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Parental involvement: Success for inclusion

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Abstract

Parental involvement is the foundation of every child's progress in school. Those whose parents are fully involved in their education tend to do better academically than those whose parents are not. Parental involvement is seen as an important strategy for advancement of the quality of education. The ultimate objective of this is to expand the academic and the social capabilities of students.

Keywords: Parental involvement, inclusive education, learners with special needs

Introduction

Parental involvement can be aptly described as the active and ongoing participation of a parent or primary caregiver in the education process of their child. There are several ways in which parents can contribute at home- reading with children, monitoring homework, and discussing school day and events. At school, parents could contribute by volunteering in classrooms, attending parent-teacher meetings, helping with organizing functions. Parental involvement and academic achievement are directly proportional to each other. Schools with enthusiastic parents involve, engage, and communicate with them which incorporate them in the learning process. This has a positive impact on the academic and overall achievement levels of the child.

Review of Literature

The parental involvement (PI) paradigm has long been recognized as centrally significant to children's educational attainment. Nevertheless, this process had neither been examined nor analytically considered until early 1960s.

Interestingly, most reviewed literature on parental involvement (PI) emphasized parental beliefs as the motivator for parent's initial involvement in school activities (i.e. role construction, sense of efficacy). However, the general prospects such as the invitation to engage with school that comes from both school and children (Level 1) also influence their involvement with school. Similarly, role construction also denotes parents' perspectives regarding their support for their child's learning (i.e. job as a parent) and it shows a significant correlation between parents with high role construction and school involvement. Also, Bandura (1997) attributes parents' sense of efficacy to their school participation, which variably or invariably contributes to children's learning and school success. Besides, parents with higher attribute for PI believe their contributions aid and sustain behavior that brings positive outcomes. This characterized general invitations from both schools and learners as a motivation for working in partnership with schools and to take part in learning activities. This proves that family's participation is desirable and valuable for learner's academic achievement. This broad prospect shows that learners share their concern regarding learning with parents at home or at schools and this allow parents' participation as shown by teachers' attitude towards them.

Discussion

Objectives of Parental Involvement

- To ensure that parents of students with special needs are considered equal partners on their child's education team and participate in decisions regarding the school community.
- Parents' involvement in public education needs to be invited and facilitated throughout the student's school years.
- Parents should be considered full partners on their child's education team and should be involved in decision making for their child.

- Establishment of equal, appreciative and student-oriented communication between parents and school.
- Psychosocial support.
- Enable parents for active involvement in the education of their child with disabilities.

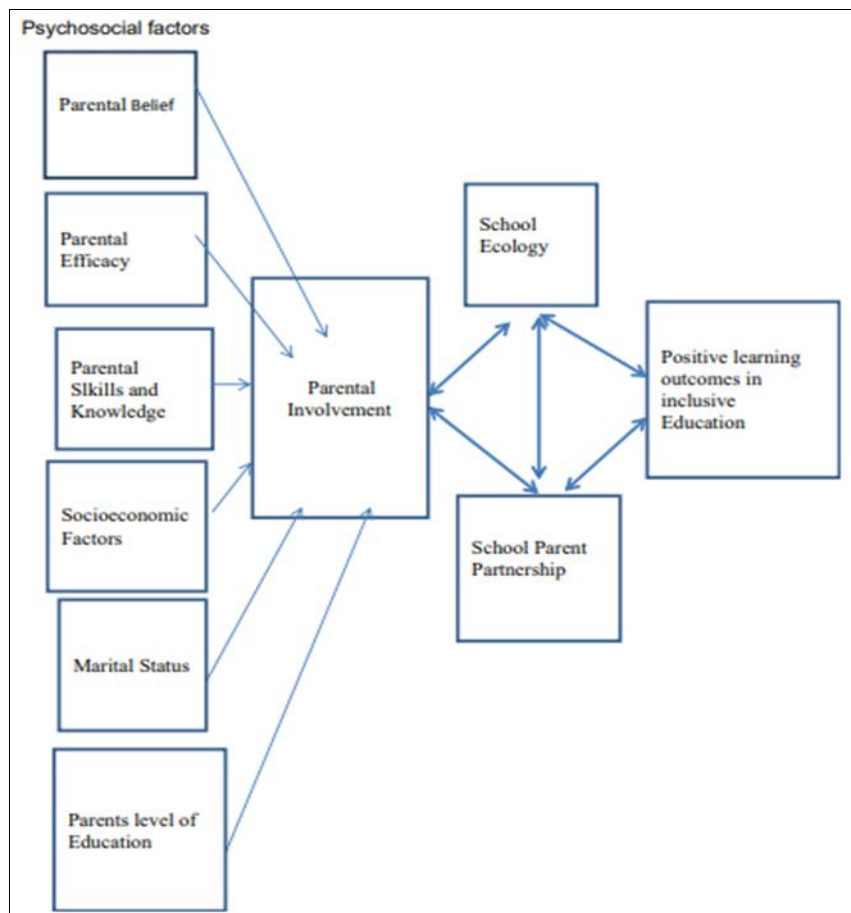


Fig 1: Conceptual framework

Benefits of the Parental Involvement

- Parents are the first teacher of their children. So children are motivated by them easily.
- Children should be encouraged by them to developed friendship with classmates or other neighborhood children.
- Parents can encourage the child to participate in activities where they can meet and interact with children of the same age group but different abilities.
- Parents can discuss the goals, expectations and preference for their child with his/her teacher, therapists etc. before the commencement of school and deciding upon the education plans for them.
- Parents should be fully aware of the rights of their child to have an inclusive education. School may avoid entertaining the special child in their school therefore parents should explain why they believe in inclusive education for their child

Obstacles That Can Come in the Way of Successful Parent Involvement

There is always a difference in perception about parental involvement. Teachers perceive that parents do not want to be involved and parents, on the other hand, don't know how to get involved. There is a strong disconnect that exists because of various reasons like lack of time, communication barriers, the experience of parents with their own schooling, the inability of the school to reach out to the parents, and

much more. More often than not these reasons become the key factor for children “slipping through the cracks”. Supportive and positive school culture will boost academic achievement and reduce a lot of surrounding problems. Schools must educate teachers and other personnel about reaching out to parents to work equally. Schools must also offer parents resources and materials to work with their children. Schools must also assist parents to understand the academic standards, child’s progress, and collaborating with teachers to improve standards and achievements. Parental involvement is crucial to foster this culture.

Till What Extent Should Parental Involvement Be Made?

Most parent involvement programs develop as a response to a specific issue or need that arises in the school or community. Parent involvement programs cannot be bespoke or a “one size fits all” prototype. What works for one school may not work for another. Teachers are often not very forthcoming in involving parents in hiring processes, planning curriculum, and choosing books due to lack of expertise. In a nutshell, the successful parent-school partnership must not be for addressing one particular issue or an add-on program. Most parent-school partnership and involvement programs must be aligned with the vision and mission of the school. Programs must be developed collaboratively with parents and must reflect the needs, interests, and issues of the school, parents, and children.

From offering child care, clubs and other multiple opportunities schools can show their genuine interest in receiving parent input. Parental involvement fund must be made transparent to parents. Parental involvement is a journey that cannot be bought but has to be nurtured and cultivated over time with care, trust, and patience.

Schools can become successful in engaging parents by making a slow start to expanding definitions of involvement. It is not just about increasing numbers but about the quality and kind of involvement that is brought to the table. It is more about believing that the success of students is a common interest for both school and family. Schools must envision parents as partners in the functioning and learning process. This will go a long way in identifying concrete ways in which the partnership can be cultivated and used for mutual benefit. Kids need to know that they are not making their life journeys alone and a successful school-parent partnership is a foundation for this.

Conclusion

The idea of inclusive education is gaining ground all over the world. All children with disabilities should be educated with non-disabled children of their own age and have access to the general education curriculum. Therefore best outcome occur when parents of children with disabilities and professionals work together. Hence, parental involvement in inclusive education is more important for children development.

Parental involvement is associated with a wide range of positive child outcomes in primary and high schools, such as good academic skills, positive attitudes and social competence. Parental involvement in learning acts as a gel that helps to make learning for children pleasant and encourages them to work even more as they seek to make those closest to them proud.

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