

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED CHILDREN IN RIVERS STATE-SPECIALSCHOOLS: COUNSELLING IMPLICATION

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### Abstract

This study investigated parental involvement in the education of physically challenged children. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The study population comprised 44 parents and teachers from two inclusive Junior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt. Sample size of the study was 10 respondents (6 parents and 4 teachers) selected from Shalom International School and Christie Toby Inclusive Educational Center which operate inclusive education. A purposive sampling technique was used to select sample sizes for the study. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide and analyzed by theme using Epstein (2001) six-dimensional framework of parental involvement. The results showed that: Most of the parents of children with challenges do not always meet with the school teachers and principals in the school to talk about their children's education, and many of the parents are not really involved in making decisions regarding their children's education since they do not attend the PTA meetings and other events of the school. It was also found that majority of the parents and teachers have not taken part in a community forum to talk about problems or issues related to the schooling of children with challenges. It was recommended among others that: Parents of children with challenges should always meet with the school teachers and principals in the school to talk about their children's education for improvement. Parents of children with such challenges as deaf should endeavour to register and learn how sign language and Braille to enable them to facilitate the children's learning at home. They should also be encouraged to always participate in community forums to enable them to present the issues related to the schooling of children with challenges to the larger community.

### Introduction

Parental involvement (PI) refers to the many things parents do that affect their children's learning and growth (Epstein, 2009). Parental involvement in education has long been hailed as a crucial and advantageous factor in children's academic and socio-emotional growth. Empirical research revealed that, parental involvement in education is linked favourably to academic success (PerezSanchez,

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BetancortMontesinos & CabreraRodriguez, 2013; Tarraga, Garcia & Reyes, 2017), children's academic performance and self-esteem (Garbacz, Herman, Thompson & Reinke, 2017) and school retention and attendance (Ross, 2016). According to research (Jeynes, 2012; Catalano & Catalano, 2014), initiatives aimed at boosting parental involvement in education benefit kids, families, and school communities.

Parent-school collaboration enables a more comprehensive view of roles, relationships, and effects on children's development (Christenson & Reschly, 2010). By creating new and various activities to relate to one another in accordance with unique educational situations families and schools become primary actors in the formation of their roles and forms of involvement. According to major studies in the family-school field, this collaboration has a significant impact on academic performance and achievement, among other good outcomes (Epstein & Sander, 2000; Hotz & Pantano, 2015; Sebastian, Moon & Cunningham, 2017). Ngwenya (2010) asserted that parental involvement (PI) in education means that parents participate in several school- and home-based activities to help their children learn. This is a shared duty between the school and parents. The favourable impact of parental participation on academic achievement has also received substantial support from international research, as shown in a number of meta-analyses across various populations and educational levels (Jeynes, 2016; Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hy & Yuan, 2016). There is also agreement across research findings about the beneficial effects of parental involvement on children's academic achievement despite the fact that there are many different definitions of parental involvement, some more general and others more precise.

Parents being involved in their children's education are known to be a key plan for success (Vanderpuye, 2013; Monika, 2017). It is also an important part of how inclusive education works. One of the most important things parents can do for their children's schooling is to help them do well in school by getting involved in their learning. PI helps kids learn and do better in school, build self-esteem, and be more ambitious and motivated about school (Epstein, 2009). Studies on special needs education and disabilities have shown that active PI helps students go to school more often, get along with other people better, and do better in school (Lalvani, 2015). Therefore, parents are their children's most important teachers because they give them many opportunities to learn (Fan & Chen, 2001; Washington, 2011).

Several theoretical models have been developed to help us determine what PI is and how it works in education. Some are better known and more useful than others. For instance, Epstein's (2001) and Tekin's (2011) models are two of the most well-known models in the field. Researchers who want to study the psychological factors of PI in the teaching of children with different interests can learn a lot from Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's framework. This framework asserts that the three main things that influence parents' choice to get involved are their motivational beliefs, invitations from schools and teachers, and how they view their own lives. Epstein (2001) proposed a way to examine how parents are involved in their kids' schooling, and this study uses that framework. It is the most widely used, tested, and accepted framework. Six family involvement responsibilities are important for all children in school, no matter how well they are doing. These obligations are: (1) parenting, which includes all the things parents do to help their children learn and meet their basic needs for a good education; (2) communicating, which means that parents and teachers should talk to each other often; (3) volunteering, which means that parents should help teachers and go on field trips for free; and (4) learning at home, which means that parents should help their children learn at home. Parents' home-based participation is what Ngwenya (2010), Kavanagh (2013), and Hornby (2011) mean when they talk about the things parents do at home that have to do with their children's education and affect how well they do in school.

Home involvement includes things like helping kids with their homework, encouraging them, talking with them about what they are doing at school, reading stories to them at home, making sure they have the right learning tools and care at home, and helping them with their schoolwork. On the other hand, school-based involvement requires parents to take part in activities at school, like volunteering, going on field trips, going

to conferences and workshops, talking with teachers and school principals about how their children are doing in school, and taking part in Parents-Teachers Association decision-making (Ibrahim, 2012). One of the researchers, an experienced school owner of inclusive education center noted that parents do not seem to work well together to teach students with special needs, and they frequently gave the excuse that the school didn't include them, but the truth is that the parents keep their distance and don't attend the meetings, while schools would say that parents kept their distance from the school and didn't show up to meetings they were asked to.

Thus far, empirical studies have been conducted worldwide on PI and the psycho-educational success of children with special educational needs (SENs). For example, Balli (2016) and Monika (2017) studied PI in inclusive schools in regular schools in Albania. ElShourbagi (2017) studied PI in inclusive schools in Omani regular schools in Botswana. The studies revealed that PI is essential for the psycho-educational growth of children with special educational needs, such as children with disabilities, in inclusive school settings. However, the researchers could not show what the specific PI activities were because the model they used (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model) focused more on the psychological factors that helped parents make decisions than on the practice of PI. Also, the experts did not pay much attention to the ways in which parents helped their children with disabilities learn. Using Epstein's model as a guide, this study was conducted to determine how involved parents are in the schooling of children with special needs.

Scholars around the world describe PI in many different ways that do not always match up (Fan & Chen, 2001). This means that PI is hard to understand because it has a lot of confusing terms and a wide range of activities, goals, and results. Nevertheless, regarding the schooling of kids with special needs, there are two main types of PI or ways to help kids learn: getting involved at home and at school. Balli (2016) asserted that parents can help their kids do well in school by doing things like joining the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), helping at school events, or getting involved in extracurricular activities. Parental involvement has also been called a "multidimensional construct" (Patrikakou et al., 2005) because it covers the things parents do at home and at school to help their children perform better in school.

Biramo, Silase and Koyra (2017), Tadele (2006) and Demiesie (2006) conducted quantitative research on PI and children's academic achievement in different parts of Ethiopian primary schools and found that PI and children's academic achievement were linked in a positive way. However, many of these studies did not focus on physically challenged children and did not also address most of the problems listed in Epstein's (2001) six-dimensional framework on how parents can help their children with challenges to learn. Hence, there is an urgent need for this study. Based on Epstein's types of parental participation in education, this study was conducted to determine how involved parents are in the education of physically challenged children in Rivers State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the education of children with different degrees of physical challenges, the involvement of their parents could be seen as important as the food we eat. Parents need to be well involved in order to help get children engaged in learning activities, especially at home, which, on the other hand, gives children a sense of belonging as human beings. Involvement of parents in education could be in the form of participating in activities at school for their children like PTA meetings and open days. According to Ibrahim (2012), school-based involvement requires parents to take part in activities at school, like volunteering, going on field trips, going to conferences and workshops, talking with teachers and school principals about how their children are doing in school, and taking part in Parent-Student-Teachers Association (PSTA) decision-making.

International researchers (such as Jeynes, 2016 and Ma, Shen, Krenn & Yuan, 2016) have revealed favourable impact parental participation on academic achievement of children with physical challenges across various educational levels. However, in the Rivers State of Nigeria, it seems that not many studies

have documented the activities of parents, as well as how much they are involved in the education of their children with physical challenges, hence the need for this study. Therefore, this study examined parental involvement in the education of physically challenged children in selected secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine how much parents are involved in the education of physically challenged children in secondary schools in Rivers State. The specific objectives of this study are as follows::

- a. Determine how much parents take care of their children who face physical challenges and achieve good grades in school in terms of parenting tasks.
- b. Access how much parents communicate with teachers and others in school in order to help their children with physical challenges perform well in school.
- c. Examine the way parents help physically challenged children perform well in school by learning at home.
- d. Examine how much parents volunteer to help their physically challenged children learn well in school.
- e. Determine how parents are involved in making decisions that help their children. With physical challenges to do well in school.
- f. Assess whether parents work closely with people in the community to help their children with physical challenges perform well in school.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do parents take care of their children with physical challenge to do well in school in terms of parenting tasks?
2. How do parents communicate with teachers and others in order to help their children with physical challenges to perform well in school?
3. How do parents help physically challenged children perform well in school by learning at home?
4. How do parents volunteer to help physically challenged children learn well in school?
5. How much are parents involved in making decisions that can help their children with physical challenges perform well in school?
6. How much do parent's work closely with people in the community to help their children with physical challenges perform well in school?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Children with Physical Challenges**

Every child has the right to live in an inclusive world and to enjoy inclusive education. Fifteen Percent of the world's population- at least one billion people have some form of disability, whether present at birth or acquired later in life. Nearly 240 million of them are children (Vanderpuye, 2013). Children and adolescents with physical challenges represent a highly diverse group with wide-ranging life experiences. They live in every community and are born with or acquire distinct impairments that, in relation to their surroundings, lead to functional difficulties-like seeing, walking, communicating, caring for oneself, or making friends. However, the extent to which these physically challenged children are able to function, participate in society, and lead fulfilling lives depends on the way they are being accommodated and included, first by their family i.e. parents and siblings and the community at large.

#### **Discrimination against children with disabilities**

Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized people in every society. A range of barriers limit their ability to function in daily life, access social services (such as education and health care), and engage in their communities. These include:

- a. Physical barriers: These include buildings, transportation, toilets, and playgrounds that could not be accessed by wheelchair users.
- b. Communication and information barriers: These are textbooks unavailable in Braille or public health announcements delivered without sign language interpretation.
- c. Attitudinal barriers: These include stereotyping, low expectations, pity, condescension, harassment and bullying, which are rooted in stigma and discrimination that reflect negative perceptions of disability associated with albinism bias, prejudice and practice that discriminate against physically challenged people.

#### The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

This principle was adopted in 2006 in response to the severe human rights violations experienced by people with disabilities worldwide. The CRPD requires governments to take concrete measures to promote their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Despite international commitments, children with disabilities remain largely invisible in research and programmes meant to build more equitable and inclusive societies. This invisibility is both a cause and a consequence of exclusion (UNICEF, 2023). Children with disabilities often work hard to adapt themselves to an inaccessible world that excludes them. However, they are not problems that need to be fixed or changed. Disability is part of the diversity of human experience: functional limitations manifest in the life cycle of every. The extent to which children with disabilities can lead happy lives depends on our own willingness to confront barriers to change (UNICEF, 2023).

#### Stigma and discrimination

Stigma and discrimination are serious challenges facing children with physical and mental disabilities in communities that call for concern. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2001) noted stigma and discrimination as “the single most important barrier to overcome in the community”. According to Scior and Werner (2015), many physically challenged children still feel socially excluded and thus face stigma and discrimination in their everyday lives. Scior and Werner further emphasized that misconceptions, negative attitudes, and discrimination affect the daily lives of people with learning disabilities, the opportunities available to them, and whether they are active participants within their local communities and society at large or confined to the margins. This situation, as observed by Ali, Hossiotis, Strydom and King (2015) is associated with higher levels of psychological distress and lower quality of life.

#### Inclusive Education

Children with disabilities face persistent barriers to education stemming from discrimination, stigma, and the routine failure of decision-makers to address exclusion in schools. As a result, they are among the most likely groups to be out of school and are often placed in segregated schooling. Many children miss opportunities to learn and develop skills for employment, independent living, and full participation in their communities. UNICEF (2023) supports inclusive education as the most effective way for all children to go to school, learn, and develop the skills they need to thrive.

Epstein created a framework for parents to be involved in their children's schooling.

It has six important parts. Here is a list of these measurements.

#### Parenting

This means that parents are responsible for making sure their children have the basic things they need, like a place to live, health care, food, and clothes. They are also responsible for making sure their children can learn at home, by doing things like buying the books and supplies they need and talking to them about good behaviour. Concerning parenting, Mwaikimu (2012) asserted that parents have basic responsibilities for their children's education. These include making sure their children go to school, giving them what they need, like school supplies and books, and making sure the home is a good place for learning and growth. Epstein (2001) observed parenting as a basic task, parents of children with different abilities have to do, such as



buying clothes, making sure the home is a good place for learning, buying books and school supplies, and expecting their children to do well in school.

Mwaikimu (2012) observed that parents who participated in the study helps to take their kids go to school and bring their school supplies and books.

In the same way, Cetin and Taskin (2016) found that most parents were involved in raising their children, especially by giving their children with disabilities the tools they needed to learn. Also, Ibrahim (2012) revealed that parents helped their kids do well in school by making sure they ate well and wore the right clothes, and also made sure their kids had the tools they needed to learn. These findings are consistent with the current study. This means that parents of children with different kinds of disabilities are involved in raising their children, especially by giving them basic supplies like clothes and school supplies. Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu's (2010) study also showed that parents have high hopes for their children's schooling. In the same vein, Erlendsdóttir (2010) found that parents did not keep an eye on things like watching TV and the time their children went to bed. This suggests that parents are more involved in certain activities than others.

### **Communicating**

The second aspect of parental participation in the education of a child with a disability is communicating with the school. This approach basically examines how parents and schools talk about their children's education plans and how well their children are doing (Epstein, 2009). It involves how parents and schools work together to plan their children's schooling and how well their children perform in school. Communication can be direct or written and can be performed in different ways to help kids do well in school (Epstein, 2009). Monadjem (2003) found that parents met with school teachers often and went to conferences at least once a month to talk about how their kids were doing in school. Erlendsdóttir (2010) also revealed that parents of children regularly contacted schools to check on how well their children were doing in school.

Mwaikimu (2012) was one of the researchers who investigated how parents in Nigeria talk to schools about how their children are doing in school. The researcher found that parents did not know or understand how to meet or contact teachers to talk about their children's schooling. Parents of children with disabilities were also asked how they used to talk to teachers even though this did not happen very often. In the same way, Girma (2017), whose PhD thesis was about how parents were involved in running primary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State, concluded that parents and teachers do not talk to each other well. A study by Jigyel, Miller, Mavropoulou, and Berman (2018) also showed that parents could not talk to staff and other students directly because the parents did not think it was important to talk to other people at the school. Most studies have shown that parents did not talk to teachers and leaders more often.

### **Learning at Home**

Children with special educational needs are most likely to do well in school if their parents and schools work together to help them learn at home (Epstein, 2001). Epstein further noted that learning at home happens when parents help their kids with their homework, set goals, and do other things that are part of the program. Monadjem (2003) found that parents did not do much to help their kids learn at home. Mauka's (2015) research found that a lot of parents did not check their kids' exercise books and schoolwork because they did not know English, which is the language taught in secondary schools. Erlendsdóttir's (2010) revealed that parents were involved in their children's education by watching and helping them while they did homework at home. In connection with this, in the U.S. The Department of Education (2003) stated that students have had homework since the beginning of formal schooling in the U.S. However, both teachers and parents have sometimes agreed with the practice and sometimes said it was wrong. The difference could be because parents have different ideas about what their job is in educating their children at home. In our culture, it is assumed that parents are not responsible for their children's education.

### Volunteering

Volunteering to help children with disabilities learn is the fourth type of participation that parents need to take part in. Its goal is to find and organize help from parents to help teachers in the classroom and on field trips, in the library and cafeteria, to watch over students' sports and cultural events, and to help raise money (Monadjem, 2003). In this way, Erlendsdóttir's (2010) study showed that parents could not participate in school fundraising events. Parents did not help in the classroom or with sports and cultural events because there were no ways for them to do so (Mwaikimu, 2012). Epstein (2001) found that the participation of PIs in parenting events was always low, with only 4% of PI taking part in activities. Flemmings (2013) revealed in his study that parents did not volunteer much because teachers saw them as supervisors who watched how they taught, how they graded, and how they ran the classroom. In the same way, parents did not help in the classroom or at sports and cultural events because there were no ways for them to do so (Mwaikimu, 2012). Epstein (2001) found that the amount of parental participation in volunteer activities was always low, with only 4% of parents actively involved in volunteering.

### Decision making

Decision-making is another way parents can help their children with physical challenges learn effectively. In this kind of participation, parents tend to help their children make decisions at school and also help to train the children to become leaders and representatives. Epstein and Sheldon (2005) stated that decision-making is the fifth domain of PI. This refers to making choices, being in charge and encouraging PSTA and other interested partners at the school, woreda/district and regional levels to take on participatory roles. Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu (2010) stated that the centralized structure of the school system meant that parents did not have a chance to take part in making decisions. Cetin and Taskin (2016) found that parents were involved in planning events for school trips and basic school needs. Cetin and Taskin (2016), who wrote about how most decisions were made by PSTA members and not by the parents themselves, demonstrates how bad the problem is, noting that parents are not able to directly take part in making decisions at the school. Mwaikimu (2012), on the other hand, noted that parents are involved in school decisions such as field trips, disciplinary measures, and other school issues.

### Collaboration with the community

This means that the school works with agencies, businesses, religious groups, and other groups that share responsibility for the education and future progress of children. Epstein and Sheldon (2005) stated that this kind of participation means finding and using community resources and services to improve school programs, family life, and children's learning and development. Epstein (2001) asserted that parents tell their kids about all the activities that are going on at school and only get active in activities that are going to happen during the summer break. According to Mwaikimu (2012), elementary schools in Kenya have an activity committee composed of teachers. This committee decided how much money parents could ask for so that sports, drama, cultural activities, and concerts could occur throughout the year. However, the study mentioned above was mostly about PIs in the education of average students. Erlendsdóttir (2010) also found that parents did not participate in any events that brought the community together. In line with the results of the current study, El Shourbagi (2017) confirmed that parents of children with special educational needs did not work with religious institutions, local associations, or business agencies like hotels to do things.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. According to Yin (2003), a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer the "how" questions in which the current study attempted to address, (b) the study covers contextual conditions in which the researchers do not have a true picture, which refers to parental involvement in their children's education in the case of the present study. This research design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to interact

with the participants in their settings; hence, the case involved the involvement of parents in their children's education.

### **Description of the Study Area**

This study was conducted in Rivers State. The Rivers State of Nigeria is made up of 23 local government areas, with Port Harcourt as its Capital City. The people of Rivers State are known as "Riverians". The topography ranges from flat plains with a network of rivers to tributaries. In terms of inclusive education, the State has about 110 inclusive secondary schools scattered throughout the state that are officially recognized as inclusive (Source: Department of Statistics, Rivers State Ministry of Education, 2022). However, from these schools, two schools: Shalom International School and Christie Toby Inclusive tional Centre in arcourt which have years of experience running inclusive education in the State. The researcher focused on these two schools because of her interest on physically challenged, i.e. deaf and children who are blind.

### **Population of the Study**

The study population comprised all 44 parents and teachers in two inclusive Junior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt. The two schools are Shalom International School and Christie Toby Inclusive Educational Center in Port Harcourt. Shalom International School has 15 parents and 10 teachers of children with challenges, while Christie Toby Inclusive Educational Center has 11 parents and 8 teachers of children with challenges (Source: Office of vice Principals Administration of both schools, 2023). Hence, the population consisted of 26 parents and 18 teachers at Shalom International School and Christie Toby Inclusive Educational Center in Port Harcourt.

### **Sample and sampling techniques**

The sample size of the study was 10 respondents (6 parents and 4 teachers) selected from two junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt (Shalom International School and Christie Toby Inclusive Educational Center) which operate inclusive education. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the two schools—Shalom International School (S1) and Christie Toby Inclusive Educational Center (S2) for the study for two reasons. Shalom International School (S1) has children with hearing loss, and Christie Toby Inclusive Educational Center (S2) has children who are blind. Secondly, the two schools had more experience than the other schools that offered inclusive education. In addition, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 3 parents of children with disabilities (physical challenges) from each chosen school (a total of 6 parents). These parents were carefully chosen with the help of the old teachers working in each school, taking into account how well they had communicated with the schools in the past about their children. Two (2) teachers were also randomly chosen: two (2) from each of the selected schools who were teaching in inclusive classrooms from JSSS 1 to JSSS 3 and had at least two years of experience in the job. Parent 1 comes from S1 as a woman, Parent 2 comes from S1 as a man, and Parent 3 comes from S1 as a woman. Parents 4 and 5 are both men from S2, while parent 6 is a woman from S2. Teacher 2 and 4 are women from S2, and Teacher 1 and 3 are men from S1. In order to get further information for the study, 6 parents of children with physical challenges (3 men and 3 women) and 4 teachers were asked questions.

### **Sources of Data**

In this study, information was gathered from first-hand sources. Parents and teachers of children with disabilities were the main sources of information. The main types of secondary data sources were government publications, technical documents, and annual reports from companies. This wasn't considered in the current study.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data for the research questions. The instrument was prepared based on a thorough review of the literature, including studies by Mwaikimu (2012) and ElShourbagi (2017) that dealt with related issues. Some of the most important things that were talked about



in the interview were how parents talk to teachers and leaders, how parents help their children learn at home, and how parents work with the community to help educate children with special educational needs. During the talks, people also talked about volunteering and how decisions are made. The plan for interviews with teachers and parents of physically challenged children was set up with the help of special needs education teachers at each school. A one-on-one conversation that took approximately 20 to 30 minutes was recorded, and the talk was conducted in English Language.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

For data analysis, survey information had to be transcribed, coded, and put into groups, and then the information had to be put into the six main themes. The main topics were parenting, learning at home, making decisions, communication, volunteering, and working with the community to make everyone feel welcome. Therefore, this study used a theme analysis method

### **Ethical Consideration**

First, the researcher solicited and obtained consent from both the selected schools and the respondents (parents and teachers) before engaging them in data collection. In carrying out this study, the respondents were fully informed of the need for the study as well as the intention for using them as respondents or participants. The researcher ensured that the rights of the participants were highly respected as they were at liberty to withdraw from being part of the participant along the process. The researcher also assured the respondents of their safety, privacy, and confidentiality of all the information they received.

### **Results and Discussion**

In this part of the study, the results of the qualitative methods used to collect data are presented. The goal of the study was to determine how involved parents were in the education of physically challenged children in secondary schools in Rivers State. Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement practices in education were used to describe most of the things schools do that engage parents. The six typologies that formed the basis for the research questions were parenting, learning at home, making decisions, communication, volunteering, and working with the community.

#### **Parenting**

**Research Question 1:** How do parents care for their children who face physical challenges and achieve good results in school in terms of parenting tasks?

According to a review of the literature, parenting is a basic task that parents of children with different abilities have to do, such as buying clothes, making sure the home is a good place for learning, buying books and school supplies, and expecting their children to do well in school (Epstein, 2001). In relation to this, parents of children with challenges were asked how they took care of their children with physical challenges so that they could do well in school in terms of parenting tasks. The results of the interviews revealed that parents of children with special educational needs were involved in their children's learning in inclusive schools in different ways. In response, parent 1 said, "As much as I can, I give my disabled child the basic learning tools like pens, paper, pencils, an exercise book, a sign language dictionary, and a uniform—even more than I did for my non-disabled child who went to the same school." In addition to what I give, the school helps my child learn by giving him or her learning tools.

Parent 2 also stated that so far, my child has got everything he or she needs to learn, like a pen, paper, pencil, practice book, uniform, and other things. But these things came from people who gave them. I can promise that if the donor could not afford it, I would do my best to give all the learning tools and clothes that were needed. Parent 4 also said, "No matter what happened, at least I could give those clothes and learning materials regularly." Lastly, parent 5 said, "I give my child the basic tools he needs to learn by paying his school fees when asked and buying everything he needs for school".

Teacher 1 explained: "Parents of children with challenges do their best to ensure their kids had what they need to learn." But I've seen that some parents didn't give their children books and other learning tools on

time because they didn't have enough money. Therefore, based on what parents and teachers said, it was clear that parents of children with challenges helped their kids do better in school by being more involved in parenting tasks. For example, parents give their children the clothes and school supplies they need to learn. The result aligns with Mwaikimu's (2012) findings. He said that the parents who participated in the study said that their kids go to school and that they purchased school supplies and books. In the same way, Cetin and Taskin (2016) found that most parents were involved in raising their children, especially by giving their children with challenges the tools they needed to learn. Ibrahim (2012) also stated that parents helped their kids do well in school by making sure their children ate well and wore the right clothes. They also ensured their kids had the tools they needed to learn, which is consistent with the current study. This means that parents of children with different kinds of challenges are involved in raising their children, especially by giving them basic supplies like clothes and school supplies. Parents were also asked what part they played in creating a good learning environment, such as creating a quiet place to study, what their children expected to do in school, and how well their children did in school. Therefore, parents did their best to make a quiet place for their kids to study, and they hoped and expected good things to happen both in school and in the rest of their lives.

Parent 4 explained that I tried to let my child read in the quietest place possible." Aside from that, I really wanted and expected her to do well in school and in the future because she wants to be a lawyer. To your surprise, I wanted a better life for this child than I do for my second child, who does not have a condition. But I didn't track of things like how much the child watched TV or when he or she went to bed. In addition, parent 2 stated that: "I really wanted my child to do well in school, so I made sure he or she could study and do chores in a safe place." I also prayed to God that my child would do well in life.

Teacher 2 reported that: when I talk to the parents of children with challenges at my school, I know that they want their children to do well in school and have a bright future. Since I worked with parents, they often talked to teachers about how their children were doing in school, this was the position of teacher 3. Based on what the respondents said about themselves, it can be said that parents of children with challenges have high hopes for their kids and want them to do well in school and in their future careers. Erdogan and Demirkasimoglu (2010) also showed that parents have high hopes for their child's schooling. These two results are similar in how they explain what parents expect from their children's learning, and it is possible to say that parents have good hopes for their children's learning. The parents said that they wanted and expected their children to do well in school and grow up to be good people. However, the results of this study showed that parents of children with challenges did not do a better job of keeping an eye on things like watching and listening to TV and the time their children went to bed. This agrees with the results of a study by Erlendsdóttir (2010), who also found that parents did not keep an eye on things like watching TV and the time their children went to bed. Therefore, the studies suggest that parents are more involved in certain activities than others. For example, they are more likely to have high hopes for their children's success, but they are less likely to watch them when they watch TV or go to bed.

### **Communicating**

**Research Question 2:** How do parents communicate with teachers and others in school in order to help their children overcome physical challenges and achieve good grades in school?

The second aspect of parental participation in the education of children experiencing challenges is communicating with the school. This section mainly examines how parents and schools work together to make plans for their children's schooling and how well their children perform in school. Communication can be direct or written and can be performed, in ways to help kids do well in school (Epstein, 2009). The parents were asked how they communicate with the teachers and others in school in order to help their children with different physical challenges perform well in school. In response, the people who were

interviewed stated that most parents of children with challenges do not always meet with school teachers and principals to talk about their children's education.

In connection with this, parent 4 reported that "I didn't even know who my child's teachers were or what their schedules were like." But I went to trainings and conferences put on by the school at least once a term to talk about the physical challenges and how our kids were doing in school. Also, parent 6 said, "Parents only talk to teachers and other people at school during the annual school day." During the meeting, parents talked with school leaders and PSTA members about how children are taught and what parents can do to help their children learn.

Teacher 1 explained that as a teacher here for more than five years, I have seen that only a few parents regularly meet with teachers and school leaders to talk about their kids. When we sent letters inviting parents to a meeting, only a small number of them showed up. When I asked kids why their parents didn't come to school, they said that their parents were busy. However, I have seen parents of children with physical challenges attending workshops when the organizers gave them a daily stipend. In the same way, teacher 2 said, "I think there won't be many parents of kids with challenges at meetings and conferences if there isn't a daily allowance." We teachers asked parents to talk with us about how their kids were doing in school, but most of them did not show up.

So, this study showed that parents of physically challenged children did not talk to teachers and principals of their children's schools very often about problems related to their education. The people who took part explained why they did not meet or talk to their children's teachers. They thought that it was up to the few parents who were members of the PTA to talk to the teachers and directors of the school about problems that were happening with the way kids were being taught. Because of this, a lot of parents stop by the school now and then, even though they had no idea that they needed to talk to classroom teachers about their kids' schooling. However, parents did attend the talks that were held by the schools. In a similar way, Monadjem (2003) found that parents met with school teachers often and went to conferences at least once a month to talk about how their kids were doing in school. Erlendsdóttir (2010) also said that parents of children regularly contacted schools to check on how well their children were doing in school, which was the opposite of what this study found. Mwaikimu (2012) was one of the researchers who investigated how parents in Nigeria talk to schools about how their children are doing in school. The researcher found that parents did not know or understand how to meet or contact teachers to talk about their children's schooling. Most parents also did not visit their children's schools very often to talk to their children's teachers, which is in line with what the present study found. Parents of children with disabilities were also asked how they used to talk to teachers even though this did not happen very often. They said that they wrote letters and talked on the phone.

In relation to forms of communication, parent 2 responded that: Even though it doesn't happen often, one of my child's good teachers calls me and asks about my child's situation, like how my deaf child talks to family members. Since this teacher is with me, I like him. This can be done by calling. Also, parent 6 said, "When the school puts on sign language and life skills classes, the teachers write official letters to tell me about it." Also, the teachers talk to me over the phone to set up meetings". Also, a part of communicating with parents about their children's schooling was to ensure that they were aware of school rules and policies. Parents of children with disabilities did not know about school rules and policies, such as punishment measures and classroom rules. As they said, when there was a problem with discipline, teachers would call the parents even though the parents were not involved.

This result agrees with Monadjem's (2003) who found in his study that parents know about school policies but do not talk to schools very well. However, that does not match what Erlendsdóttir (2010) said, that is, all parents carefully read and knew the school's rules and policies. From these, the researchers could deduce that there was no good communication between the school and the parents of children with disabilities about

their schooling. In the same way, Girma (2017), who wrote his PhD paper about how parents were involved in running primary schools in Obio Akpor, Rivers State, reached the same conclusions. The study revealed that parents and teachers do not talk to each other well. A study by Jigyel, Miller, Mavropoulou, and Berman (2018) also showed that parents could not talk directly to staff and other students in the school. These parents did not think it was important to talk to other people at school most studies have shown that parents did not talk to teachers and leaders more often.

### **Learning at Home**

**Research Question 3:** How do parents help physically challenged children perform well in school by learning at home?

Concerning parents' involvement in learning at home, the people who were interviewed said that helping their physically challenged children learn at home by doing things like checking their homework every day, asking questions, keeping an eye on what they were doing, and giving them feedback was not easy to do couple with other tasks at home. However, some parents of children with challenges watch or check on what their children do at home daily. According to (Epstein, 2001), children with special educational needs are most likely to do well in school if their parents and schools work together to help them learn at home.

In this connection, parent 1 reflected that I think that teachers are the only ones that are responsible for helping children learn." I wasn't doing my best to help my child to learn in different ways at home, to be honest. I wasn't in the habit of reading to my child. The reason was that I didn't know much about what they were learning, which made it hard for me to help them. Like parent 1, teacher 2 and 4 said, "Most of the parents I met with couldn't understand the subject well enough to help their children learn at home." Also, the parents didn't think it was their job to take care of their kids at home." Parent 4 said, "As a parent, I need to keep an eye on and help my child with his or her homework and assignments, but I couldn't do much to help because I didn't know how to write or read Braille".

Teacher 1 and 3 agreed with parent 4, who stated that many parents of hard-of-hearing children could not interact with their children using sign language, so they could not help their children with their homework and assignments. However, parent 3 explained that since ourmoms are busy all day with things like cooking and cleaning, it was hard for me to get help with my homework and assignments. But I did try to ask my child if he had done his schoolwork and assignments or not. I cannot help my child because I don't have enough time.

On the contrary, parent 6 explained that: "I tried to keep an eye on my child and see how he or she did with homework and other tasks given by the teacher." When my child took the tests, I checked to see how he did, and if he got a low score, I talked to his teacher about it. Consequently, experts learned that most parents of children with disabilities did not help their kids learn at home because they did not have enough time, had the wrong ideas, or did not know how to do things like sign language or Braille. This result aligns with Monadjem's (2003) findings that parents did not do much to help their kids learn at home. Mauka's (2015) research, which is similar to this one found that a lot of parents did not check their kids' exercise books and schoolwork because they did not know English, which is the language taught in secondary schools.

Some parents said they didn't have time to help their kids with homework at home. This means that parents of children with different needs could not help their kids learn at home as much as they would have liked. Erlendsdóttir (2010) revealed that contrary to the current study, parents were involved in their children's education by watching and helping them while they did homework at home. The difference could be because parents have different ideas about what their job is in educating their children at home. In our culture, it is assumed that parents are not responsible for their children's education.

### **Volunteering**

**Research Question 4:** How do parents volunteer to help physically challenged children to learn well in school?

Volunteering to help children with disabilities learn is the fourth type of participation that parents need to take part in. When the participants were asked how parents volunteer to help their physically challenged children learn well in school, it was observed that many of the parents explained that parents of children with challenges did not do much to help their children's schooling in inclusive schools by volunteering. Related to this, Parent 1 stated his opinion as follows: "I didn't think that my help would help the teacher or my child learn, since I thought that teachers were the only ones qualified to teach my kid. I think it's not up to the parents of children with challenges to help the teacher in the classroom, and parents still don't know anything about this.

Besides, Parent 2 explained that: "My child has been going to this school for more than four years, but I have never helped out in the classroom, gone on a school trip, or helped with a sports event." The teachers have never asked me to help with my child's schooling. Parent 4 also said, "I had no reason to volunteer to help elementary schools in the classroom because I thought teachers who thought my child did not let parents help in classroom."

Furthermore, teacher 1 reflected that: Most parents of children with challenges did not want to get involved in their children's education on their own because they thought it was the teachers' and schools' job to help their kids learn and they did not know what they could do to help their kids learn. When teachers invited parents of children with challenges to take part in school events on their own time, most parents saw this as a problem and thought it was up to the government and non-government organizations to fix it. Thus, the participants stated that parents of children with challenges did not do volunteer work at school, like helping teachers, because it was not a practice for parents to do things like that.

Therefore, we can say that parents' voluntary participation in the education of their children with challenges was bad and not well understood. This finding was confirmed by Flemmings (2013), who asserted that parents did not volunteer much because teachers saw them as supervisors who watched how they taught, graded, and managed the classroom. In the same way, parents did not help in the classroom or at sports and cultural events because there were no ways for them to do so (Mwaikimu, 2012). Epstein (2001) found that the amount of parental participation in volunteer activities was always low, with only 4% of parents actively involved in volunteering.

## **Decision Making**

**Research Question 5:** How much are parents involved in making decisions that can help their children with physical challenges perform well in school?

The fifth way parents can help their children with physical challenges learn is by making decisions about the most important parts of learning. In this kind of participation, parents are expected to help in making decisions at school and in the training of the children to be good leaders and representatives through the parent-teacher association (PTA) and other similar groups. However, when the parents were asked to explain how much they are involved in making decisions that can help their children with physical challenges do well in school, their responses revealed that many of the parents were not really involved in making decisions regarding their children's education since they did not attend the PTA meetings and other events of the school. For instance, Parent 2 explained the following about how parents are involved in making decisions. First, I played no role in making decisions. Also, I wasn't on the PTA or any other school-related committees that help children with challenges to learn in school. Also, I don't think it's my job to take part in making decisions. Furthermore, he stated that the main goal of a parent-teacher association is to let parents know the choices made about their children's education.

Here's what parent 6 had to talk about this: Most of the time, I didn't understand how the PTA members took part in making decisions. At the end of the school year, I meet the members once a year. Even until the end of the school year, I did not know what the members of the group did and where decisions were made. I did not belong to any committee. In addition, parent 5 explained that At the end of each school year, there is a



meeting. I went to that meeting to talk about different school-related problems. This annual meeting gives us a chance to talk about our ideas. Parents meet to accept the school's plan and talk about how to put it into action for the next school year, as well as other things like giving money to the school.

A teacher stated that most parents, including parents of children with challenges, took part in planning meetings once a year. This was how parents were involved in making decisions. Most parents, including the parents of children with challenges, are involved in how plans are carried out and how the school is evaluated twice a year. During this time, parents of children with challenges are involved in making decisions about things like the school's strengths, chances, and weaknesses in the way it teaches and learns. Therefore, parents of kids with challenges were usually less involved or not involved at all in making decisions that would help their kids' schooling.

Thus, the researcher deduced that parents of children with challenges do not have enough power to make decisions on their own. This could be because of policy gaps that gave school parents less power to make decisions in their schools. However, they stated that PTA members conducted the decision-making process even though they sometimes made decisions without asking their parents.. This is because all none participants in this study were not PTA members. Cetin and Taskin (2016), who wrote about how most decisions were made by PTA members and not by the parents themselves, concurred with this result. In fact, the above results demonstrated how bad the problem is and suggest how it should be fixed in the future. This means that parents were not able to directly participate in making decisions at the school. This means that more needs to be done to get them involved in making decisions through different means. However, contrary to the findings of this study, Mwaikimu (2012) asserted that parents are involved in school decisions like field trips, disciplinary measures, and other school issues.

### **Collaborating with Communities**

**Research Question 6:** How much do parent's work closely with people in the community to help their children with physical challenges perform well in school?

Lastly, parents were asked how much they worked closely with people in the community to help their children with physical challenges perform well in school. In response, the majority of the parents said that they and the teachers had not taken part in a community forum to talk about problems or issues related to the schooling of children with challenges. In addition, in the study area, parents of children with challenges did not take part in community events, especially those related to sports clubs.

In connection with this, teacher 2 stated that: Parents of children with challenges did not get involve with neighbourhood groups, churches, non-governmental organizations, orhotels to help their children with challenges do well in school. To the best of my knowledge, I have never seen a parent of a child with a challenge take part in these events in collaboration with the community. In addition, parent 5 elaborated on the following about collaborating with the community:

So far, I have not become involved in different parts of my community to help my child's schooling because I and other people in my neighbourhood thought that children with disabilities cannot learn like other kids. Also, I didn't have the chance to do things like play sports or go on field trips with people from the neighbourhood. Erlendsdóttir (2010) also found that parents did not participate in any events that brought the community together.

In line with the results of this study, El Shourbagi (2017) confirmed that parents of children with special educational needs did not work with religious institutions, local associations, or business agencies like hotels to do things. The researcher deduced that, in general, parents of physically challenged children do not collaborate with their communities in helping their children learn in school. This study is based on several real-world examples and experiences shared. This could be because of different things, such as school, attitude, information, and skills.

### **Implication for Counselling**

Parental involvement in the education of physically challenged children has far reaching implication for counsellors this is because counsellors are custodians of emotional adjustment. These children require emotional support from their parents, advocacy, inclusiveness, empowerment, and what you have. By recognizing parental involvement counsellors should collaborate with parents to develop personalized plans, provide support and resources for parents and their children that will help them excel, address potential barriers to parental involvement to foster growth, and foster supportive environment that encourages parental involvement in school. Counsellors should promote a collaborative approach among parents, educators, and health care professionals for the growth and development of children with various challenges..

### **Conclusion**

This study found that parents of physically challenged children were more involved in events for their children at some schools. They give them the tools they need to learn, such as pens, pencils, books on sign language and Braille, papers, practice books, and uniforms. Parents of children with challenges have also tried to ensure that their children have a quiet place to study at home. They have high hopes for their children's success in school and in life. The study also showed that parents of children with challenges did not often meet teachers to talk about how their children were doing in school. They only saw their teachers on the school day.

In terms of how involved parents were in their children's learning at home, most parents of children with challenges in the study area did not help their children with disabilities with their homework every day, keep an eye on their activities, or give feedback often. However, some parents of disabled children in the study area were keeping an eye on and helping their kids with their homework and assignments at home. Although, parents did not have much say in school decisions, they did have a say through Parent-Teachers Association (PTA).

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations were made::

1. Parents of physically challenged children should improve their involvement in the education of their children in order to give them a sense of belonging and to the feeling that their education is important.
2. Parents of children with challenges should always meet school teachers and principals to discuss their children's education for improvement.
3. Parents of children with challenges should constantly check their children's Homework and keep an eye on what they do to enable them to learn at home.
4. Parents of physically challenged children should always volunteer or work together with other community members in organizing events like conference that would help their children learn and do well in school.
5. Parents of children with such challenge as deaf should endeavour to register and learn how sign language and Braille can be used to facilitate their children's learning at home.

Both parents and teachers are encouraged to always participate in community forums to enable them to present issues related to the schooling of children with challenges to the larger community.

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