



# Role Of Family Environment In The Growth And Development Of Children With Special Needs In Chandigarh

**Kamal Dev**

**Research Scholar**

Department of Community Education and Disability Studies, Panjab University Chandigarh.

## ABSTRACT

The present paper is focused on the role of family environment in the growth and development of children with special needs (CWSN). Family is known as a miniature of society. The role of family in the growth and development of the child is very important, it becomes more crucial when we talk about the children with special needs. Proper growth and development of the child is only possible if a conducive environment is provided at home. A positive family environment promotes moral values, cultural values and the overall growth and development of the child. Children with special needs require special attention at the early stage. If it is not taken care of well on time it can lead to some serious disorders at the later stage of growth and development. For the study researcher were selected 50 families of children with special needs and data was collected using self prepared questionnaire. In this study, the researcher applied percentages, tabulation, and bar diagram to analyse the data to study the role of family environment on the growth and development of children with special needs. Finding of the study revealed that the majority of parents accept that family support and supportive attitude of family towards children with special needs, and providing a conducive environment at home played a important role in the overall growth and development of children with special needs

**Keywords:** Family Environment, Growth and Development, Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

## Introduction

Family, particularly its environment, plays a very significant role in the growth and development of the child. Children having some kind of disability need social and emotional support at all levels, to enable them to remain focused in their life. Little distraction during the years of growth can ruin their life and career. Family support system and environment is the enabling factor for a child to do better in life (Kurniawan et al., 2018, Roostin, 2018). Children with special needs to be taken care of in a highly sensitive, harmonious, and supportive way because children with special needs are often either very aggressive or depressed due to regular failure in academics and more so when they fail to come up to the expectations of their parents and teachers. Such children need guidance and encouragement, particularly in the nascent years of their life.

As it is well known that the family is the primary institution not only to understand the child but also to help the child in his or her growth and development by removing fears and complexes from his or her mind, the current study aims to investigate the role of the family environment in the growth and development of children with special needs and the support available to them by the family. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness, particularly among families, about the potential consequences of neglecting

these factors. If not addressed in a timely manner, such neglect can lead to significant issues later in life.. Hence family environment and growth and development are the key variables in this study which shall be applied to investigate the problems. Both the variables are being defined hereunder.

## **Environment**

The environment refers to the process through which an individual's traits are shaped by their surroundings and circumstances. A person's behavior is closely linked to the environment they are in, and they are likely to develop their mental abilities based on the influences of their surroundings..

## **Family**

A family is a group of individuals connected by relationships, shared feelings, and living together. Immediate family members typically include a spouse, parents, siblings, and children. The family is considered the fundamental unit of society and should receive the protection and support of the state to ensure its formation and growth (Green, 1952).

## **The Family Environment**

The family environment becomes the principal agent of socialization of the children. The family environment involves the circumstances and social climatic conditions within families. Since every family consists of a distinct individual in a distinct environment, every family setting is distinct from the others. (Manivannan & Anbuchevar, 2011).

The family environment refers to the conditions and social atmosphere within a family. Since each family consists of different individuals in varying circumstances, every family environment is distinct. In the early stages of life, children's experiences are primarily shaped by their families, making the family environment the key agent of socialization. The environments can differ in many ways. Especially when we talk about children with special needs, family environment is very crucial for their overall growth and development. Family needs to provide a supporting environment at home as per the need of the children so that Children with special needs can express their feelings and desires without any hesitation in a positive family environment (Srikandi, 2021). Children with special needs with different disabilities require various types of support such as social, emotional, and supporting attitudes from family as well as society (Robledo-Ramn & Garca-Snchez, 2012).

## **Child Growth and Development**

Children's growth and development are shaped by the interaction between their genes and environment. For many years, there was a debate among researchers and practitioners about whether heredity (genes) or the environment played a more significant role in a child's development. Today, however, there is a general agreement that both factors work together to influence development (Berk, 2008). While genes establish certain limits and boundaries—such as those related to height, weight, and other physical traits—the environment plays a crucial role in shaping the overall process of growth and development. A child's environment encompasses factors like prenatal nutrition, the quality of parent-child relationships, family structure, neighborhood safety, and more.

In this paper researcher focused on how families of children with special needs helps their special child day to day activity which later shape child behaviour, social development, emotional ability, and physical growth and development. These developmental domains are interconnected and often influence one another. For example, a child's newly developed ability to walk (physical development) can impact their capacity to explore and learn about different aspects of their environment (cognitive development). In some instances, physical growth may outpace social or emotional development, or vice versa. Children's growth and development typically proceed as expected across various domains, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge being built upon those gained at earlier stages. However, parents should recognize that if a child has not achieved a specific developmental milestone within the expected timeframe, it may indicate an issue.

## Children with Special Needs

The term children with special needs is used for those children who have some type of disability and require extra support and exceptional care. The special needs of these children depend on the nature of the disability and the degree of disability. The condition and disability of children with special needs are four types such as physical, sensory, developmental, behavioural, or emotional and children who comes under 21 listed disability as per the Right to Person with Disability Act 2016 (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2016). The special needs of a child may include a barrier-free environment, supporting environment, exceptional care, family support, special education, medical assessment, supporting aids and appliances, accessible accommodation individualized education programme etc.

### Objective of the studies

1. To study role of family environment in the growth and development of children with special needs.

### Research question

1. What role does the family environment play in the growth and development of children with special needs.

### Methodology and procedures

There are various methods of conducting research study but in the present study, the descriptive survey method is selected keeping in view the purpose of the study, the nature of the problem, and kind of the data necessary for the study.

### Methodology

In this study researcher used descriptive and survey methods to conduct the research study. A random sample of 50 families of children with special needs were selected. For the study, a self-constructed questionnaire was prepared by the investigator and administered on the parents. For the study primary data was collected from parents of children with special needs, Whereas secondary data was collected from books, journals, government records. In the present study descriptive statistics technique namely tabulation representation, percentage and bar diagram were used. This study was delimited to parents of 50 children with special needs of the Government School of Chandigarh only.

### Sample

The total numbers of Government schools in the union territory of Chandigarh are 115 comprising of Government Primary Schools, Government Model Middle Schools, Government Model High Schools, Government Model Senior Secondary Schools. These schools are further divided into twenty clusters, each cluster comprising 5-6 schools. Out of the twenty clusters, two clusters were randomly selected for conducting the study. Out of these two clusters, fifty children with special needs were selected for the study.

The self-constructed questionnaire was used to collect the data for assessing the role of family environment in the growth and development of children with special needs for the study. This questionnaire was administered on the parents of children with special needs. The questionnaire was prepared according to the objective of the study. Previous studies, literature, and manuals on family environments were studied for the construction of the questionnaire. A dichotomous questionnaire consisting of 17 questions based on the role of family environment in the growth and development of children with special needs was prepared. To approach the student and family permission from the Department of Education and Principal was obtained.

**Figure no. 1** School-wise distribution of children with special needs studying in the different government schools

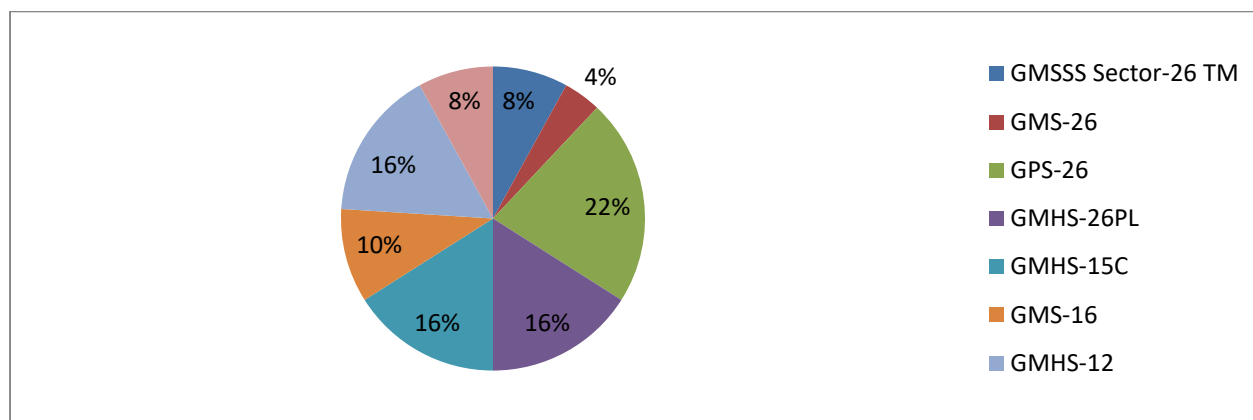
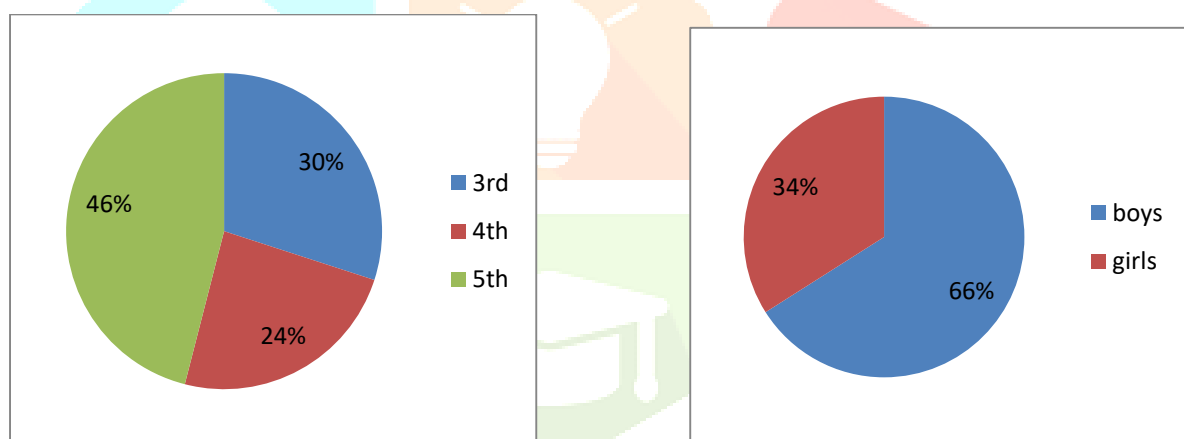


Figure no. 1 presented the percentage distribution of children with special needs across various government schools. A total of 50 children with special needs were selected from 8 schools in Chandigarh. The distribution was as follows: 4 students (8%) from GMSSS- Sector 26 Timber Market, 2 students (4%) from GMS- Sector 26, 11 students (22%) from GPS- Sector 26, 8 students (16%) from GMHS- Sector 26 Police Line, 8 students (16%) from GMHS- Sector 15-C, 5 students (10%) from GMS- Sector 16, 8 students (16%) from GMHS- Sector 12, and 4 students (8%) from GPS- Sector 12.

**Figure no.2** Class wise distribution of data

**Figure no. 3** Gender wise distribution of data



The above figure no. 2 showed the class wise distribution of data in percentages of children with special needs out of which 30 percent CWSN belongs to class 3<sup>rd</sup>, 24 percent CWSN belongs to class 4<sup>th</sup>, and 46 percent CWSN belongs to class 5<sup>th</sup>.

The above figure no. 3 shows the gender wise distribution of data in percentages of children with special needs out of which 66 percent were boys and 34 percent were girls.

**Figure no. 4** Residential area wise distribution of data

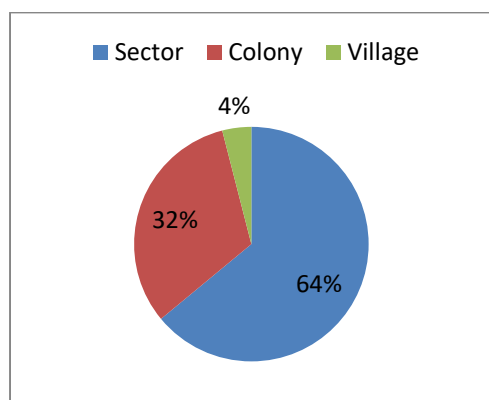


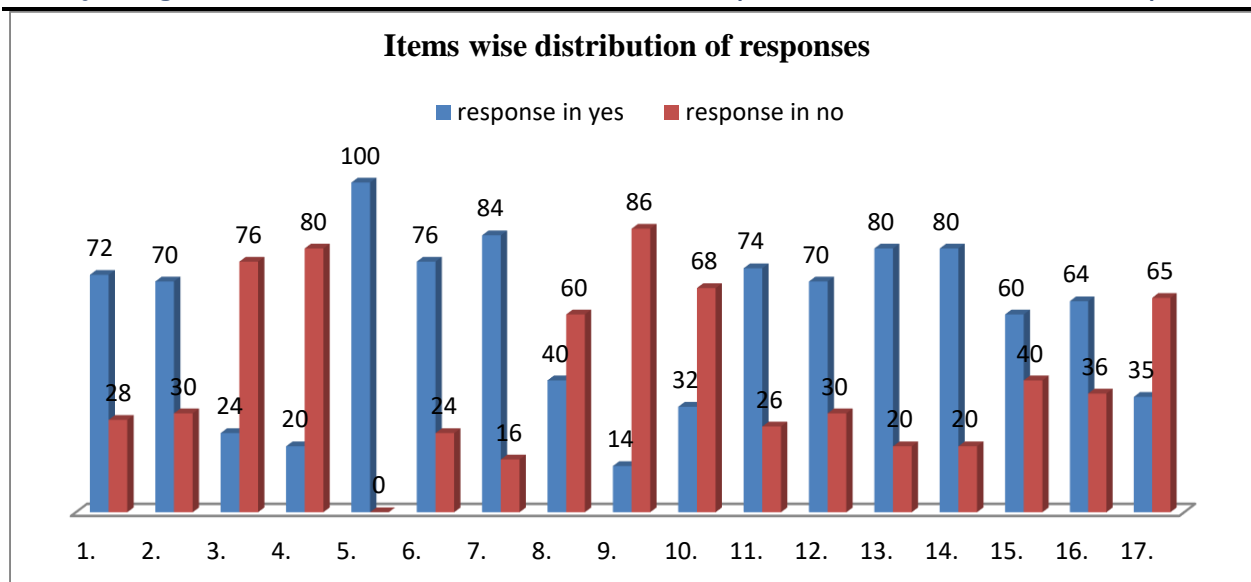
Figure 4 above showed the residential area-wise distribution of children with special needs in percentages. Out of the total, 64 percent resided in sectors, 32 percent resided in colonies, and 4 percent resided in village.

Descriptive statistics namely tabulation, percentage, and pie diagram have been used for the analysis and interpretation of the data. The interpretation of each item and pie diagram are discussed below.

The scoring was done using the descriptive method and the results were shown using tabulation, percentages, and pie diagrams.

Table no. 1

Sr. No.	Items	Response Yes in percentage	Response No in percentage
1.	Do you think that disability can affect the performance, growth and development of the child?	72%	28%
2.	Do you think a family support system is essential at home to help children with special needs?	70%	30%
3.	Are you strict with your child having special needs?	24%	76%
4.	Do you behave strictly with other children in the family?	20%	80%
5.	Do you spend some leisure time with your child apart from his/her study?	100%	0%
6.	Does the behaviour of the family towards child with special needs is supportive?	76%	24%
7.	Does your child have difficulties in doing homework?	84%	16%
8.	Do you provide special material to your child which helps him/her to learn easily?	40%	60%
9.	Do you provide a separate study table for your child?	14%	86%
10.	Do you help your child in the management of things on his/her study place?	32%	68%
11.	Does the child finish the task properly?	74%	26%
12.	Do you provide toys, games, and other opportunities that will stimulate your child development?	70%	30%
13.	Do you go to parent-teacher meetings regularly?	80%	20%
14.	Does the behaviour of the child towards sibling is normal?	80%	20%
15.	Does the child having special needs makes friend easily?	60%	40%
16.	Do you take your child along with you whenever you visit friends and relatives?	64%	36%
17.	Do you give him/her regular family responsibilities whenever possible?	35%	65%



## Discussion

Table and bar diagram presented the items wise responses of parents regarding the role family in the growth and development of children with special needs. The responses were categorized into two groups. 'Yes' and 'No' and the percentages reflect the distribution of these responses.

Regarding the impact of disability on a child's performance, growth, and development, 72% of respondents believed it could have an effect, while 28% disagreed. When asked about the importance of family support for children with special needs, 70% agreed that it was essential, with 30% not in agreement. A significant number of respondents (76%) reported that they were not strict with their child with special needs, while only 24% were strict. In contrast, 80% stated that they were not strict with other children in the family, compared to 20% who were.

When it came to spending leisure time with their child, 100% of respondents confirmed that they had dedicated time apart from study activities. Regarding family support, 76% felt that the family's behavior towards the child with special needs had been supportive, while 24% did not. In terms of homework difficulties, 84% reported that their child had faced challenges with homework, while 16% had not.

Regarding additional support, 40% had provided special materials to help their child learn more easily, whereas 60% had not. A low percentage (14%) had provided a separate study table for their child, while 86% had not. A smaller portion (32%) had helped their child manage the study space, and 68% had not. When asked if their child finished tasks properly, 74% of respondents affirmed that they did, with 26% disagreeing.

In terms of stimulating development, 70% had provided toys, games, and other opportunities, while 30% had not. A high percentage (80%) had attended parent-teacher meetings regularly, and 80% also reported that their child's behavior towards siblings had been normal, with 20% indicating otherwise. Lastly, 60% of respondents believed their child had had no trouble making friends, while 40% thought otherwise.

In terms of socialization, 64% had taken their child along when visiting friends and relatives, while 36% had not. Lastly, 35% had given their child regular family responsibilities when possible, while 65% had not.

## Discussion

The survey findings offer valuable insights into how children with special needs are supported by their families, as well as the challenges they face in terms of performance, growth, and development. The study highlights the impact of disability on these areas, emphasizing the role of family support in addressing various challenges. While children with special needs benefit from family support in many aspects, issues such as socialization, academic performance, and taking responsibility remain areas of concern (Keen, 2007). Additionally, the study underscores the significance of family support, parenting styles, discipline,

family interaction, and support systems. These findings align with existing literature that stresses the importance of a nurturing family environment in fostering a child's emotional, cognitive, and social development (Dhall, 2004; Srikandi, 2020) .

Further, the results suggest that parents of children with special needs may sometimes be more lenient due to their child's unique challenges. The family's supportive role is crucial in providing a stable foundation for the child's emotional and psychological well-being. While most families create supportive environments, there are varying levels of awareness and involvement in strategies aimed at promoting the child's development (Belikova and Zelens, 2020). These findings emphasize the need for personalized approaches to both discipline and education, as well as the importance of continued support and resources for families with children who have special needs. Intervention programs, awareness campaigns, and targeted resources could help bridge gaps in understanding and support, ensuring that children with disabilities receive the best possible opportunities for growth and development.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion and analysis of data, it is evident that Family, particularly its environment, plays a very significant role in the growth and development of the child. It has been found that the majority of parents accept that family support and supportive attitude of family towards children with special needs, and providing a conducive environment at home is essential for the overall growth and development of children with special needs (Bennett & Hay 2007). The positive family functioning played a also crucial for the development of children with special needs, where they got equal oppourtunity in participation in each activity within the family (khan.et.al. 2010). However, some parents are not able to provide a conducive environment at home due to some reasons such as lack of awareness, low socio-economic status etc. There is a dire need to make the people aware in general and the family in particular about its repercussions and if it is not attended well in time it can lead to some serious disorder at the later stage of life. Hence it can be concluded that the family environment contributed in the growth and development of children with special needs.

## Reference

1. Belikova, and Zelena, (2020). Characteristics of the family environment of children with disabilities. EBSCOhost. <https://web-s-ebscobhost-com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=33&sid=ae267e33-359e-4def-9987-7a18d082a4f7%40redis>
2. Bennett, K. S., & Hay, D. A. (2007). The role of family in the development of social skills in children with physical disabilities. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 54(4), 381–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10349120701654555>
3. Berk, L.E. (2008). *Exploring Lifespan Development*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
4. Dhall, T.C. (2004). *Family environment and school performance*. Kalpaz Publication, Delhi.
5. Green, A. W. (1952). *Sociology an analysis of life in modern society*. New York: McGraw hill
6. Keen, D. (2007). Parents, families, and partnerships: Issues and considerations. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 54(3), 339–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10349120701488855>
7. Khan, S., Haynes, L., Armstrong, A., & Rohner, R. (2010). Perceived teacher acceptance, parental acceptance, academic achievement, and school conduct of middle school students in the Mississippi Delta region of the United States. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 44(3), 283-294.
8. Kurniawan, J., Effendi, Z. M., & Dwita, S. (2018). The Effect of School Environment, Family Environment and Learning Motivation on Studentsr Learning Performance. 57(Piceeba), 571–576. <https://doi.org/10.2991/piceeba-18.2018.6>
9. Manivannan, M.& Anbuchelvan, K. (2011). *Psychology of learning and human development*. Neelkamal publications pvt.ltd. Educational publisher, sultan bazaar Hyderabad-500095.
10. Minsitry of Law and Justice. (2016). *The Rights of Persons with disability Act, 2016*. Government of India, DI, 1–35. <http://www.tezu.ernet.in/notice/2017/April/RPWD-ACT-2016.pdf>
11. Robledo-Ramn, P., & Garca-Snchez, J.-N. (2012). The Family Environment of Students with Learning Disabilities and ADHD. *Learning Disabilities*, April 2014. <https://doi.org/10.5772/32507>
12. Roostin, E. (2018). Family Influence on the Development of Children. *PrimaryEdu - Journal of*

Primary Education, 2(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.22460/pej.v1i1.654>

13. Setiawati. (2020). Family Role in Children's Social Development. 405(Iclles 2019), 159–162. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200217.033>

14. Srikandi, S. (2020). The Importance of the Role of the Family in Protecting Children: A Conceptual Papers. 501(Icet), 339–341. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201204.065>

