



**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR LIFE-LONG  
LEARNING: IMPLCATION FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE**

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**Abstract**

The roles of parents as facilitators in building foundations for life-long learning cannot be over emphasized. This paper examines the crucial roles of parental involvement in laying the groundwork for lifelong learning and its implications for counselling practice. It explores how parents significantly influence a child's educational trajectory, from early childhood development to adulthood. The paper highlights the importance of fostering positive parent-child interaction, creating a supportive learning environment, and promoting a growth mindset within families; secondary source of data was considered for the study. Based on the evidence, this study concludes that parental involvement impacts positively in building child's life-long learning as the more parents actively involved in their child's education, the more they realize its goal; contrarily, the children who lack parental involvement are likely not to realize their educational goal. It is suggested therefore that all parents should passionately involve their child's education in other words, for them to realize their life-long educational goal. Therefore the paper recommends among others that counsellors should quickly identify children in their cares who lack parental involvement, and collaborate with their parents to address barriers to parental involvement with the appropriate counselling approaches. Also, counsellors should encourages workshops and resources on effective parenting strategies emphasize the importance of nurturing positive parent-child relationships as a foundation for lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** Parental Involvement, Foundation, Life-long Learning, Parent-Child Interaction, Parental Responsibility,

**Introduction**

Parental involvement is a cornerstone of building a foundation for life-long learning in children. It is an essential that ingredient facilitates a child's cognitive and moral development through positive parent-child interaction for better understanding the child and supporting their development. Parental involvement plays a pivotal role in laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning in children, shaping their academic fulfilment, personal growth, future achievements, and significantly influencing their whole success in life. From the earliest stages of childhood through adolescence and beyond, parents serve as the primary influencers and facilitators of their children's educational journey. Parental



involvement refers to the multifaceted engagement of parents in their children's schooling, including emotional support, educational guidance, and collaboration with teachers and administrators (Durisic, & Bunijevac, 2017).

At its core, parental involvement encompasses a spectrum of activities and attitudes aimed at supporting children's educational growth. From reading bedtime stories and assisting with homework to attending parent-teacher conferences and advocating for educational resources, parents contribute to their children's learning in diverse and meaningful ways (Casey, 2022). It's the active, ongoing participation of a parent or primary caregiver in the education of a child. Parents can demonstrate involvement at home by reading with children, helping with homework, discussing school events, attending school functions, including parent-teacher meetings; and volunteering in classrooms (Casey, 2022). Parental involvement is not limited to academic support but also encompasses emotional nurturing, cultural enrichment, and the cultivation of critical life skills.

Parental involvement in building a foundation for life-long learning comprises a range of activities and approaches that parents choose to support their children's educational journey throughout life. This involvement can include: commitment in early childhood education, supporting academic success, fostering curiosity and creativity, modeling lifelong learning, creating a positive learning environment. All these implies that parental involvement in education sets the stage for lifelong learning by instilling important values, habits, and skills that empower children to continue growing intellectually throughout their lives (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017). However, foundation for life-long learning describing the multidimensional nature by which an individual member of the society acquainted with self-directed learning, adaptive learning, personal and professional development, informal and non-formal learning, and critical reflection relevant for personal development, adaptability, and social progress throughout one's life. Life-long learning includes informal learning skills gained through daily life activities, as well as non-formal learning opportunities acquired by community organizations, workplaces, and online platforms (Merriam et al., 2007).

Etonhouse (2022) observed that early stage education cultivates a joy of learning in children from a young age and has proven to have a positive impact on life-long education. Inquiry-based learning supplements a child's innate curiosity and helps them cultivate confidence in their abilities by creating the greatest possible learning opportunities. Building foundation for life-long learning begins with getting the basics right, and children learn best when the content is interesting, meaningful and relevant to them (Etonhouse, 2022). This involvement includes but is not limited to assisting with homework, attending school events, communicating with teachers, and creating a supportive learning environment at home (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017).

### **Forms of Parental Involvement in Building Foundation for Life-long Learning**

Parental involvement set the stage for life-long learning by instilling crucial values, skills, habit that facilitate children in developing throughout their live intellectually. Parental involvement takes several forms, but majorly it may include:

**Home-based involvement:** this embroils activities such as helping with homework, discussing school events, and providing a supportive environment for learning at home (Casey, 2022).

**School-based involvement:** this includes attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering at school events, and participating in school governance or decision-making processes (Casey, 2022).

**Collaborating with community:** parents should help connect and expose their children to the community and community recreational resources, cultural and athletic programmes to assist students receive exposure to different experiences and opportunities that assist in choosing future academic and career opportunities. Also, parents should support in identification and utilization of community resources towards students' learning and development (Epstein, 2017).

### **Parental Roles and Responsibilities in Building Life-long Learning**

Parents have a range of roles and responsibilities in supporting their children's life-long learning; these include:



**Academic support:** one of the primary roles of parents in life-long learning is to provide academic support to their children. As noted by Hill and Tyson (2009), this includes assisting with homework, providing resources, and helping children develop effective study habits. By offering guidance and reinforcement, parents play a crucial role in facilitating their children's academic progress and success.

**Emotional nurturing:** emotional nurturing in parental roles goes beyond academics. Parents provide emotional support, encouragement, and reassurance required to their children to develop confidence, resilience, and a productive mindset on learning that are crucial for lifelong learning.

**Creating a positive learning environment:** the responsibility of parents in creating a positive learning environment at home. This includes setting expectations, providing structure, and fostering a culture of curiosity and exploration. By creating a supportive and stimulating environment, parents encourage their children to develop a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom (Wilder, 2014).

**Cultural enrichment:** parents are responsible for exposing their children to diverse cultural practices, values, and beliefs. This exposure helps children develop a broader understanding of the world and cultivates an appreciation for diversity, which are important aspects of life-long learning (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005).

**Modeling life-long learning behaviours:** parents as role models for life-long learning, should demonstrate a commitment to their own education, pursue interests, and engage in unceasing learning. By modeling life-long learning behaviours, parents inspire their children to embrace learning as a life-long journey (Sheldon and Epstein, 2005).

### **Benefits of Parental Involvement in Building Foundation for Life-long Learning**

Parental involvement in education yields numerous benefits for long-term learning and development in children that extend far beyond the academic realm. By actively participating in their children's learning journey, parents contribute to their overall development, well-being, and future success in the following ways:

**Improved academic achievement:** when parents are actively engaged in their children's education, students are more likely to achieve higher grades, have better attendance records, and demonstrate greater motivation to learn (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

**Increased motivation and engagement:** when parents show interest in their children's education and participate in school-related activities, it sends a powerful message of support and validation, which can boost children's motivation and engagement in learning. Children who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to become life-long learners, pursuing knowledge and skills not just for academic or professional success but for personal fulfillment and growth (Breisacher, 2024).

**Enhanced communication and language skills:** parental involvement, particularly through activities like guiding/reading to children and engaging in meaningful and appropriate use of words/languages, contributes to the development of language and communication skills (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Thus, early literacy experiences may assist in academic achievement and communication proficiency later in life.

**Positive parent-child relationships:** actively participating in their children's education strengthens the bond between parents and children (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005). Collaborating on educational activities and shared experiences create opportunities for meaningful interactions and mutual understanding, fostering a positive and supportive family environment.

**Cultural enrichment and identity development:** parental involvement allows families to transmit cultural values, traditions, and beliefs to their children, contributing to cultural enrichment and identity development through celebration of cultural heritage and engaging in culturally relevant activities reinforces children's sense of belonging and pride in their identity (Kim & Brand, 2023).

**Better decision-making skills:** through parental involvement, children acquired valuable decision-making skills required for appropriate decision-making independently.

### **Challenges and Barriers in Building Foundation for Life-long Learning**

Numerous challenges and barriers may be encountered by parents in actively participating in their children's education (life-long learning) in the following ways:

**Work commitments:** work commitments can pose a barrier to parental involvement in life-long learning, particularly for parents with demanding jobs or irregular work schedules, limiting their ability to actively involve in their children's lifelong learning.



**Financial limitations:** financial limitation restrict parental involvement in life-long learning. Low-income families may lack the financial resources to access learning resources, participate in extracurricular activities, or offer additional academic backing for their children (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005). This can exacerbate educational inequalities and hinder children's learning opportunities.

**Language barriers:** language barriers can present a significant challenge to parental involvement in life-long learning, particularly for immigrant or non-English speaking families (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Parents who are not skillful in the language of instruction may struggle to communicate with teachers, understand school policies, or support their children's academic needs effectively. .

**Cultural differences:** cultural differences can also impact parental involvement in life-long learning. Cultural norms, values, and expectations regarding education may differ across different cultural groups, influencing parents' attitudes towards involvement in their children's education (Wilder, 2014). This may lead to confusions or disagreement between parents and educators and affect the level of parental engagement in life-long learning.

**School-related factors:** School-related factors, such as inaccessible communication channels or unwelcoming school environments, can also hinder parental involvement in lifelong learning (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Parents may feel marginalized or excluded from the learning process, leading to lessened engagement and involvement in their children's learning.

### Strategies for Promoting Parent-Child Relationship

The aspects of the parent-child relationship that may create a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters children's academic success, personal development, and life-long love of learning are:

**Establishing trust and connection:** Trust is the foundation of any strong relationship. Trust and connection serve as the foundation for effective communication, collaboration, and support between parent-child's relations which necessary in building foundation for life-long learning.

**Quality time and bonding activities:** spending quality time together through shared activities and bonding experiences strengthens parent-child relationships (Wilder, 2014). Engaging in activities such as reading together, playing games, or exploring new interests fosters positive interactions and creates lasting memories. These shared experiences provide opportunities for communication, learning, and mutual enjoyment, strengthening the parent-child bond.

**Active listening and validation:** effective communication is key to promoting parent-child relationships in life-long learning. Parents can nurture open communication by actively listening to their children, validating their feelings, and demonstrating empathy and understanding (Epstein, 2001). When children feel heard and validated by their parents, they are more likely to share their feelings, worries, and thoughts about learning.

**Setting clear expectations and boundaries:** setting boundaries is a vital tool in building foundation for essential for life-long learning; and for families that can aide in the development of children who will grow into healthy, caring and responsible adults (Innis, 2012).

**Modeling life-long learning behaviours:** parents act as powerful role models for building life-long learning. When parents demonstrate a commitment to their own learning, pursue interests, and engage in continuous learning, they inspire their children to do the same. By modeling life-long learning behaviors, parents show their children the value of curiosity, persistence, and intellectual growth (Etonhouse, 2022).

### Theoretical Perspective (Social Learning Theory)

Researchers have developed different theories that provide explanations of how parental involvement helps in building the foundation for life-long learning. This study explores "Social Learning Theory" by Bandura, 1977. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory provides a robust theoretical basis for explaining how parental involvement contributes to the development of learners' behaviours and, ultimately, lifelong learning outcomes. The theory theorizes that learning occurs within a social context through processes of observation, imitation, and internalization of behaviours exhibited by significant others, mostly parents (Bandura, 1997).

The framework, parental involvement is theorized as the portraying parents' active participation in their children's education through behaviours like academic monitoring, encouragement of learning, and the demonstration of positive educational values. In line with Social Learning Theory, these behaviours



work as models that children emulate, encode, and reproduce. The mechanism of modelling, parental involvement, particularly, the consistent positive parental practices shapes learners behaviours and fosters their development in key learning dispositions, including motivation, self-regulation, persistence, and strong academic engagement. These behaviours develop as a result of the practices of care and attention, retention, responsiveness and internalization emphasized in the theory.

In turn, learner behaviour's determines to a large extent, a lifelong learning outcome, as Social Learning Theory suggests that behaviours being acquired through observation (observational learning) could become a relatively stable and enduring behaviour in an individual over time. Consequently, learners who adopt and internalize positive learning behaviours among other qualities, are more likely to develop sustained learning orientations, adaptability, critical thinking and self-directed learning that are beyond formal schooling gains. Social Learning Theory assumes that children observed their parents' behaviours, attitudes and values. It is also assumed that parents serve as role model for their children. A parent that positively impacts his child's education creates a life-long foundation for child's education. The theory tries to link together the behavioural dispositions of parents toward a child's education as a catalyst for learning/educational growth, and all round development of such a child. In conclusion, the type of a model that a parent be (for instance, parental involvement) has implication in building the foundation for the life-long learning of a child.

### **Counselling Implication**

Advancing parental involvement as a foundation for life-long learning calls for a structured and proactive counselling practice and approach. Professional counsellors should design and implement appropriate parent education programmes that will provide parents with practical skills and knowledge for supporting their children's study habits, motivation and independent learning skills both at home and outside home. The counsellors should also strengthen school-home collaboration strategies and supportive approaches such as regular communication channels, regular parent-teacher interactions and ensuring strong alignment between school expectations and home support systems. Through well-established counselling interventions, counsellors can identify students with low parental involvement, assess underlying barriers (such as time constraints or limited awareness) and work directly with family members to improve parental involvement or participation towards achieving a life-long learning among others, using tailored guidance and support plans. Furthermore, counsellors should create awareness campaigns that will sensitize parents and the wider community on the long-term benefits of active involvement in supporting children through inculcating positive values, attitudes, discipline and readiness for life-long learning. Finally, effective student support services through counselling intervention (such as, individual counselling and group counselling), mentoring and educational guidance, should be actively provided to children in such a way that it integrates parental involvement, thereby causing a child's academic progress, emotional well-being and capacity to sustain learning throughout life.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that parental involvement has a significant positive influence in building foundation for children's life-long learning. The more parents actively involved in their child's education, the more they realize its goal. Contrarily, the children who lack parental involvement are less likely to develop strong foundations for life-long learning. Parental involvement remains a cornerstone in building children's foundations for life-long learning. Active engagement of parents in their children's education fosters academic success, personal development and the cultivation of skills necessary for continuous learning throughout life. Conversely, children who experience limited parental involvement are at risk of underdeveloped learning foundations and may struggle to achieve their long-term educational goals. This study emphasizes that the quality and consistency of parental engagement can directly lead to building the learner's foundation for life-long learning.

### **Suggestion**

Based on the theoretical analysis of this study, it is suggested among others that parents should actively engage in their children's learning process, by providing adequate guidance and support at home. School counsellors should assist in educating parents on effective parental involvement strategies,



identify children who lack adequate parental support and collaborate with the affected families to remove barriers involved. Emphasis should be placed on nurturing positive parent-child relationships as a foundation in building a life-long learning. Policymakers should implement appropriate social and economic measures that will strengthen family social and economic stability to promote parental involvement in building the foundation for life-long learning. Finally, parents and members of the community should be consistently encouraged to see education as a shared responsibility between home (family), community and school.

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