



## THE EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS FROM MONTESSORI PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

**Fatma Ulku Yıldız**

*Selcuk University, Turkey*

This study focuses on children who were educated by Montessori applications in kindergarten of Selcuk University Faculty of Vocational Education in the beginning of 2011 - 2012 school years. This study is designed to assess the parents' expectations from Montessori Preschool education. The study data were collected by "Pre-school education to mothers and fathers Expectations" questionnaire. It was tried to determine the expectations of the parents from "their children's social-emotional development, language development, development of self-care skills, cognitive development, psychomotor development, and institutional features of the school" by the survey. The data were analyzed with the SPSS 15 statistical software. The results from the research will be used to inform the parents about Montessori education better and to generalize Montessori education.

**Keywords:** Montessori education, Parents, Expectation, Pre-school.

### Introduction

The role of the close environment in child care and development is vital. Development known as dynamic interaction is provided by the child's family and his or her social environment and experience. The experiences offered by the environment are not regarded as independent phenomena apart from the child. As a biological organism, the child's interaction with his environment and the interaction of the systems, have an important place in the development of the child. During the development process the child and the environment are equally important.

Montessori approach takes the pre-school period as the normalization of the child. All the children have similar normalization or deviations. Normalization is being a part of the society and contributing that society. When development is not in the direction of normalization, deviations are seen. Deviations are the defenses created by the organism itself. The child, who feels himself not understood, will respond with so-called deviations. These reactions are; discouragement, feelings of inferiority, obedience, addiction, power and ambition, constant day-dreaming and living in a dream, aggression, and sloth etc. (Montessori, 1949; Tepeli, 2010).

It is accepted by all the pedagogues that most of the individual's personal features, basic knowledge, skills and habits are gained during the pre-school period at the ages of zero to six. Neither families nor pre-schools are sufficient both in the development and the education of the child by themselves. For this reason parents should know and be informed about their children's pre-school education representing the first main step of the education system with the support of the institution. Along with this information it is important to carry out the given education to houses too. When the consistency of the education is not achieved, the target behavior fails. Children can only benefit from the given education when parents believe in the education system and cooperate with the institution.

Today being parents is not considered as an instinctive fact. When compared with the previous years, the increase related to the complexity of the knowledge of parenting provided parents more information with the child care and education. According to Şahin ve Özbey (2007), social values are changing rapidly. Parents are confused with the way they should bring up their children and the way they should behave. To stop this confusion parents felt it necessary to have education before and after becoming parents (Kılıç, 2010).

Many studies emphasized that there are programs facilitating the development of the child during the pre-school period. Especially the materials having the control of making mistakes in Montessori education, processes following each other one after another such as child's own physical, biological and emotional development and intended to discover, make it easy for the child to adapt the material drawn attention (Deutsch, 1973). The characteristic of the teacher in Montessori approach is that education perception differ from today's education conception and application. The most common thing in Montessori approach is; "Human-being builds himself and adult's role is, to help him during this process. So first of all removing the barriers coming up while trying to develop and build himself is essential (Winfried, 1994; Topbaş, 2004). These barriers are not only inhibiting child's development but also preventing him from being himself. Bringing up individuals who have balanced personality, who can think and express his thoughts freely, showing respect both for himself and the others, who can question and produce are only possible with the cooperation of both pre-school institutions and families. To bring up new generations, pre-school institutions and parents should communicate deeply, be aware of each others' expectations and need to get to a common goal (Metin ve diğ. 1993).

Although parents' expectations regarding pre-school education differ, it is essential that they know this period is important in child's development and they should make the best of it. Besides they should know about the Montessori Approach since pre-school institutions consider parents as inbuilt of education. It is necessary for pre-schools to take parents' expectations into consideration in order to increase the quality of education.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

To identify whether the independent variables such as parents have an idea about Montessori education or not, their ages, their professions, the number of children, children's ages are effective on children's social-emotional areas, language area, self-care skills, cognitive area, psychomotor developmental areas and expectations from the institutions.

### **The Significance of the Research**

The education given during the early childhood has positive effects in the long term on; health and prosperity. It also contributes to developing skills, education level of the community, employment rates and productiveness of the society (Kılıç, 2010).

Some of the researches in Turkey show that children having Montessori education during pre-school period are ready to study in primary schools (Yıldız, 2011; Kayılı, 2010; Koçyiğit ve diğ; 2009). It is an obligatory to do longitudinal research assessments in the following years for the Montessori education which has just started in Turkey. However, evaluating the expectations of the parents in the right way will help the Montessori education become widespread.

This research is important so many ways such as; to exposure parents' expectation levels from Montessori Education during pre-school period, determining the topics about Montessori education needed by parents regarding their expectations, correcting the imperfect knowledge and misinformation, emphasizing the necessity of satisfying parents' expectations while preparing the programs at schools.

### **Problem Statements**

The condition of parents' being aware of Montessori education or not, their ages, professions, number of children, and children's ages are effecting the; "Parents' expectations regarding their children's developmental areas?"

The condition of parents' being aware of Montessori education or not, their ages, professions, number of children, and children's ages are effecting "the school's expectations from the institutions?"

### **Sub-Problems**

1. Does the condition of parents' being aware of Montessori education or not affect Parents' expectations regarding their children's developmental areas?
2. Does the condition of parents' being aware of Montessori education or not affect Parents' expectations from schools regarding its institutional features?
3. Does the age of parents affect their expectations from their children regarding their children's developmental areas?
4. Does the age of parents affect their expectations from schools regarding its institutional features?
5. Does the occupation of parents affect their expectations from their children regarding their children's developmental areas?
6. Does the occupation of parents affect their expectations from schools regarding its institutional features?
7. Does the number of children they have affect parents' expectations from their children regarding developmental areas?
8. Does the number of children they have affect parents' expectations from schools regarding its institutional features?
9. According to children's ages is there a meaningful difference between parents' expectations regarding the developmental areas of their children?
10. Is there a meaningful difference between the child's age status and school's institutional features of parents' expectations?

### **Assumptions**

1. It is assumed that the questionnaire used in the study determines the parents' level of expectation from pre-school education.
2. It is assumed that parents answer the questionnaire sincerely.

### **Limitedness**

1. The sample of the study is limited with the mothers or fathers whose children study Montessori Education at Selcuk University, Faculty of Vocational Education, Ihsan Dogramaci Nursery School during 2011 and 2012. There are 41 students registered in the Montessori group. A total of 41 questionnaires were collected.
2. The study is limited with the questionnaire questions developed to determine the expectations of parents from pre-school education.

## Method

### Population and Sample

The sample of the study is the mothers or fathers of children whose children study Montessori Education at Selcuk University, Faculty of Vocational Education, Ihsan Dogramaci Nursery School during 2011 and 2012. There are 41 students registered in the Montessori group. A total of 41 questionnaires were collected.

### Data Collection Tool and Application

The data collected with the "Parents' Expectations from Pre-school Education" questionnaire. This questionnaire which was developed to determine the expectations of parents from pre-school education used in the study consists of 40 items. These items are measured in five categories as; "I definitely agree", "I agree", "I'm doubtful", "I disagree", "I definitely disagree". The scale has two parts which determines the demographic features and expectation levels of parents. In the first part; the questions are tend to get information about parents' ages, their educational background, the gender of their children studying in pre-school, the number of their children and the age ranges of their children. In the second part; the questions in the questionnaire are about parents' institutional expectation levels from pre-school education and trying to determine the expectation levels of parents regarding their children's social, emotional, cognitive, psychomotor and self-care skill development areas. The Alpha coefficient of internal consistency of the scale was calculated as 0.86% (Ozen, 2008). The scale was examined by the instructors in 2011 and the necessary corrections were made. Two questions are added in the first part after the correction. These questions are about; the age ranges of the children studying in the institution and whether they know Montessori Education or not. The scale is given to the mothers and fathers whose children study Montessori Education at Selcuk University, Faculty of Vocational Education, Ihsan Dogramaci Nursery School during 2011 and 2012 and 41 questionnaires were assessed.

### Analysis of Data

For the data analysis, program for Social Sciences SPSS 15.0 is used. Analyzed data is based on  $p < 0.05$  level of significance. "Independent sample t-test" was used to investigate whether there are differences between the two sample groups in terms of averages. In the comparison of averages of more than two groups, variance analysis is used (Büyüköztürk, 2007).

### Finding and Comment

**Table.1.** Parents having information about Montessori Education or not; the state of effecting "Their expectations regarding their children's developmental areas".

	Knowledge	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Social-Emotional Area	Knows	19	42.31	3.84	39	.940	.353
	Doesn't Know	22	43.22	2.26			
Language	Knows	19	20.57	2.34	39	.358	.722

Area	Doesn't Know	22	20.77	.92			
Self-Care Skills	Knows	19	22.94	1.80	39	.911	.368
	Doesn't Know	22	23.50	2.04			
Cognitive Area	Knows	19	24.10	2.10	39	1.37	.178
	Doesn't Know	22	25.09	2.44			
Psychomotor Area	Knows	19	15.31	1.52	39	.867	.391
	Doesn't Know	22	15.72	1.35			

Table 1. No significant difference was found between the parents who emphasized that they **have** information about Montessori education (22 people) and who **don't have** (19 people).

**Table.2.** Parents having information about Montessori Education or not; the state of effecting “The expectations from schools as institutional properties”.

	Knowledge	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Expectations from Institution	Knows	19	30.52	4.18	39	.867	.391
	Doesn't Know	22	31.68	4.31			

Table 2. No significant difference was found regarding the expectations of parents from school's institutional features who emphasized that they **have** information about Montessori education (22 people) and who **don't** (19 people).

**Table.3.** The results of Variance Analysis regarding Parents' age effecting their “Expectations of their children's Developmental Areas”.

	The source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Standard deviation	Squares Average	F	p	Meaningful Difference
Social-Emotional Area	Among the Groups	66.751	3	22.250	2.608	.066	--
	Within the Groups	315.688	37	8.532			
	Total	382.439	40				

Language Area	Among the Groups	6.912	3	2.304	.775	.515	--
	Within the Groups	109.966	37	2.972			
	Total	116.878	40				
Self-Care Skills	Among the Groups	1.588	3	.529	.132	.940	--
	Within the Groups	147.973	37	3.999			
	Total	149.561	40				
Cognitive Area	Among the Groups	12.764	3	4.255	.776	.515	--
	Within the Groups	202.748	37	5.480			
	Total	215.512	40				
Psychomotor Area	Among the Groups	13.621	3	4.540	2.450	.079	--
	Within the Groups	68.575	37	1.853			
	Total	82.195	40				

Table 3. Parents' ages are grouped as 18-24, 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41 and above 41. The statistical evaluations are made by variance analysis. However, among parents' expectations regarding the developmental areas of their children, no significant difference is found. Parents' ages don't affect their expectations related to developmental stages.

**Table.4.** The condition that Parent's Age affecting their "Expectations from the institutional properties of Schools".

	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	Standard deviation	Squares Average	F	p	Meaningful Difference
Expectations from Institution	Among the Groups	127.207	3	42.402	2.651	.063	--
	Within the Groups	591.915	37	15.998			
	Total	719.122	40				

Table 4. There is no significant difference among the expectations of parents from the institutional features of schools regarding their ages.

**Table.5.** The state of Parents’ Occupations Effecting their “Expectations regarding their children’s developmental stages”.

	Knowledge	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	P
Social Emotional Area	Academicians	20	42.55	3.28	39	.510	.613
	Others	21	43.04	2.95			
Language Area	Academicians	20	20.75	1.37	39	.242	.810
	Others	21	20.61	2.01			
Self-Care Skills	Academicians	20	22.80	1.67	39	1.454	.154
	Others	21	23.66	2.10			
Cognitive Area	Academicians	20	23.80	2.46	39	2.37	.023*
	Others	21	25.42	1.91			
Psychomotor Area	Academicians	20	15.65	1.08	39	.490	.216
	Others	21	15.42	1.71			

Table 5. Parent’s occupation divided into two categories as academicians and others since it is the nursery school of the university. The other groups are; civil servants, cook, nurse, accountant and engineer. Parent’s occupation has no meaningful difference in their expectations regarding their children’s social, emotional, language, psychomotor areas and self-care skills. However, expectations regarding cognitive areas the difference is found significant on the level of 0.05. According to arithmetic average ( $\bar{X}$ ) the expectations of academicians in cognitive areas were lower than the others. This is an expected advantage for the academician parents.

**Table.6.** The state of Parents’ Occupations Effecting their “Expectations from institutional properties of school”.

	Knowledge	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	P
Expectations from Institution	Academicians	20	30.30	4.16	39	1.256	.216
	Others	21	31.95	4.24			

Table 6. There is no significant difference between the occupation of parent and the expectations from the institutional features of schools.

**Table.7.** The condition of the number of children that Parents' have effecting their "Expectations related to their children's developmental stages".

	Number of Children	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Social Emotional Area	1	24	42.41	3.36	39	.954	.346
	2	17	43.35	2.66			
Language Area	1	24	20.54	2.10	39	.624	.536
	2	17	20.88	.92			
Self-Care Skills	1	24	23.04	1.98	39	.792	.433
	2	17	23.52	1.87			
Cognitive Area	1	24	23.79	2.28	39	3.03	.004*
	2	17	25.82	1.84			
Psychomotor Area	1	24	15.50	1.50	39	.192	.849
	2	17	15.58	1.37			

Table 7. With the t test the meaningful difference of parent's expectations are measured regarding the number of children that they have and their children's developmental areas. According to data which is divided into two groups; First group, single children and second group children with a siblings and more than two siblings; there is no significant difference regarding social-emotional, language, psychomotor areas and self-care skills. In table 5 the difference related to cognitive development expectations of parents is important at the level of 0.04. The arithmetic average ( $\bar{X}$ ) shows that parents having two and more children have more expectations in cognitive areas than the ones with one child.

**Table.8.** The results according to the number of children that parents have "Parents' expectations from institutional features of school".

	The Number of Children	N	$\bar{X}$	S	sd	t	p
Expectations from Institution	1	24	30.91	3.94	39	.408	.686
	2	17	31.47	4.73			

Table 8 No significant difference is found regarding the number of children that parents have and parents' expectations from institutional features of school.

**Table.9.** According to children’s ages “Parents’ expectations regarding their children’s developmental areas”.

	Variance Source	Squares Sum	Standard deviation	Squares Average	F	p	Meaningful Difference
Social-Emotional Area	Among the Groups	98.191	2	49.095	6.563	.004*	1-2/1-3
	Within the Groups	284.248	38	7.480			
	Total	382.439	40				
Language Area	Among the Groups	2.983	2	1.491	.498	.612	--
	Within the Groups	113.895	38	2.997			
	Total	116.878	40				
Self-Care Skills	Among the Groups	2.228	2	1.114	.287	.752	--
	Within the Groups	147.333	38	3.877			
	Total	149.561	40				
Cognitive Area	Among the Groups	12.914	2	6.457	1.211	.309	--
	Within the Groups	202.598	38	5.332			
	Total	215.512	40				
Psychomotor Area	Among the Groups	3.555	2	1.777	.859	.432	--
	Within the Groups	78.641	38	2.069			
	Total	82.195	40				

Table 9. According to ages, the expectation of parents related to their children’s developmental areas is evaluated with variance analysis. Children are grouped according to their ages as 1-36-48 months, 2-48-60 months, 3-60-72 months. In table 9 the meaning between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> groups regarding social-emotional area is significant (P< .004). This meaningful difference also shows the significant difference

between the ages 36-48 months and 60-72 months. The difference in expectations of parents' according to their ages is what is what is expected development and educational sciences.

However, no significant difference is found in parents' expectations regarding; language, cognitive, psychomotor areas and self-care skills. This shows that parents couldn't enhance a criterion for the age groups of young- middle and old. Besides they have higher expectations in language, cognitive, psychomotor areas and self-care skills which are over the children's developmental stages.

**Table.10.** The variance analysis results of the "Parents' expectations regarding their children's ages and the institutional features from schools".

	Source of the Variance	Squares Sum	Standard deviation	Squares Average	F	p	Meaningful Difference
<b>Expectations from Institution</b>	Among the groups	3.344	2	1.672	.089	.915	--
	In the groups	715.778	38	18.836			
	Total	719.122	40				

Table 10. The expectations of parents from the institutional features of schools regarding the children's ages are evaluated with variance analysis.

## Result

In this research the expectations of parents from Montessori education are evaluated in terms of different variables.

The fact that whether the parents have information about the Montessori education or not (Table.1), have no significant importance on the variables, the parents' ages (Tablo.3) and the field or area that the parent want his/her child to make progress.

Regarding parent's occupation which is divided into two categories as academicians and others (cook, officer, nurse, accountant, student, and teacher) (Table.5) and social-emotional, language, psychomotor areas and self-care skills there is no significant difference. However the difference related to the expectations of academicians in cognitive development having lower expectations is meaningful (Table 5). The difference in expectations from their children's developmental stages and parents' occupation is meaningful.

The difference is evaluated with a t-test between the variables of parents' expectations from their children regarding their ages and the number of children they have. Although no significant difference was found related to social-emotional, language, psychomotor development areas and self-care skills; in the field of cognitive development the meaning was statistically significant ( $p < .004$ ) in Table.7. The arithmetic average ( $\bar{X}$ ) shows that parents having two and more children have more expectations in cognitive areas than the ones with one child. Parents' occupations and the number of children they have increase their expectations regarding the cognitive development of the children (Table.5) and (Table.7).

The expectations of parents from their children regarding their developmental stages considering their children's ages is evaluated with variance analysis. Children are grouped as 36-48 months, 48-60 months, and 60-72 months (Table 9) and significant difference is found between the age groups 36-48 months, 48-60 months related to social-emotional areas. Therefore there is a difference between the age groups of 36-48 months and 60-72 months. This shows that parents couldn't enhance a criterion for the

age groups of young- middle and old. Besides they have higher expectations in language, cognitive, psychomotor areas and self-care skills which are over the children's developmental stages. The important thing is that in each developmental stage and range of children there should be an important difference in age groups because development characteristics differ according to ages. In brief, we can say that parents don't know the development features of their children according to their children's ages.

Parents' knowledge of Montessori Education, their ages, occupations, the number of children they have and their children's ages has no statistical meaningful difference regarding their expectations from the institutional features of schools.

### Suggestion

According to the results; it is found that parents, who are defined as the other group according to their occupations, have higher expectations related to children's developmental stages. Whereas Montessori education is an education that children find themselves and become themselves. According to Montessori; parents' high expectation is the greatest handicap in children's development. Parents should be informed about Montessori education, and how it is applied. Some samples also should be given to parents that can be applied at home. In this way parents will experience a way to see what their child can or cannot do.

To introduce Montessori education to families:

- 1- Brochures, education boards, circulars, school newspaper or magazines can be prepared.
- 2- Conferences and panels can be organized.
- 3- Parents can be invited to the school within the term to see Montessori studies.
- 4- A parent preparation program contributing the applications done at home can be formed and applied about pre-school Montessori education. With the help of short-term, longitudinal, previous and recent studies, the effects of this program on children and parents could be examined. Besides, a study can be done using content analysis to see the reasons why parent's occupation and the number of children in the family are affecting their expectations.

### References

1. Büyüköztürk Ş. (2007) *Sosyal Bilimler İçin Veri Analizi El Kitabı*, 8. Baskı, Ankara, Pegem Yayıncılık.
2. Deutsch, M.(1973).*Facilitating Development in The Pre-School Child: Social Psychological Perspective*, Emerging Strategies In Early Childhood Education. Retrieved September 30, 2011, from [http://www.google.com/books?hl=tr&lr=&id=IvoMSn8\\_ixUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA106&dq=Montessori+Education%2Beffect+on+children%27s+development%2Bpreschool&ots=IzVH45F7G-sig=eC0\\_pzVhF69qbJnHRnbZ2T\\_rDZw#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://www.google.com/books?hl=tr&lr=&id=IvoMSn8_ixUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA106&dq=Montessori+Education%2Beffect+on+children%27s+development%2Bpreschool&ots=IzVH45F7G-sig=eC0_pzVhF69qbJnHRnbZ2T_rDZw#v=onepage&q&f=false)
3. Kayılı, G.(2010) *Montessori Yönteminin Anaokulu Çocuklarının İlköğretime Hazırbulunuşluklarına Etkisinin İncelenmesi*, Yayınlanmış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
4. Kılıç, Ç. (2010) *Aile Eğitim Programları ve Türkiye'deki Örnekleri*, Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Dergisi Cilt:10 Sayı:1. Retrieved September 25,2011, from [http://www.efdergi.ibu.edu.tr/arsiv/cilt10\\_sayi1/9.pdf](http://www.efdergi.ibu.edu.tr/arsiv/cilt10_sayi1/9.pdf)
5. Koçyiğit, S. & Kayılı, G. & Kuşcu, Ö.(2010)*Montessori Eğitimi Alan ve Almayan Anaokulu Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Becerilerinin Karşılaştırılması*. Konya:Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, Sayı 20.
6. Metin, N. & diğerleri (1993) "*Anne-babaların Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumlarından Beklentileri*", 9. Ya-Pa Okul Öncesi Eğitimi ve Yaygınlaştırılması Semineri, İstanbul: YA-PA Yayıncılık.
7. Montessori, M.(1949) *The Absorbed Mind*. Madras(India):The Theosophical Publishing House.
8. Özen, Ş.(2008) "*Preschool education and family: The expectations of parents from preschool education*", Kars, Kafkas Üniversitesi(Yüksek Lisans Tezi)"*Pre-school education to mothers and fathers Expectations Questionnaire* ". Retrieved September 3, 2011, from <http://www.belgeler.com/blg/1hpr/okul-oncesi-egitim-ve->

aile-anne-ve-babaların-okul-öncesi-egitimden-beklentileri-kars-ili-örneği-preschool-education-and-family-the-expectations-of-parents-from-preschool-education

9. Topbaş,E.(2004)*Montessori Yöntemi İle Çocuk Eğitimi*. Ankara:Tekağaç Eylül Yayıncılık.
10. Şahin, F. T. & Özbey, S. (Nisan, Mayıs, Haziran, 2007)*Aile Eğitim Programlarına Niçin Gereklinim Duyulmuştur? Aile Eğitim Programları Neden Önemlidir?* T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Genel Müdürlüğü Eğitim Kültür Ve Araştırma Dergisi Yıl:10, Cilt 3. Sayı 12. S.9–10.
11. Tepeli, K. (2011)*Montessori Yaklaşımında Çocuğun Gelişimi ve Eğitimi (Editör:E. W. Çakıroğlu)* Okul Öncesi Eğitimde Montessori Yaklaşımı. Ankara: Kök Yayıncılık.
12. Winfried, B.(1994) *Maria Montessori*.
13. Yıldız, Fatma Ulku.(2011) *Adaptation of the Children to Primary Schools Educated by Montessori Method*, *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Thought*, **1**(4): 349–354 (2011), © CD-ROM. ISSN 2156-6992.