

ROLES OF PARENT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Parent has vital roles to play in the life of a child. The involvement of a parent on a child determines the future of such child. Parenting involvement is a catch-all term for many different activities including at 'home,' good parenting, helping with home work, talking to teachers, attending school functions, through to taking part in school governance. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in schools but throughout life. To say the fact, the most accurate prediction of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's parent is able to create a home environment that encourage learning and to express high expectations for their children's achievement and future careers. Hence this paper addressed some of the essential responsibility of parents, impact of parent involvement, differences in the level of involvement. Conclusion from this study indicated that parental involvement in children's education has a powerful impact on their attainment.

Keywords: Involvement, predictors, achievement, responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

The role of a parent to a child at any given time cannot be over emphasized. The home is very germane and crucial to a child's well being and development in later life. Family is the primary cell of society where the child's upbringing must begin since his birth, still in cradle. According to V. Hugo, the person's principles established since childhood are like letters engraved in the bark of a young tree, which grow, enlarge with it making its integral part. Therefore, right beginning makes the most important part of upbringing/education. Nobody ever said that children were easy to raise. They don't come with guidelines or instructions, and they certainly

don't come with a pause button (I've looked!). What they do come with is a crucial set of physical and emotional needs that must be met. Failure of the parents to meet these specific needs can have wide-ranging and long-lasting negative effects. Chris Theisen, (2009). This is because parent in the home are children first teacher. As a child move from infant to toddler and then to a preschooler, he learns how to speak, listen, write and read which latter develop the child to achieve academically.

The influence of parents on children school achievement is well documented in numerous studies. Gadsden (2003) says greater parental involvement at early stage in children's learning, positively affects the child's school performance including higher academic achievement. Harderves (1998) review that family whose children are doing well in school exhibit the following characters:

- Establish a daily family routine by providing time and a quite place to study with the children and assigning responsibility for house hold chores.
- Monitor out-of-school activities, for example setting limits on television watching, reduce time of playing, monitor the groups of friends the pupils walk with.
- Encourage children's development and progress in school; that is maintaining a worm and supportive home, showing interest in children's progress at school, helping him or her with home work, discussing the value of a good education and future career with children.

Izzo et al (1999) studied 1205 US children from kindergarten through to grade 3 in a 3 year longitudinal research programme. Teachers rated four forms of involvement; frequency of parent-teacher contact; quality of parent teacher interaction; participation in educational activities in the home; and participation in school activities. These factors, as well as family background variables were examined to find any relationship they might have with school achievement as indexed by school grades. Consistent with other studies, Izzo et al showed that all forms of parental involvement declined with child's age and that involvement in the home 'predicted the widest range of performance variance. In another longitudinal study, Dubois et al (1994) showed that family support and the quality of parent child relationships significantly predicted school adjustment in a sample of 159 young US adolescents (aged 10 –12) followed in a two year longitudinal study. At-home parental involvement clearly and consistently has significant effects on pupil achievement and adjustment which far outweigh other forms of involvement.

When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. In fact the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning and to express high expectations for their children's future careers and become involve in their children's education at schools and in the home.

Differences between parents in levels of involvement

Levels of involvement are positively related to social class and to maternal levels of education. Parental involvement decreases as the child gets older. Single parent status and problems with

maternal psycho-social health (especially depression) have a negative impact on involvement. Material poverty also has a powerful negative impact. It is shown that there are large differences between parents in the degree to which they see a role for themselves in their child's education and in the degree to which they feel confident in being able to help.

It is demonstrated that many parents feel put off from involvement by the way some teachers treat them. Finally, the children themselves are shown to have a significant influence on the degree to which their parents get involved. Parents felt very involved the more so in primary than in secondary schools. Mothers felt more involved than fathers.

Essential parents' responsibilities are to:

Provide an environment that is safe: Keep your child free from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, Keep unsafe objects locked up or out of reach of your child, correct any potential dangers around the house, Take Safety Precautions, lock doors at night, etc.

Provide your child with basic needs: There some basic needs like Water, Plenty of nutritious foods, Shelter, A warm bed with sheets, blankets, and a pillow, Medical care as needed/Medicine when ill, Clothing that is appropriate for the weather conditions etc.; that parent must meet for the up keep of their children.

Provide your child with self-esteem needs: Accept your child's uniqueness and respect his or her individuality, Encourage (don't push) your child to participate in a club, activity, or sport, Notice and acknowledge your child's achievements and pro-social behavior, Encourage proper hygiene (to look good is to feel good, or so they say!). Set expectations for your child that are realistic and age-appropriate, Use your child's misbehavior as a time to teach, not to criticize or ridicule.

Teach your child morals and values: Let your child knows the values of the following qualities: Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, Patience, Forgiveness, Generosity etc.

Develop mutual respect with your child: Use respectful language, respect his or her feelings, respect his or her opinions, respect his or her privacy, respect his or her individuality.

Involve yourself in your child's education: Communicate regularly with your child's teacher(s), Make sure that your child is completing his or her homework each night, Assist your child with his or her homework, but don't do the homework. Talk to your child each day about school (what is being studied, any interesting events, etc.). Recognize and acknowledge your child's academic achievements.

Get to know your child: Spend quality time with your child, be approachable to your child. Ask questions from your child time to time and Communicate with him/her always as we know that communication bridge caps.

IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Singh et al identified four components of parental involvement namely; parental aspirations for children's education, parent-child communication about school; home-structure and parental participation in school related activities. It should be emphasised that 'parental aspiration' refers to the parents' hopes and expectations for the child's continuing education, 'parent-child

communication' refers specifically to school related matters, 'home structure' refers to the degree of discipline exerted by the parents to insist on homework completion and to limit potentially distracting activities (e.g. watching T.V.) whilst 'parental participation in school' more self evidently refers to parent support for and participation in school and class functions. Singh et al showed that parental involvement in school activities had no effect on achievement whilst home structure had a slight negative association. Parental involvement in the form of parent child discussions had a moderate impact. Parental aspiration had a powerful influence on achievement both directly and indirectly through discussion. To give some idea of the scale of this influence it can be compared to the influence of prior achievement. Prior achievement is usually the best predictor of pupils' present achievement. It is a good measure of all the previous effects of family background and the child's abilities. Singh et al showed that parental aspiration was the factor that had the biggest impact on pupil achievement once social class factors had been taken into account.

The surprise finding is the slight negative effect of 'home structure' on achievement. It has generally been considered that a degree of organisation and discipline related to the use of out-of-school time would support school achievement. The negative result here runs counter to that sentiment. It merits cautious interpretation. It could be that the best discipline is self discipline. Attempts to impose discipline on adolescents might be indicative of problem behaviour, i.e. the parents are reacting to a problem rather than causing it. Another result to emphasise from this study, replicating that of Sui-Chu and Willms is that parental involvement which takes the form of in-school parental activity has little effect on individual's attainment.

Catsambis (2001) analysed data from the NELS: 88 study and its second, follow-up (NELS: 92). This gave access to extensive data collected by questionnaire from parents, students, teachers, principals and administrators on achievement and parental involvement. Catsambis used Epstein's conception of involvement and searched the data base to find evidence with which to assess the 6 types of involvement, relating them to measures of student achievement. Once again, background variables such as family socio-economic status and previous attainment, were factored out before examining the impact of parental involvement on student achievement, in this case in the age range 14 – 18 years. The first main result of this study was that none of the 6 modes of involvement was associated with academic progression in this age range. This replicates Sacker et al's (2002) findings from the UK NCDS for adolescents. However, parental involvement was positively associated with what in England would be termed 'staying on rates' and with increased likelihood of making challenging course options. High levels of parental expectation, consistent encouragement and actions to enhance learning opportunities in the home were all positively associated with students' high aspirations and college enrolments – this regardless of students SES or ethnic background.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It was concluded that when parents come to school regularly to know the well beings of their children, it reinforces the view in the child's mind that school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family's life.

Academic achievement improves when parent plays the following role in their children's learning at early stage.

- Act as teachers: Parents should create a home environment that promotes learning, reinforces what is being taught at school and develops the life skills. Children need to become responsible adults.
- As supporters: Parents should contribute their knowledge and skills to the school, enriching the curriculum, and providing extra services and support to students.
- As advocates: Parents should help children negotiate the system and receive fair treatment and work to make the system more responsive to all families.
- As decision maker: Parents serve as an advisory councils, curriculum committees and management teams, participating in joint problem solving at every level.

It can be said that the impact of parental involvement arises from parental values and educational aspirations and that these are exhibited continuously through parental enthusiasm and positive parenting style. These in turn are perceived by the student and, at best, internalized by them. This has its impact on the student's self perception as a learner and on their motivation, self esteem and educational aspirations. By this route parental involvement frames how students perceive education and school work and bolsters their motivation to succeed. For younger children, this motivational and values mechanism is supplemented by parental promotion of skills acquisition (e.g. in respect of early literacy). Parental behaviours which manifest parental involvement change across the age range. With younger children, direct help with school relevant skills is appropriate and foundational. With older students, activities which promote independence and autonomy more generally become more relevant.

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