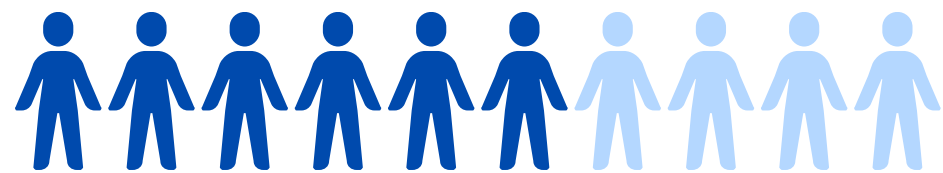


BARRIERS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Introduction

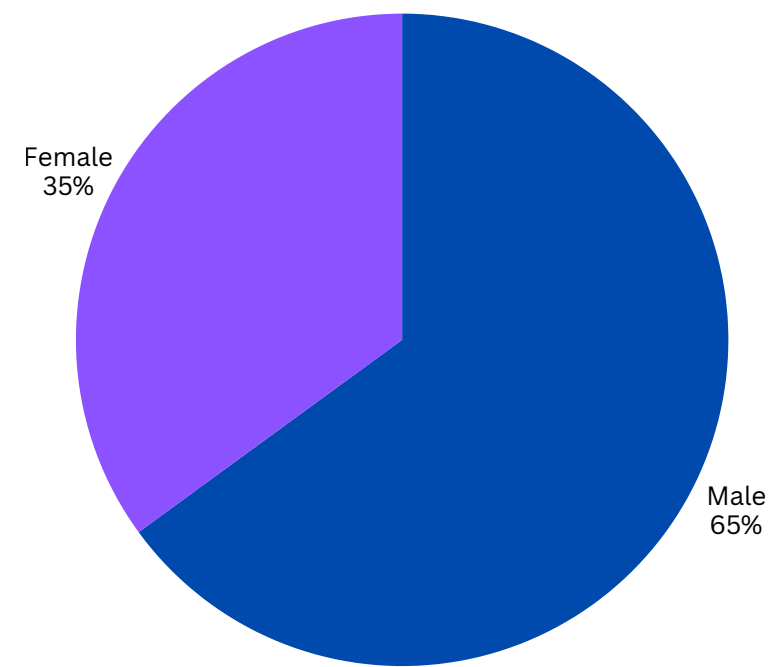
Early childhood development begins at the household level. The characteristics of household heads and family structure shape decisions about when and how children access early learning opportunities. This analysis is based on data from a nationwide survey on early childhood education conducted in 2024.

House size



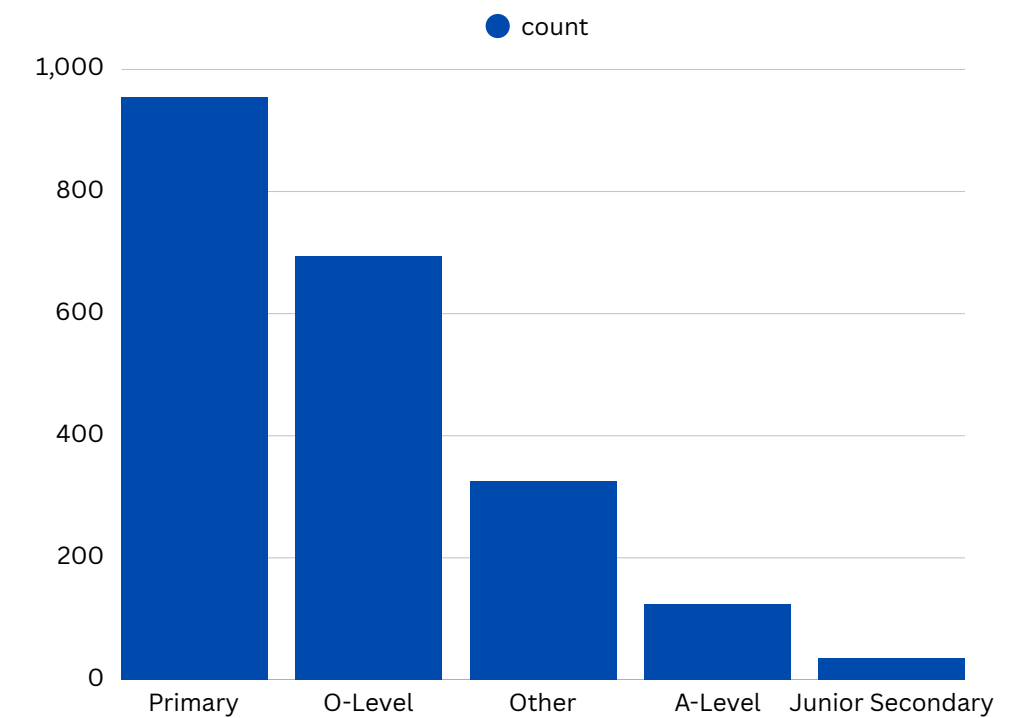
Households are predominantly medium to large, with most having 4–6 members. This suggests that resources are shared across several dependents, which may influence how households prioritize early childhood education.

Distribution of Gender in household



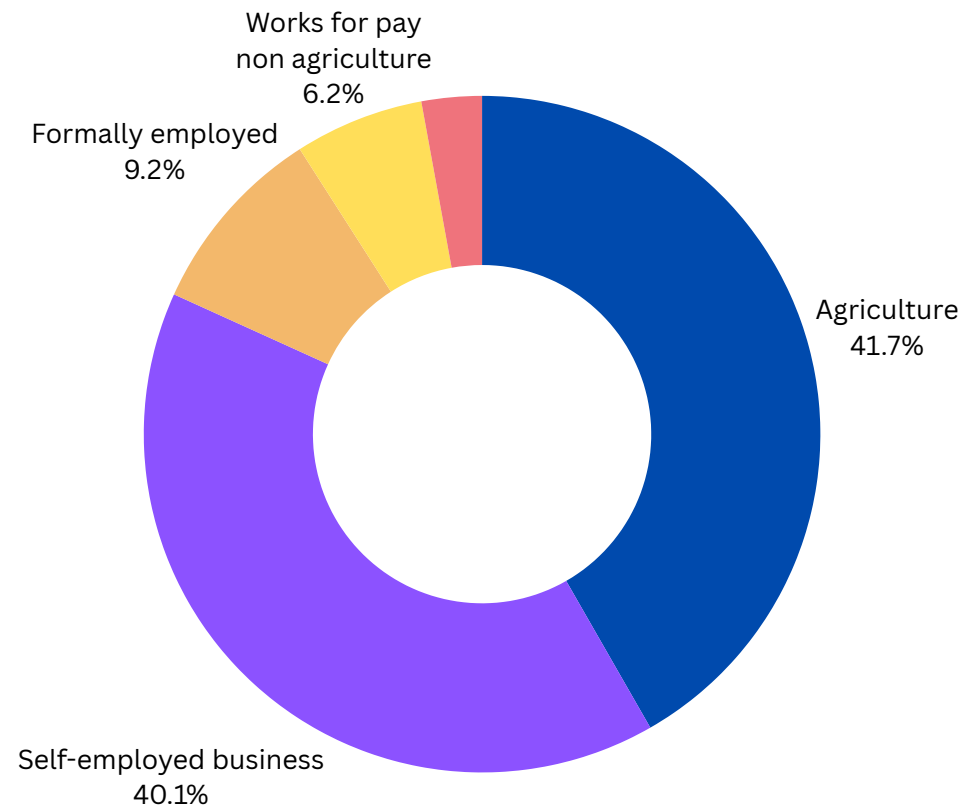
The majority of households are male headed, suggesting that early childhood education decisions like enrolment and school choice are primarily shaped by male decision-makers.

Distribution of HH education level

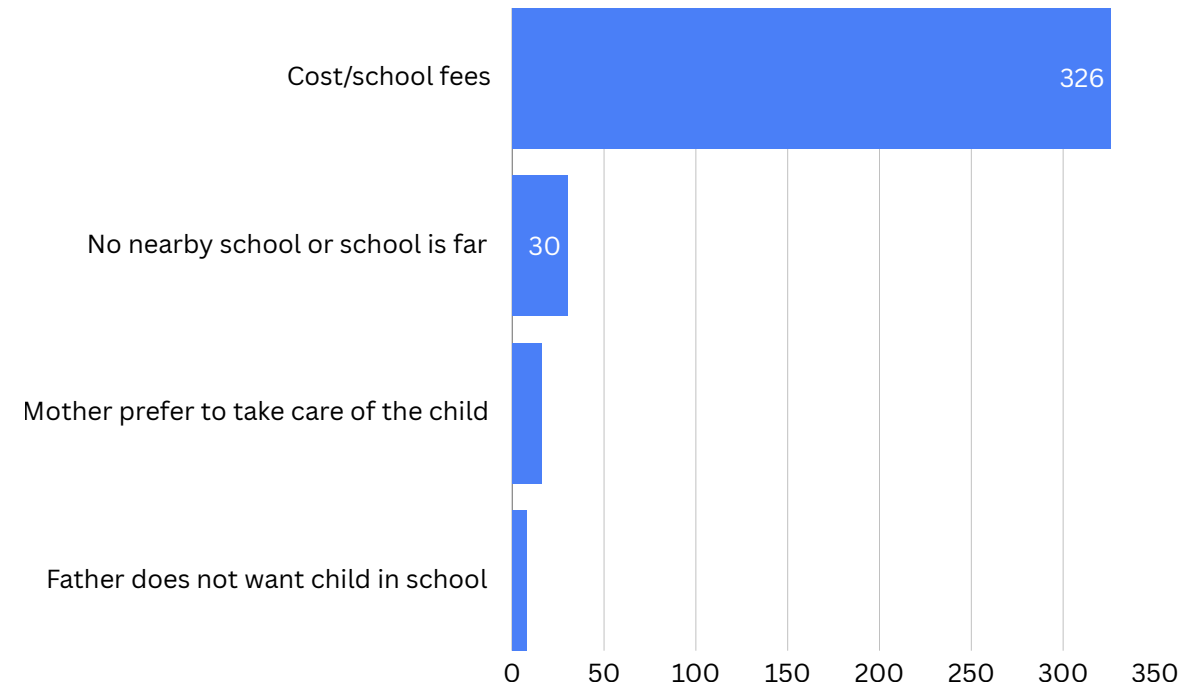


Education levels vary widely, but many household heads have basic or limited formal education, which can influence awareness and prioritization of early learning.

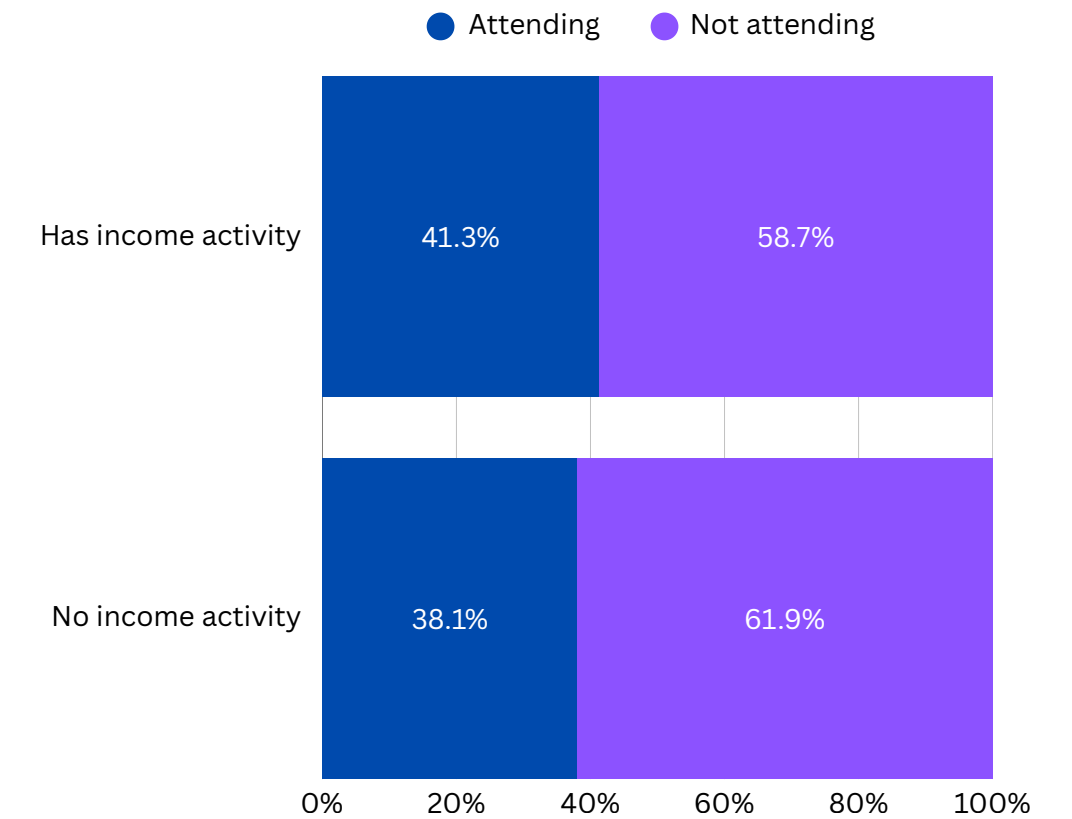
Income-Generating Activity



Main Reasons for Child Non-Attendance



Parents income status vs children not attending school

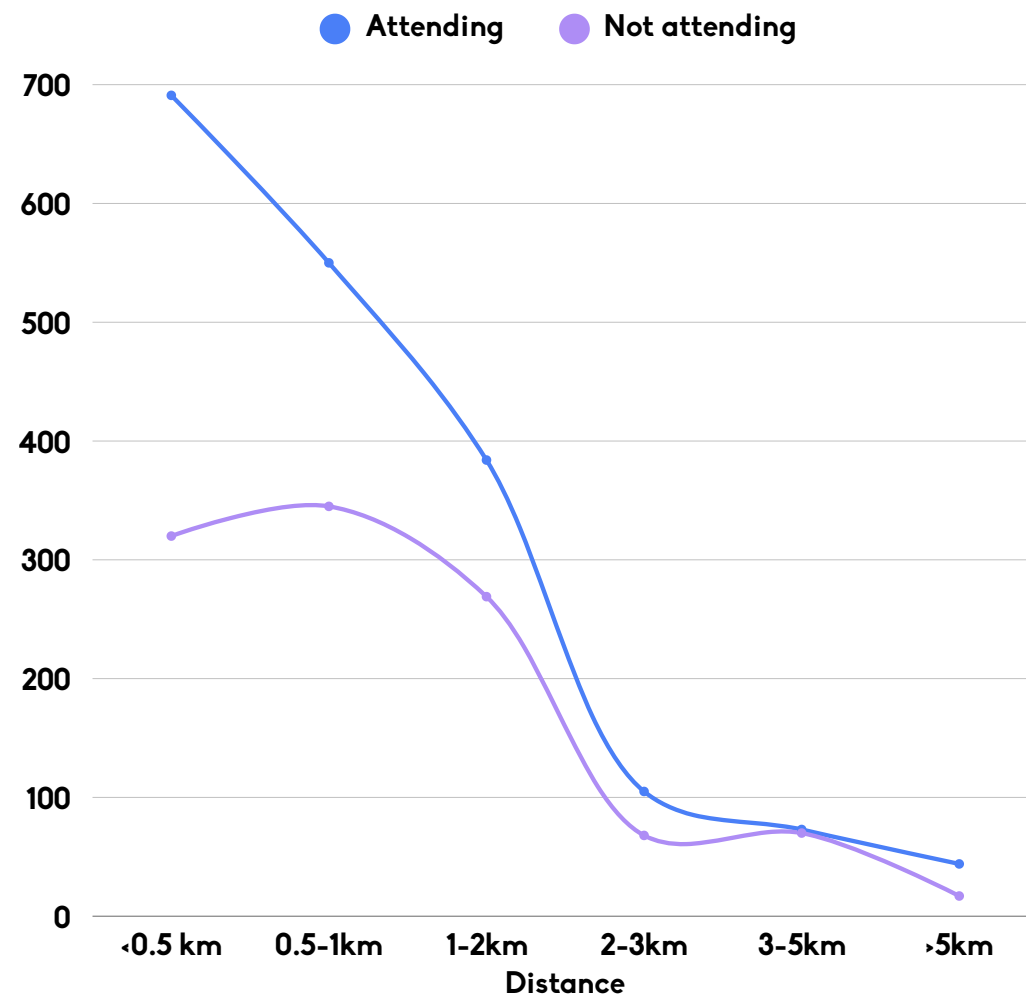


The majority of households rely on agriculture and informal businesses, highlighting that income is often unstable affecting affordability of pre-primary education.

Among children not attending school, cost remains the most significant barrier while distance to school and parental preferences affect only a small proportion.

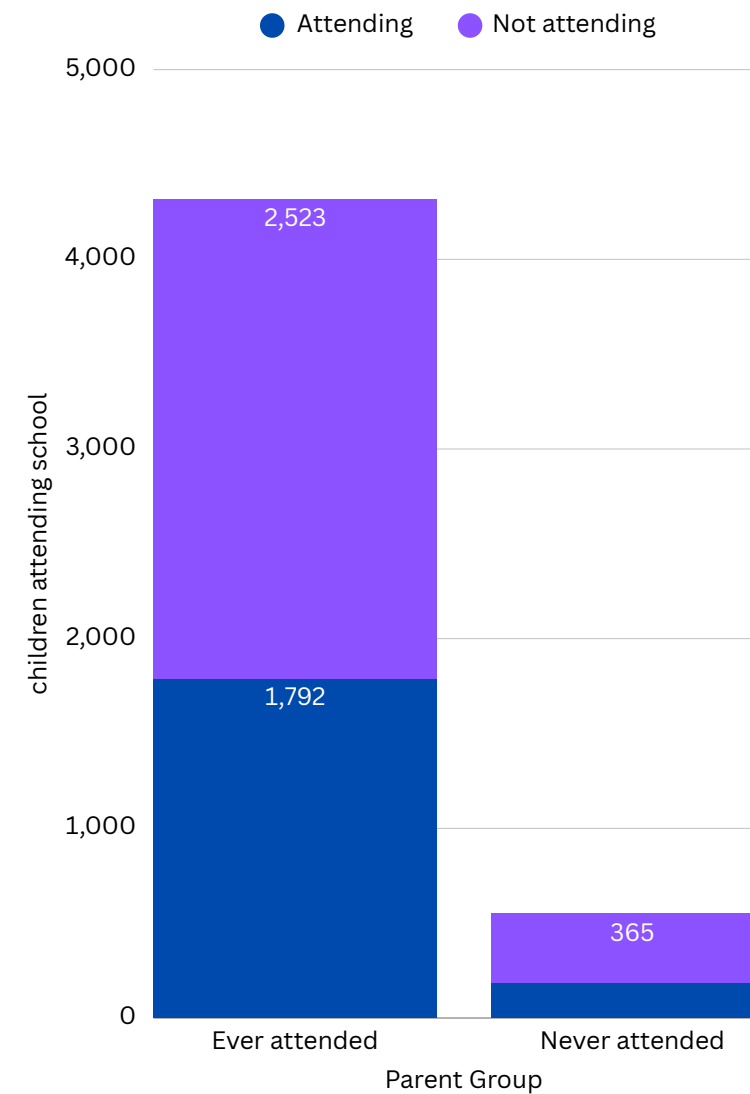
Children from households with income-generating activities are more likely to attend school compared to those without.

Number of Children Attending vs Not Attending School by Distance to School



Most children who attend school live closer to it, and as distance increases, the number of children (both attending and not attending) decreases significantly.

Parental Education and Child School Attendance



Children whose parents have attended school are significantly more likely to also be attending school, compared to those whose parents have never attended.

Conclusion

Early childhood school attendance is shaped long before a child reaches the classroom. Household characteristics particularly income stability and parental education play a decisive role in determining whether children access early learning opportunities.

While multiple factors influence attendance, cost emerges as the most significant barrier, far outweighing distance or availability. This is especially critical in contexts where most households rely on informal or seasonal income sources, limiting their ability to consistently afford childcare and early education.

Although distance is not the primary barrier overall, it interacts with income constraints, further restricting access for the most vulnerable households.

Most importantly, the findings highlight a strong intergenerational effect: children whose parents have never attended school are significantly less likely to attend themselves. This reinforces a persistent cycle where limited education and economic disadvantage continue across generations.