

## Family Overprotection in the Learning Process During Early Childhood: A Bibliometric Analysis in Scopus Using PRISMA

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**Abstract**—Overprotective parenting can shape the development of autonomy and the learning process during early childhood, yet the scientific output on this relationship has not been systematically mapped. This study aimed to analyze bibliometrically the Scopus-indexed scientific output on family overprotection and its incidence on children's learning. A quantitative, descriptive bibliometric design was adopted: a Boolean search equation was executed in Scopus, documents were selected following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, and a final corpus of [N] documents was analyzed through descriptive statistics by year of publication, country, subject area, and document type. Annual output increased over the period analyzed and peaked in 2025; production was concentrated in the United States, China, and the United Kingdom, with Medicine as the dominant subject area and journal articles as the main document type. Latin American output was limited, and few studies specifically addressed the relationship between overprotective parenting and learning during early childhood. Although scientific interest in the topic is growing, persistent research gaps justify new studies, particularly in Latin American and Ecuadorian contexts, that deepen the understanding of this phenomenon and guide educational strategies to promote children's autonomy.

**Keywords**— bibliometric analysis, early childhood, family overprotection, learning, Scopus

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### I. Introduction

Within the field of early childhood education, the study of family relationships has gained growing importance, particularly because the practices that take place inside the household exert a substantial influence on the holistic development of children during their earliest years. Numerous studies conducted at the international level have emphasized that the family constitutes the primary educational agent, since it generates the environments that foster cognitive, social, and emotional development before children formally enter the education system. In this regard, a study carried out in the city of San Juan de Pasto, Colombia, indicates that the active integration of the family into the educational process generates an atmosphere of trust, support, recognition, and the formation of self-esteem, self-concept, and self-worth, which in turn allows children to become more participative, independent, and affectionate in their interactions with others (Valdés Cabello et al., 2023).

Building on this perspective, a range of studies has shown how family environments in which emotional accompaniment and support are emphasized tend to favor the learning process during the earliest stages of a child's life. In the case of Ecuador, these international tendencies allow children to act with greater confidence and security within the educational context, positioning the family as an essential component for the appropriate holistic development of children while encouraging their active participation in learning activities. Consequently, cultivating healthy communication patterns within the household contributes to academic success, generating tangible benefits for learning outcomes and supporting children as they reach the successive developmental milestones associated with the early stages of life.

Nevertheless, although family participation and accompaniment generally prove beneficial for the learning process, this involvement can also produce negative effects when it is expressed in an excessive or exaggerated

manner. One of the principal manifestations of this imbalance is overprotection, which emerges when parental control, rigidity, infantilization, and intrusiveness exceed the boundaries required for the autonomous development of children, and which may generate chronic anxiety in the child. Beyond this emotional cost, overprotective practices can also compromise children's active participation in learning activities and generate difficulties in establishing healthy interpersonal relationships, not only during early childhood but throughout the individual's broader life cycle (Díaz-Mosquera et al., 2024).

From an analysis situated within the Latin American context, family overprotection emerges as a phenomenon linked to the intense forms in which parents become involved in child development, particularly during early childhood, the stage in which fundamental social skills begin to consolidate. According to Valdés Cabello et al. (2023), the active participation of parental figures, and especially of the father, exerts a significant influence on the formation of empathy, cooperation, and positive interaction with others. However, when this involvement intensifies and becomes a constant presence that regulates and directs the child's every action, it may limit the child's capacity to act autonomously. In this sense, although family accompaniment is necessary, it can interfere with the child's independent development whenever an adequate balance is not maintained between support and control.

Family involvement in the educational sphere can also directly influence the child's learning process. Several studies indicate that parental engagement in school-related activities constitutes a key factor for academic performance and adaptation to the school environment, strengthening motivation and commitment toward learning. On the other hand, when this participation turns into excessive intervention, in which the adult assumes responsibilities that properly belong to the child, the development of essential skills such as autonomy, self-regulation, and decision-making becomes constrained. Under these circumstances, children may struggle to face challenges independently and to engage actively in classroom dynamics, so that excessive parental involvement can progressively foster dependency on adults and ultimately affect the child's holistic development within the educational context.

Similarly, excessive adult involvement can affect both the social and cognitive development of the child during early childhood. The constant presence of an adult limits the spontaneous interaction that can arise between peers, which hinders the construction of social skills such as communication and conflict resolution. From a cognitive standpoint, overprotection reduces opportunities for exploration and discovery, affecting curiosity, initiative, and critical thinking. As a result, the child confronts barriers that restrict full development, both inside and outside the educational setting. Although family involvement remains an essential element of child-rearing, it can become counterproductive when it manifests as overprotection (Tristán Sarmiento et al., 2021). It should further be noted that overprotection during early childhood can limit the development of multiple skills and capacities in children, as well as meaningful learning; in the Ecuadorian context, this problem shapes the way children interact with their environment, participate in academic activities, and construct their own learning processes, a situation compounded by the limited systematized scientific production on the relationship between overprotection and child development, which reveals an important gap in this area of research. At the same time, it remains essential to establish affective bonds, provide emotional security, and offer accompaniment that safeguards children's well-being while simultaneously fostering their freedom of expression and clarifying the role of the educator (Gómez-Pintado et al., 2025).

In this sense, it becomes essential to deepen the analysis of the current state of knowledge and to orient future research accordingly. The lack of organization and systematic evaluation of the scientific literature constitutes a difficulty that must be addressed, particularly with respect to the implications that family overprotection may have for child development and for the quality of educational processes. Likewise, Sánchez et al. (2025) point out that family participation in educational institutions directly shapes the diverse forms of involvement that occur within the school setting. It is further emphasized that the relationship between family and school constitutes a key element for promoting children's holistic growth, as it fosters more active forms of participation while helping to avoid practices and forms of accompaniment that restrict children's development and independence.

In line with the foregoing, the following research question emerges: what are the trends, characteristics, and evolution of the scientific production indexed in Scopus concerning family overprotection and its incidence on the learning process during early childhood? This question opens numerous opportunities to determine the role of the family as a fundamental agent in the teaching-learning process. It likewise makes it possible to analyze how family dynamics, parenting styles, and the active participation of family members and the broader community influence the autonomy of children. Accordingly, this article aims to contribute to the understanding of how families influence the educational environment, offering an organized, evidence-based perspective that can inform both future research and educational practice.

Based on this research question, the following general objective is proposed: to bibliometrically analyze the scientific production indexed in the Scopus database in relation to family overprotection and its incidence

on learning during early childhood. This general objective is, in turn, guided by three specific objectives: (1) to generate a search formula for a study on family overprotection within the Scopus database; (2) to establish a systematic review process using the PRISMA method; and (3) to apply a bibliometric review to the documents obtained through this process, so as to characterize the current state of scientific knowledge on the topic under study.

## II. Literature Review

### A. Family Overprotection in Early Childhood

Family overprotection has been theoretically defined as a parenting pattern characterized by an excessive level of control, rigidity, infantilization, and intrusiveness, through which caregivers regulate the child's actions well beyond what is developmentally necessary. Díaz-Mosquera et al. (2024) explain that when these behaviors intensify, they can generate chronic anxiety in the child and interfere with the establishment of secure attachment styles that extend into later stages of life. From a developmental standpoint, Tristán Sarmiento et al. (2021) add that although parental involvement in a child's daily activities is, in principle, a protective factor, it becomes counterproductive once it substitutes for the child's own agency, thereby restricting the opportunities to practice decision-making and self-regulation that are typical of early childhood.

From a Latin American perspective, Valdés Cabello et al. (2023) emphasize that the active participation of parental figures, and particularly of the father, plays a determining role in the formation of empathy, cooperation, and positive social interaction; however, the same authors caution that when this participation becomes a constant, directive presence, it limits the child's capacity to act autonomously. In a complementary line of reasoning, Gómez-Pintado et al. (2025) argue that emotional bonds and accompaniment are indispensable for children's well-being, but only insofar as they promote free expression, exploration, and participation, rather than substituting for the child's own initiative. Taken together, this body of literature situates family overprotection not as an isolated clinical construct but as a multidimensional phenomenon with direct implications for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

The conceptual roots of this discussion trace back to Baumrind (1971), whose classic typology distinguished authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting according to the balance between parental warmth and behavioral control; family overprotection can be understood as an intensification of control that exceeds this classic balance. Building on this tradition, Grolnick and Pomerantz (2009) proposed a refined conceptualization in which only parenting characterized by pressure, intrusion, and domination should be labeled control, whereas guidance-based parenting is better described as structure, a distinction that helps separate healthy supervision from overprotective intrusiveness. Within this same conceptual family, Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) established helicopter parenting as a construct distinct from behavioral and psychological control, showing that it is positively associated with parental involvement and warmth yet negatively associated with the child's autonomy granting and school engagement, which mirrors the tension already noted between beneficial accompaniment and restrictive overprotection.

Empirical evidence on the consequences of this pattern reinforces its relevance to the present study. Segrin et al. (2012) found that overparenting is associated with lower-quality parent-child communication and, indirectly, with reduced family satisfaction, while also predicting higher levels of entitlement among the children raised under such practices. Similarly, LeMoyne and Buchanan (2011) reported that excessive parental hovering is linked to lower well-being, reflecting the broader pattern documented throughout this literature: parental involvement that fails to adjust to the child's developmental stage can undermine, rather than support, healthy growth. These findings collectively strengthen the theoretical basis for treating family overprotection as a distinct and consequential construct worth mapping bibliometrically.

### B. The Learning Process during Early Childhood

The learning process during early childhood is widely regarded in the literature as the product of a continuous interaction between the child, the family, and the educational environment. Healthy family communication has been found to be positively associated with academic success and with the achievement of key developmental milestones, since it provides children with the emotional security required to explore, participate, and engage with new learning experiences. In a similar vein, Martins et al. (2020) found that parental behavior and the goals that caregivers model for their children directly shape the child's own goal orientation and their willingness to face novel academic challenges, underscoring the formative influence that family dynamics exert on early learning trajectories.

Complementing this perspective, Rubio Hernández et al. (2025) note that positive parenting practices, effective communication between caregivers, and a genuine concern for children's education are associated with more favorable learning outcomes, while Sánchez et al. (2025) demonstrate that the specific profile of family

participation adopted by educational institutions has a direct bearing on how families become involved in school-related activities. These findings collectively suggest that early learning cannot be examined in isolation from the family context: the same accompaniment that nurtures motivation and engagement can, if miscalibrated, undermine the very autonomy that sustains meaningful learning, which is precisely the tension explored in the next subsection.

The theoretical basis for why families become involved in children's learning was articulated by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), who proposed that parents' role construction, their sense of efficacy for helping children succeed, and the invitations they receive from children and schools jointly determine the extent and quality of their involvement. This model helps explain why family accompaniment tends to be beneficial when it responds to genuine invitations and supports the child's own efforts, rather than substituting for them. Consistent with this framework, the meta-analysis conducted by Fan and Chen (2001) across numerous empirical studies found a small-to-moderate but practically meaningful relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, with parental aspirations and expectations showing the strongest association and direct home supervision the weakest, suggesting that the manner in which families are involved matters as much as the fact of their involvement.

### *C. The Relationship Between Family Overprotection and Early Childhood Learning*

The intersection between family overprotection and early childhood learning constitutes an emerging but still fragmented area of inquiry. Arias-Ortega and Villarroel Cárdenas (2026) show that the form and intensity of family participation in schooling vary according to the social, cultural, and educational particularities of each context, which implies that the effects of overprotection on learning cannot be generalized without accounting for local conditions. Padilla-Faneytt (2025) similarly stresses the importance of understanding family experiences from the standpoint of specific educational transitions, such as the passage from preschool to primary education, a period in which overprotective practices may be particularly consequential for the child's growing autonomy.

Despite this growing interest, the literature reviewed reveals a significant gap: few studies have specifically examined, through systematic or bibliometric methods, how the scientific production on family overprotection intersects with research on early childhood learning. Most of the available evidence approaches overprotection from clinical, psychological, or developmental perspectives, while comparatively fewer studies adopt an explicitly educational lens or attempt to map the structure and evolution of this specific field of knowledge. This gap provides the direct justification for the present bibliometric study, which seeks to organize, quantify, and characterize the scientific production indexed in Scopus in order to clarify existing trends and to identify the areas that still require further investigation.

Two theoretical frameworks help explain why family overprotection and early childhood learning are conceptually inseparable. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model situates the family as the child's most proximal microsystem, the immediate context through which broader social and educational influences are filtered; overprotective practices occurring within this microsystem can therefore be expected to ripple outward into the child's school engagement and social development. Complementing this ecological view, self-determination theory, as formulated by Ryan and Deci (2000), identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as innate psychological needs whose satisfaction underlies intrinsic motivation and healthy development; family overprotection, by restricting opportunities for autonomous action, directly threatens the satisfaction of the autonomy need that self-determination theory identifies as essential to sustained learning motivation. Together, these frameworks provide the theoretical scaffolding that justifies treating family overprotection and early childhood learning as two facets of a single, interdependent developmental process.

## **III. Methods**

### *A. Research Design*

This research was developed under a quantitative approach, as it allowed the scientific production related to family overprotection in the learning process during early childhood to be analyzed in an objective, systematic, and measurable manner. This approach made it possible to compile and organize statistical data drawn from scientific documents indexed in a high-impact academic database, thereby facilitating the identification of research trends, publication frequency, the most productive authors, the countries contributing most extensively to the field, and the principal thematic lines developed around the object of study. The quantitative approach further enabled the use of basic descriptive statistical procedures to interpret the behavior of the scientific literature, supporting the construction of a structured and verifiable overview of the current state of bibliometric research on the topic addressed.

In this regard, the study was grounded in the positivist paradigm, given that the analysis was oriented toward the objective observation of scientific reality through organized and verifiable procedures. From this perspective, priority was given to the documentary and statistical analysis of the information gathered, which made it possible to understand the behavior and evolution of scientific knowledge from a descriptive and interpretive standpoint. The study corresponded to a bibliometric investigation of a quantitative type with a descriptive scope. This choice responded to the need to examine the evolution and behavior of the scientific production indexed in Scopus regarding family overprotection and its incidence on the learning process during early childhood, since bibliometric analysis makes it possible to identify indicators related to scientific productivity, publication frequency, predominant areas of knowledge, the most cited authors, academic institutions, and the countries with the greatest research participation.

The descriptive scope, in turn, allowed the current state of the scientific literature to be characterized without manipulating variables or intervening directly in the phenomenon under study. Consequently, the research concentrated on the observation, classification, analysis, and interpretation of previously published scientific documents, which made it possible to describe existing research trends within the international academic context. This type of research further favored the construction of a general overview of how scientific knowledge related to family overprotection and children's learning during early childhood has evolved over time, providing a solid descriptive foundation for the bibliometric procedures detailed in the following subsections.

### *B. Information Sources and Search Strategy*

The principal source of information used in this study corresponded to the Scopus database, developed by Elsevier and selected due to its international recognition, its multidisciplinary coverage, and the rigor of its scientific indexing processes. This database was chosen based on criteria of quality, reliability, and academic relevance, considering that Scopus concentrates a substantial volume of scientific publications related to education, social sciences, psychology, and child development, all of which are directly relevant to the object of study addressed in this research. In addition to this primary source, the study drew on original scientific articles, systematic reviews, and academic documents indexed in Scopus, which provided direct information on family overprotection and learning during early childhood, complemented by secondary sources such as books, methodological articles, and theoretical documents that supported the conceptual design of the research and strengthened the interpretation of the results obtained.

The search for scientific information was carried out through a systematic and structured strategy, using Boolean operators and key terms related to the topic under investigation. In order to broaden the scope of document retrieval and to obtain scientific publications of greater international impact, the search equation was formulated in English. Accordingly, the following search formula was applied to the Scopus database: TITLE-ABS-KEY (“family overprotection” OR “parental overprotection” OR “overprotective parenting”) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (“learning process” OR “early childhood learning” OR “early childhood education” OR “preschool education”). The search was executed on [DD Month 2026]; because the Scopus database is continuously updated, re-running the same equation at a later date may yield a different number of records. Equivalent Spanish- and Portuguese-language terms (e.g., “sobrepotección familiar” and “sobrepoteção parental”) were not included in the equation, which may have under-represented Latin American and Ecuadorian production indexed under non-English keywords; this is acknowledged as a limitation of the search strategy.

Following the initial retrieval, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied in order to refine and select the information most pertinent to the study, in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines for transparent systematic document selection (Page et al., 2021). The inclusion criteria considered scientific articles indexed in Scopus, research related to early childhood, documents connected to learning processes, and publications corresponding to a specific time frame consistent with the research objectives. Conversely, duplicate documents, studies unrelated to the central topic, and publications without full access to relevant bibliographic information were excluded from the final corpus of analysis. The initial search identified [number] records. After [number] duplicate records were removed, [number] records were screened by title, abstract, and keywords, of which [number] were excluded as unrelated to the central topic and [number] were excluded for incomplete bibliographic information or for falling outside the time frame, yielding a final corpus of [N] documents for analysis. The complete selection process is summarized in the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram presented in Figure 1.

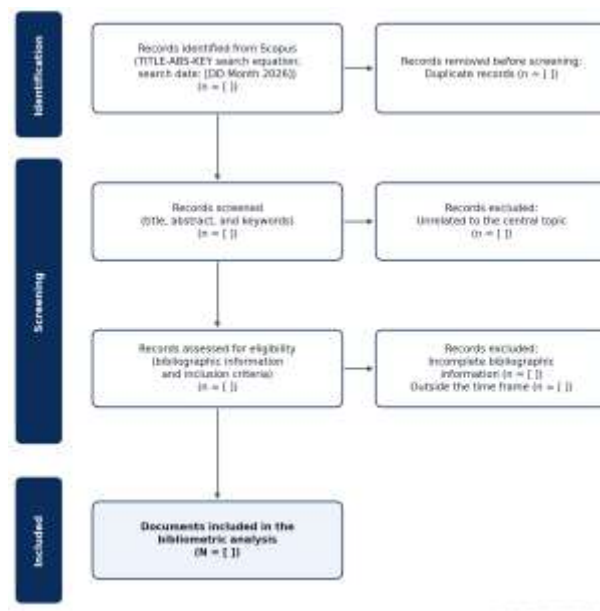


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the document selection process (adapted from Page et al., 2021).

### C. Data Collection Instrument

The principal technique employed was systematic documentary review, as it enabled the identification, compilation, classification, and organization of scientific information related to the object of study. This technique facilitated the structured analysis of academic documents indexed in Scopus, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent bibliometric and statistical analysis. As a data collection instrument, a bibliographic registry matrix was developed in digital format. Within this matrix, variables such as author, year of publication, country of origin, scientific journal, keywords, thematic area, number of citations, and principal research contributions were systematically organized. The use of this instrument made it possible to systematize the data obtained and to support the quantitative processing of the information gathered throughout the research process, ensuring consistency across all documents included in the final corpus.

### D. Data Analysis

The information gathered was analyzed through bibliometric analysis techniques combined with basic descriptive statistics, following the general workflow for conducting bibliometric studies described by Zupic and Čater (2015) and Donthu et al. (2021), who distinguish performance-based indicators (such as publication counts and distribution by year, country, and document type) from science-mapping techniques (such as co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analysis). The present study relied primarily on performance-based indicators, given its descriptive scope. These indicators were generated with the Scopus Analyze search results tool. Countries were assigned according to the full-counting convention applied by Scopus, whereby a document is credited to every country represented in the affiliations of its authors, so that country totals exceed the number of documents. Subject areas follow the source-based All Science Journal Classification (ASJC) used by Scopus, in which a single document can belong to several areas; accordingly, subject-area percentages were calculated over the total number of subject-area assignments rather than over the number of documents. Initially, the selected documents were organized and classified according to the previously established variables, which made it possible to identify behavioral patterns within the scientific production analyzed. Subsequently, a quantitative analysis based on frequencies, percentages, and the distribution of publications by year, author, country, and area of knowledge was developed, allowing the research team to construct a comprehensive statistical portrait of the field.

In addition to this quantitative procedure, a descriptive interpretive analysis was carried out, aimed at understanding the principal research trends and scientific approaches present in the literature reviewed. This procedure made it possible to integrate statistical analysis with a rigorous and contextually grounded academic interpretation of the results obtained, strengthening the understanding of the current state of scientific research related to family overprotection in the learning process during early childhood and providing the analytical basis for the results presented in the following section.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### A. Research Results

After establishing the search system and applying the documentary selection criteria, the temporal behavior of the scientific production registered in the Scopus database was identified. The results revealed a progressive tendency in the number of publications over time, with relatively stable annual output between 2021 and 2023, followed by a marked increase in 2024 and 2025. Annual output reached its highest value in 2025, reflecting greater research interest and an expansion of studies related to child development, family dynamics, and the factors influencing the learning process during early childhood; the lower count for 2026 reflects a partial year up to the search date, and the records dated 2027 correspond to articles in press. These findings reflect a growing academic attention toward issues connected with family participation and its impact on children's holistic development, as illustrated in Figure 2.

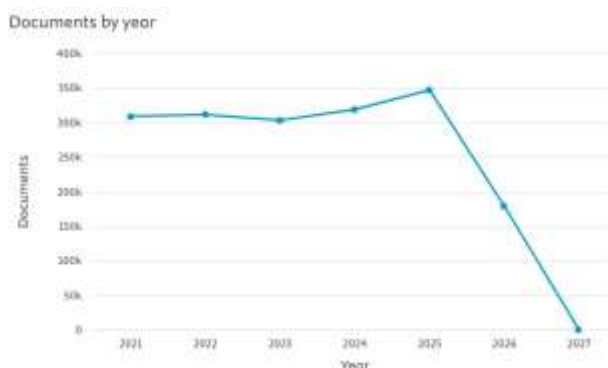


Figure 2. Number of Scopus-indexed documents on family overprotection and early childhood learning, by year of publication (2021–2027). Data for 2026 are partial up to the search date, and 2027 records correspond to articles in press.

With respect to the geographic distribution of the scientific production, the analysis identified that most of the retrieved documents originated from countries with a long-standing research tradition. As shown in Figure 3, the United States concentrated the largest share of publications ( $n = [ ]$ ), followed at a considerable distance by China ( $n = [ ]$ ) and the United Kingdom ( $n = [ ]$ ), while countries such as Japan, Italy, Canada, France, Australia, Spain, and South Korea completed the group of the ten most productive countries identified in the search. This distribution reveals a markedly uneven geographic pattern, with a comparatively limited presence of Latin American countries, including Ecuador, among the leading contributors to this specific field of research.

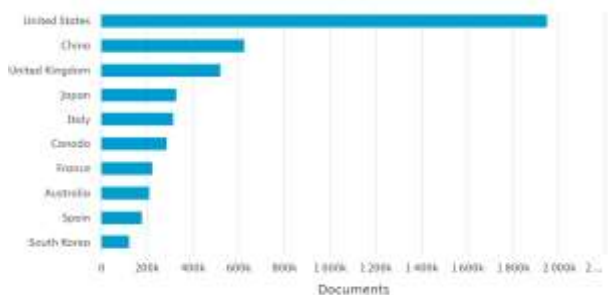


Figure 3. Number of Scopus-indexed documents by country of origin (2021–2027). Documents are credited to every country represented in their authors' affiliations (full counting).

Regarding the distribution of documents by type, the results indicated a clear predominance of journal articles, which accounted for 69.8% ( $n = [ ]$ ) of the total production retrieved, followed by review articles (14.0%,  $n = [ ]$ ) and book chapters (4.7%,  $n = [ ]$ ), as illustrated in Figure 4. Conference papers, editorials, letters, notes, books, errata, and short surveys together represented a considerably smaller proportion of the corpus. This predominance of peer-reviewed journal articles confirms the importance of indexed scientific journals as the principal channel for disseminating knowledge on family overprotection and early childhood learning, and it further indicates that the field relies primarily on original empirical and theoretical contributions rather than on secondary or grey literature.

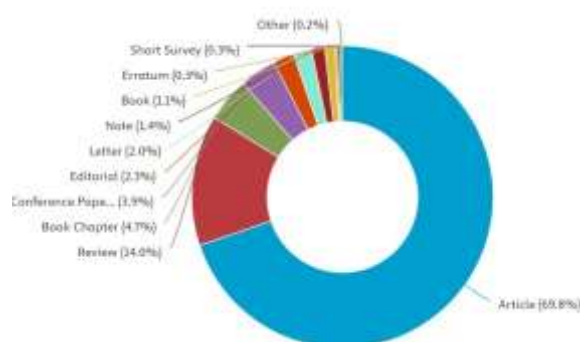


Figure 4. Distribution of Scopus-indexed documents by document type (2021–2027).

Finally, the analysis of subject areas showed that scientific production on family overprotection and early childhood learning is concentrated primarily in Medicine (38.2%,  $n = [ ]$ ), followed by Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (10.6%,  $n = [ ]$ ), Computer Science (4.8%,  $n = [ ]$ ), Engineering (4.8%,  $n = [ ]$ ), Social Sciences (4.4%,  $n = [ ]$ ), Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics (3.7%,  $n = [ ]$ ), Agricultural and Biological Sciences (3.1%,  $n = [ ]$ ), Nursing (3.0%,  $n = [ ]$ ), Neuroscience (2.6%,  $n = [ ]$ ), and Chemistry (2.4%,  $n = [ ]$ ), with the remaining 22.4% ( $n = [ ]$ ) distributed across other disciplines, as shown in Figure 5. This distribution confirms the multidimensional character of family overprotection as a research object, whose effects are studied across biomedical, psychological, social, and educational domains, even though specifically educational approaches remain comparatively underrepresented relative to clinical and health-related perspectives.

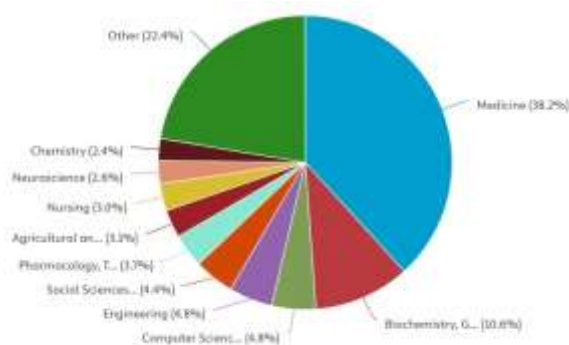


Figure 5. Distribution of Scopus-indexed documents by subject area (2021–2027).

## B. Discussion

The results of the bibliometric analysis revealed an overall increase in the scientific production on family overprotection and its incidence on the learning process during early childhood, with the highest annual output recorded in 2025. This pattern suggests that the scientific community has begun to pay closer attention to the influence that parental practices exert on child development and educational performance. Beyond the quantitative increase in publications, this tendency reflects a growing need to understand how transformations in family dynamics affect the construction of autonomy, school participation, and the overall well-being of children. These findings are consistent with Valdés Cabello et al. (2023), who indicated that family involvement constitutes a determining element for socioemotional development during childhood, as well as with Rubio Hernández et al. (2025), who found that balanced family participation strengthens confidence, self-esteem, and commitment toward the learning process. Along similar lines, Arias-Ortega and Villarroel Cárdenas (2026) argued that collaboration between family and school represents an essential component for promoting meaningful educational experiences that respond to the needs of child development.

The increase in publications also made it possible to observe that family overprotection is no longer regarded solely as a characteristic of parenting styles, but has consolidated into a research line with clear educational, psychological, and social implications. This evolution reflects a broadening of the object of study, now incorporating variables related to autonomy, emotional regulation, school adaptation, and interpersonal relationships. In this respect, the results obtained are consistent with Díaz-Mosquera et al. (2024), who explained that parenting practices characterized by excessive control can limit the child's active participation across different learning contexts. Similarly, Martins et al. (2020) indicated that parental expectations and behavior influence the construction of children's personal goals and their capacity to confront new challenges, while Toro

and Arteaga (2023) emphasized that family affection and communication generate positive effects only when accompanied by the progressive strengthening of children's independence.

Another relevant aspect concerned the geographic concentration of scientific production in countries such as the United States, China, and the United Kingdom. From a bibliometric perspective, this pattern indicates that research on this topic continues to develop primarily in contexts with higher levels of scientific investment and academic consolidation. At the same time, it highlights the need to expand research output in Latin America, given that the cultural, social, and family characteristics of the region differ from those found in more extensively studied countries. Consequently, the interpretation of these results suggests that the direct transfer of international models may be of limited applicability if the particularities of the Latin American context are not taken into account, an observation consistent with the emphasis placed by Valdés Cabello et al. (2023) on analyzing family participation from the standpoint of each sociocultural context, and with Padilla-Faneytt (2025), who underscored the importance of understanding family experiences during educational transitions from contextualized perspectives.

The findings related to subject areas showed that most of the retrieved studies were concentrated in Medicine, followed by Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology and, to a lesser extent, the Social Sciences. Rather than representing a limitation, this distribution confirms the multidimensional nature of family overprotection, since its effects involve biological, emotional, cognitive, and educational components. This disciplinary diversity helps to explain why learning during early childhood depends on the interaction of multiple factors that extend beyond the school setting itself. In this respect, evidence from the Finnish DAGIS survey of 798 children aged 3–6 years (Rahkola et al., 2026) indicates that higher parental overprotection is associated with lower physical activity among preschoolers, suggesting fewer opportunities for active exploration and autonomous development, while additional studies included in the international literature associate overprotective practices with higher levels of emotional dependency, anxiety, and difficulty coping with novel situations. Consistent with this, Gómez-Pintado et al. (2025) noted that the establishment of secure affective bonds is fundamental for children's well-being, provided that such bonds promote free expression, participation, and the progressive development of autonomy.

From a critical standpoint, the growth of scientific production reflected not only increasing academic interest but also the persistence of knowledge gaps related to the specific effects of family overprotection on learning during early childhood. Although the retrieved studies addressed aspects connected to parenting, emotional development, and family participation, comparatively few studies analyzed this phenomenon from an explicitly educational and bibliometric perspective. Consequently, the present findings support the relevance of this study, since they made it possible to organize, systematize, and interpret the evolution of the available scientific knowledge, offering a global overview of research trends and of the areas that still require further development.

The evolution of scientific production further revealed that interest in family overprotection has been accompanied by a growing concern for understanding the conditions that favor the development of autonomy during early childhood. Although the literature agreed that family participation is indispensable for children's well-being, more recent studies began to differentiate between accompaniment that strengthens learning and intervention that restricts children's opportunities to act independently. This interpretation is consistent with the present results, since the increase in research reflected a gradual shift from approaches centered exclusively on child protection toward perspectives oriented toward the development of personal and social competencies. In this sense, Valdés Cabello et al. (2023) indicated that family involvement favors holistic development when it promotes relationships based on trust and respect for the child's capacities, while Tristán Sarmiento et al. (2021) argued that the constant restriction of exploratory experiences can affect the construction of essential social and cognitive skills during childhood.

Taken together, the contrast between the results obtained, the reviewed literature, and the analysis developed in this study made it possible to establish that scientific production on family overprotection experienced overall growth and thematic diversification, reflecting the academic community's interest in understanding the implications of parental practices for child development. Nevertheless, important gaps were also identified, particularly regarding Latin American scientific production and the scarcity of bibliometric studies focused specifically on learning during early childhood. Consequently, the present study offers an organized overview of the current state of knowledge, identifies emerging trends, and highlights opportunities for future research capable of strengthening the understanding of the relationship between family, autonomy, and learning. These contributions constitute a relevant foundation for guiding further investigation and for informing educational strategies that promote balanced family participation, respectful of the developmental and learning processes proper to early childhood.

## V. Conclusion

Scientific production on family overprotection and its incidence on the learning process during early childhood increased over the period analyzed, reaching its highest annual output in 2025. This pattern reflects a growing interest within the scientific community in understanding the influence of parental practices on child development, consolidating this topic as an emerging research line within the fields of education, psychology, and health sciences. The bibliometric analysis further identified that the largest share of scientific production was concentrated in countries such as the United States, China, and the United Kingdom, as well as in the subject area of Medicine, with a comparatively small share in the Social Sciences, revealing an uneven distribution of scientific knowledge and highlighting the need to strengthen research in Latin America, and particularly in Ecuador, where studies addressing the relationship between family overprotection and learning during early childhood remain limited.

The literature review likewise established that family participation constitutes a fundamental factor for children's holistic development; however, when this accompaniment manifests as overprotective practices characterized by excessive control and the restriction of autonomous experiences, it can limit the development of social, cognitive, and self-regulation skills, with direct repercussions for the learning process and for the construction of children's autonomy. The study also made it possible to organize and systematize the available scientific knowledge through the bibliometric analysis of the production indexed in Scopus, identifying trends, the most developed areas, and the research gaps that persist. These findings constitute a foundation for guiding future research and for strengthening the generation of scientific evidence on the influence of family overprotection on learning during early childhood.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that future research expand scientific production on family overprotection within Latin American contexts, and particularly in Ecuador, through studies that examine in greater depth the cultural, social, and educational particularities that characterize parenting practices during early childhood. It is further suggested that subsequent studies adopt complementary approaches, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed, in order to gain a broader understanding of family experiences, accompaniment dynamics, and their influence on the development of children's autonomy and learning.

It is likewise recommended that stronger articulation be established between educational institutions and families through orientation and training programs designed to promote parenting styles that balance affective accompaniment with the progressive development of independence, thereby fostering more active and meaningful learning. Finally, it is proposed that future bibliometric studies and systematic reviews incorporate additional international databases, such as Web of Science, ERIC, or Dimensions, in order to broaden documentary coverage and to compare the evolution of scientific production related to family overprotection and its incidence on learning during early childhood across different sources.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Author Contributions

L.E.H.G. led the conceptualization of the study, the design of the search strategy, and the drafting of the original manuscript. E.N.M.S. contributed to the documentary review, data curation, and the bibliometric analysis of the retrieved records. E.P.P.S. contributed to the interpretation of results, the review of the discussion, and the final editing of the manuscript. All authors participated in the revision of the manuscript and approved the final version submitted for publication.

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