic performance of students in rural and urban locations in Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of rural and urban schools.

The result of the study in Table 2 showed multiple regression analysis of relative contributions of family demographic factor to school readiness among primary-one pupils in Southeastern, Nigeria. The three family demographic factors have significant relative contributions to the school readiness of the Primary one kids. Parents' educational attainment has the highest relative contribution, followed by home location while the family income has lowest significant contribution. The reason could be that educated parents have basic knowledge needed in getting the child ready for school compare to uneducated parents who might not have the knowledge needed in getting the child ready for school. Another reason could be the home location in which these children leave had quality pre-primary schools, health facilities and other infrastructural facilities that could help children to get ready for school. Another reason could be that the family income of the parents of these pupils is high to meet the basic needs of these pupils to get them ready for school. The result is in line with the result of (Carneiro, Crawford, & Goodman, 2007; Gennetian, Magnuson & Morris, 2008;

Jiang, 2014), who provided empirical evidence to prove that children's early academic skills are higher, on average, when parents have more years of schooling. Davis-Kean, (2005) also provided evidence to the fact that the educational status of parent(s) has overwhelming influence on their school readiness. This also supported the report by Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bieman & Nelson, (2010), that substantial achievement gaps exist between children in urban location and children from rural locations at the school entry level. Also, Schmitt, Finders & McClelland, (2015), showed that home location was significantly associated with school outcomes of pupils. The finding of the study is in support of Ololube, Onyekwere, & Agbor, (2015), who investigated the influence of parental income on school outcome of children. The result of the study revealed that family income had significant effects on school readiness of children. However, this finding on the other hand disagree with Kudaisi & Martins (2014) who reported that parental income level had no significant effect on educational success of children.

Conclusion

It had being concluded from the study that family demographic factors which comprised of family income, parent's education and home location predicted positively to school readiness of primary one pupils' in Southeastern, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Parents should be encouraged to involve in getting their children ready for school because they are the child's first teacher and role model.
- Since pre-primary school level of education is under the control of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), this body should organise seminars/workshops from time to time for all parents whose children are in pre- primary schools in the state to equip them with knowledge needed in getting children ready for school. Experts in early childhood education should be invited to carry out this training.
- State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in Southeastern, Nigeria should from time to time, organise a forum where all the stakeholders especially parents in ECE would gather and enlightened about their roles toward school readiness of their children.

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