



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH
(Scholarly Peer Review Publishing System)

AN EVALUATION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ECD PROGRAMME: A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KUWADZANA SUBURB IN ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to evaluate the nature of parental involvement in the ECD programme. The evaluation focused on why, how and what challenges parents meet in being involved in the ECD programme. The descriptive research design was used because the researchers could describe in detail what was found in the field. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 5 schools in Kuwadzana high density suburb in Harare district and involved 10 parents who were randomly selected from these schools (2 parents from each school). A questionnaire, face to face interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data which was analysed using tables and percentages. The study found out that parents are rarely involved in ECD programmes. The major reason being that teachers do not know how to involve the parents and some parents have no time to visit schools since most of them are working although they know the meaning and importance of their being involved in the education of their children. The study recommended that the education personnel need to be educated on how and why they should involve parents in the early years of their children's education to ensure that the children receive appropriate care and that their development is enhanced.

Keyword: Early Childhood Development, Parent Involvement, Partnership and Collaboration



1. INTRODUCTION

Generally, it has been observed that education for young children is a joint effort between parents and teachers. According to Peters, et al. (2008) research has shown that parental involvement in children's education has a positive impact on children's performance and development. In this regard this paper seeks to evaluate parental involvement in Early Childhood Development programmes in kuwadzana primary schools in Zimbabwe. The historical perspective is discussed in the next section.

2. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dowling, (1988) asserts that the notion of parents being informed about and involved in their child's education is not new. Since the Plowden Report cited in Dowling, (1988) observed that parent interest in their children's education was the most important factor in the education of young children. In 1975 the Bullock Report, concerned with reading and language development, recommended close parental involvement to facilitate progress during the early years. The Court Report in 1976 stated that services for young children must not be allowed to become over-professionalised. Instead they should seek to work through the family, encouraging its strengths and helping its shortcomings. The Warnock Committee added its voice in 1978 that "in the earliest years, parents rather than teachers should be regarded wherever possible as the main educators of their children." The United Nations Declaration On the Rights of the Child 1959 states that the best interest of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his/her education and guidance. In this regard, the care and education of children are the natural right of parents and the duty is primarily theirs. All these commissions point to the fact that parental involvement in education of young children is crucial in the early years.

According to Eldridge (2001), working with parents in Early Childhood Development can be one of the teacher's most satisfying responsibilities or can be one of the most frustrating. Usually it is both. Literature emphasizes that the dynamic partnership between the parents/caregivers and teachers is important in the child's life. Bronfenbrenner, (1988) argued that, to be effective and have lasting impact, early childhood programmes need to involve the children's parents and communities so that all environments affecting the child would foster similar roles. The common goal for this partnership is the welfare of the child. It therefore implies that each partner has knowledge, skills and a sense of caring to bring to that relationship. Each has a need for each other. Parents and teachers become co-workers and colleagues in a joint effort to help the child develop fully.

Spodek, (1983) says that, Pestalozzi and Froebel observed that the partnership between parents and educators was emphasized since the 18th century. Spodek, (1983) went on to say that when the ECD centers were organized (then called Kindergartens), classes for parents also started and the National Congress of Parents was formed to monitor the relationship between parents and teachers in education. According to Simmons (2001) the National Congress of Mothers evolved from just a movement to a National mothers clubs to Congress of parents and Teachers. Since that time, a growing literature suggests that parental involvement has a positive impact on children's learning and development. Parents have a unique contribution to make in the education of their child. They have different knowledge about the child from what teachers know. For example, parents know the child's history in terms of his/her physical, social, emotional, intellectual development and medical history. In this respect, the parents know the child as a member of the family and the role that the child plays in the total family group. Parents are children's primary educators. (OECD, 2012). Through the parents the teachers learn about the child's home life/lifestyle such as what makes the child happy or sad. Parents bring with them a sense of continuity about the child and provide the context with which the teacher can view the whole child. Teachers bring to the partnership another perspective as child development professionals; they see the children in relation to what they know are normal milestones and appropriate behaviours. Unlike the parents, teachers see individual children from a perspective that is balanced by numerous other children they have taught, therefore both parents and teachers gain a complete picture of the whole child. (Simmons 2001).



The term 'partnership' is used to describe the relationship between parents and ECD practitioners. The principle of 'working in partnership' with parents is now firmly established within national educational policies in Zimbabwe (Nziramasanga,1999). The Director's Circular No.12 of 2005 states that, parents should play an active role in implementing the ECD programme in primary schools by contributing towards construction and furnishing of ECD centre classrooms through their School Development Association/Committee. The Circular goes on to explain that in order to provide quality ECD programmes, parents should maintain a reciprocal relationship with the ECD practitioners. The notion of equal or coordinated partnership is emphasized, with each party recognizing and valuing the contribution of the other to children's wellbeing. In this respect, parents and ECD practitioners are both viewed as experts. Parents as experts on their own children and teachers as experts in caring and educating children in the context of an institution or group setting. Respectful sharing of information between parents and teachers about children's learning and development at home and at the centre is viewed as being in children's best interests. Therefore partnership involves responsibility on both sides. It is with this background that this study seeks to find out how and why parents are involved in the ECD programmes and the challenges they experience in working with ECD teachers in primary schools in Warren Park/Mabelreign District in Harare.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWRK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

3.1 Meaning of Parental Involvement.

Parental involvement is defined by Eldridge, (2002) as the process whereby schools, parents and other services support each other in stimulating children's curiosity, motivation and development in order to achieve educational/pedagogical, organisational, democratic and enabling objectives. The Pedagogical aim involves harmonisation of childrearing and educational approach at home and at the ECD centre, whereby parents/caregivers and ECD teachers listen respectfully to each other and are open to share knowledge about children. Eldridge (2002) further explains that the Organisational aim entails parents providing practical help in the organization and implementation of activities in and outside the centre, such as helping the child with homework, reading/telling stories to the child, accompanying children to a swimming pool, library or a museum. It could also involve parents sharing their own talents in the centre. The Democratic partnership aim focuses on giving parents a voice in education whereby parents are active formally and informally in decision making processes about the centre aims and developments. This also presupposes respectful listening between the centre and parents, whereby each other's areas of expertise is acknowledged. The Enablement aim involves affording an opportunity for both parents and teachers to enhance the quality of their mutual relationship for the benefit of children's learning.

According to Berger (2000), education practitioner's definition of parent involvement in early childhood includes the following three main points.

- participation in many different forms in the child's intervention programme and plan.
- taking an active role in controlling and making decisions about their child's intervention plan such as what programme to enroll their child in, the goals to work on, what therapy services the child may need and so on. It is important to note that parents have a legal right to make decisions about their child's educational placement and treatment plan and
- advocating for their child.

On the other hand Christenson and Sheridan (2001) assert that, there are different definitions, models and traditions that explain the meaning of parental involvement. Adding to the confusion is that the term 'involvement' can be used synonymously with 'participation', 'partnership', 'collaboration' or 'cooperation'. Furthermore, there is no common



understanding of its meaning among educators. Hornby, (2000) identifies the following forms of parental involvement which explain this term:

- good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values, high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship.
- contact with schools to share information,
- participation in school events,
- participation in the work of the school and
- participation in school governance.

These forms of parental involvement also apply in many ECD services. Most recently, the term parental engagement has been used in international literature, although this too is used differently depending on the source. Connor and Wheeler, (2009) use the term to capture learning at home, school-home and home-school communication, in-school activities, decision-making and collaborating with the community. Parental engagement is defined as comprising parental warmth and sensitivity, support for a child's emerging autonomy, and active participation in learning (Goffin and Wilson, 2002). Therefore parental involvement in this study means the process whereby centres, parents and other services support each other in the implementation of the ECD programme in order to achieve pedagogical, organisational, democratic and enabling objectives and to nurture the child for healthy growth and development.

However, Eldridge (2001), says this concept of working in partnership with parents in ECD means that both mothers and fathers are involved. Although fathers and male teachers have tended to be invisible in services for children, mothers and fathers, teachers and children all have a role to play in early learning. Therefore attention should be paid to parent-child relationships, teacher-child relationships, child-child relationships and parent-teacher relationships. The parents and teachers need support to make these learning partnerships work.

3.2 Importance of Parental Involvement in ECD

Bailey, Scarborough and Hobbler (2003), assert that current policy discourse on parents and early learning International policy documents, cited by UNICEF describe the involvement of parents in young children's education as a fundamental right and obligation. Working with parents as partners is critical for young children's development and learning, which is why ECD centre staff work hard to put the partnership with parents in practice. Families are important partners in a child's early care and education and parent involvement is a critical factor for enhancing a child's early learning experiences. Parent participation in their child's early education programme sets the stage for continued involvement in the school environment and sends a message to the child that education is valued and important.

Spodek, (1983) also points out that, working with parents provide an opportunity for parents to meet each other, share problems and friendships blossom based on the mutual interest and concerns about their children. Parents also find ways to become more effective as parents and as teachers of their children. The teachers act as role models for parents to copy effective techniques on how to handle children at different stages of their development. According to Eldridge (2001), the benefits of parent involvement in early childhood development include, the following.

- The child, the parent and the teachers adopt a positive attitude and behaviour towards education.
- The parents and professionals will set realistic expectations for the child.
- The parents gain an understanding of and become interested in their child's learning.



- The parents gain greater confidence in themselves as a parent and in their ability to help the child at home and teachers gain more confidence in the child's progress. Parents develop self-determination as they gain control of their child's education.
- The mutual support between parents and teachers increase the morale for both and parents become empowered to make decisions concerning their child's education.

3.3 Methods of Working with Parents in ECD Centers

The methods of working with parents are based on the Constructionist and Psychoanalytical Approaches. According to Berger, (2000) the constructivist approach deals with reality. It is based on viewing the family as a special structure with its own special rules where individual roles are divided among the members of the family according to a specific past and values. The family has its own channels and means of communication. The special rules can be declared or non-declared, or inherited and implicit that the power rests with the mother or that she is the hidden power in the family. Therefore, when working with the family, it is important for the professionals to find out who has the real power or who is the most flexible and open minded member in the family before establishing the partnership. Christenson and Sheridan, (2001) also maintain that communication channels of inter-relations vary from convincing to temptation to beating. Some families are communicative others are not. The psychoanalytical approach helps by explaining the background behind prevailing behaviours and mentalities. This implies that parental involvement in ECD is done in different forms depending on the objectives of the centre and that the ECD practitioners need to understand that each family is unique with its own values and traditions. This knowledge help teachers to know how to approach different families when they are involving the parents in the education of their children.

According to Connor and Wheeler, (2009) the extent and form of parental engagement in ECD programmes is strongly influenced by a family's social class, mothers' level of education and psychosocial health, parent's status, and family ethnicity. However, parents involve themselves by sending their children to ECD centres, assist in provision of indoor and outdoor play materials, involve themselves in fund raising activities, advocating for children's issues, initiating and participating in feeding schemes, building and maintaining infrastructure, ensuring that children are immunised, provide basic needs of children, ensure that the rights of children are met and attend centre/school events, workshops and serve in School Development Associations/Committees. At times they assist the teachers as volunteers in classroom activities depending on their area of expertise. (Connor and Wheeler, 2009)

At home the parents create a literacy rich environment, offer quantity and quality cognitive stimulation, offer sensitive and child-centred emotional support, attend to the personal care of the child such as dressing, feeding and washing, play with the child, sing songs and recite nursery rhymes together. They also watch TV, play games including computer games and accompany children on field trips and nature walks. (Eldridge, 2001).

Christenson and Sheridan, (2001) maintain that there are two forms of organising parent involvement, these are, school-centred parent involvement and home-centred parent involvement. School-centred parent involvement includes activities such as participation in classroom, social and service events, attending Parent Teachers Association meetings and attending and participating in school/centre board meetings. Home-centred parent involvement is where parents do activities directly with their child, such as providing good nutrition and healthcare to the child, and attending one-on-one meetings with their teachers. Chavkin and Williams (1988) identified six parent roles, which are parent as audience, home tutor, programme supporter, co-learner, advocate and decision maker. Epstein (1992) proposes five types of parent involvement which are Reporting progress of the child, attending special events, parent education organised by the school/centre, parents teaching and educational decision-maker.



3.4 Factors that Strain the Relations between Parents and ECD Practitioners.

Christenson and Sheridan, (2001) assert that international and national research indicates that relations between ECD practitioners and parents are often strained because of the following factors

- Lack of knowledge of pedagogical principles (the fact that education is not just teaching)
- Lack of knowledge of child development issues and the needs of each developmental stage.
- Lack of father's involvement in the education of young children
- Working woman: a lack of involvement compounds her problems. She is a mother, a worker and an ideal wife at the same time.
- Financial difficulties produce family pressure leading to parents failing to meet the children's basic needs.
- Marital difficulties
- Intervention from the extended family
- Lack of confidence on the part of both parents and ECD practitioners regarding mutual communication
- Different understandings and expectations of each other's contribution to children's early learning
- Differences in views between parents and practitioners regarding respective responsibilities for child-rearing and education
- Lack of attention to skills necessary to work with parents and families in pre-service and in-service training of practitioners.

However, Kernan, (2012) observed that topics of discussion and information given by teachers to parents at parent evenings or informal meetings have little influence on childrearing behaviours at home. Kernan, (2012) also concluded that mutual sharing of information regarding children's learning and development between parents and practitioners is not happening.

Factors accounting for these findings include a clear separation in the minds of parents between child-rearing at home and education at school, differences in norms and values regarding childrearing and education between parents and teachers, cultural differences in communication styles and differences in views regarding respective responsibilities for child-rearing.(Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). A further important contributing factor to strained relations between parents and practitioners as cited by Christenson (2002) is the lack of attention given to the skills necessary to work with parents and families in pre-service and in-service training of professionals. An important finding of the Kernan, (2012) study about professional competencies and training in ECD was that many formal professional competence profiles and training profiles focus mainly on knowledge and competences about working with children neglecting the essential work with parents and local communities.

3.5 Intervention Strategies

Several solutions/strategies have been proposed by researchers to improve working relations between parents and educational settings. Some authors such as Epstein (2002) point to the necessity of clarifying the overall responsibilities of parents versus schools. Parents ultimately have the responsibility for their children's upbringing and schools/ECD centres remain ultimately responsible for the organisation and the quality of education of their children.

According to National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2005) both parents and educators need to acknowledge that they 'need' each other in order to be better able to communicate about the pedagogical climate at home and at school, so that they can better complement each other's contribution to children's learning and development, and can develop respect for each other's contribution to the childrearing and education of children. Kernan, (2012) places the emphasis on improving communication and mutual understanding. For educators, listening to parents



more, improving communication, taking concrete action and learning about family situations seem to be the key aspects for overcoming problems. (De Graaff cited in Kernan, 2012). The responsibility for action is placed squarely on practitioners' shoulders.

Armstrong and Goldfeld (2004) suggest that another form of parental involvement is to implement (Triple P) the Positive Parenting Programme, developed in Australia, which uses a five-level model of family intervention in both treatment and prevention and is tailored to individual families' needs. The focus is on parenting skills, competence, communication between parents and reducing parental stress.

The Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P) involves interventions at different levels of intensity that target children's behavioural and emotional problems and children at risk. The programmes have involved changing the way parents think and behave in relation to both themselves and their children. Parents are taught to be good problem solvers and to monitor and evaluate their parenting performance according to reliable criteria. They are also encouraged to see themselves as competent and successful parents. In addition parents are taught ways to create positive learning environments for their children by using descriptive praise (for example, 'That's great Getrude that you ate every bit of your meal tonight'), offering quality time (by organising activities that the child finds particularly engaging) and setting a good example. Parents are taught to be assertive in disciplining their children rather than being coercive and are encouraged to have realistic expectations about their child's capabilities. Parents are encouraged to take care of themselves so that they can feel good about parenting. (Armstrong and Goldfeld, 2004).

4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Discuss the importance of parental involvement in ECD
- Examine how parents are involved in the ECD programme.
- Analyse factors that strain parental involvement in ECD.
- Suggest positive intervention strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the ECD programme.

5. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey design in the context of a case study. The Descriptive research design was used because it allowed for more extensive examination the concepts under study and helped the researchers to produce findings from real world situations. (Patton, 2002). The researchers used purposive sampling to select 5 primary schools in Kuwadzana suburb which had established Early Childhood Development class A for (3-4 year olds) and Early Childhood Development class B for (4-5 year olds). Opportunity sampling procedure was used to select 10 parents who participated in the study. (2 parents from each school). A semi structured questionnaire was administered to the 10 parents. To further clarify issues, the researchers also used face to face interviews and focus group discussion methods. The questions focused on finding out the meaning of parental involvement, why and how parents should be involved in the education of their children and the challenges they face in this partnership with the ECD teachers. The parents were also asked to suggest solutions to these challenges. The data was analysed and presented using tables and percentages.



6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

TABLE I Demographic Profile of the Participants.

NO. 10

Variables	Number	Percentage
Sex Male	3	30
Female	7	70
Age		
20 and below	0	0
21 -30	4	40
31-40	5	50
41-50	1	10
51+	0	0
Academic Qualifications		
Std6	0	0
ZJC	0	0
'O' Level	7	70
'A' Level	3	30
Professional Qualification		
Teacher	0	0
Nurse	2	2
Farmer	0	0
House wife	6	60
Accountant	2	20

Table 1 above shows that 2 (20%) men and 8 (80%) women participated in the study. The majority of the respondents 50% are in the age range of 31 to 40 years of age whilst 40% are in the age range of 21 to 30 years of age. Only one respondent is aged 51 years and above. This implies that females dominate in the care of children than males pointing to the fact that mothers take more responsibility than fathers in caring for the children. The study also revealed that the majority of the parents are of middle age between 21 years and 50 years. This age group is mature and active and one expects them to be actively involved in their children's education. However table1 also shows that there are no respondents who had standard 6 and ZJC academic qualifications. 7 (70%) of the respondents attained 'O' Level and 3 (30) attained 'A' Level. This data indicates that the respondents are literate and knowledgeable to understand what goes on in an ECD centre. The statistics above also show that the majority of the respondents 60 % are house wives, 20% are nurses and 20% are accountants. Again this implies that these respondents are educated enough to understand and communicate with the ECD teachers concerning the education and care of their children.



6.1 The Meaning of Parental Involvement in ECD.

Data from the questionnaire revealed that 3 of the participants see parental involvement as participating in different ways in the child's education at home and at the ECD centre, 1 participant perceived it as paying fees and sending children to the centre, 4 of the participants maintained that the term involvement can mean working in partnership with teachers to nurture the child for healthy growth and development while 2 perceive it as supporting the teachers with materials such as toys for children to play with. These responses indicate that the parents do understand the meaning of parental involvement in ECD although they used different definitions. This is in line with Connor and Wheeler, (2009) who assert that there are different definitions that explain the meaning of parental involvement. The responses also concur with Eldridge (2001), who pointed out that parental education level and economic status also determine the way they understand the meaning of parental involvement.

6.2 The Value of Working with Parents

From the focus group discussions, it was established that there are two categories of parents: One group which is enthusiastic about participating in the education of their children and the other group which is not enthusiastic but does not admit. The study revealed that parents, children and teachers benefit in this partnership. The majority of the participants (those who are enthusiastic) said that working in partnership with the ECD professionals offer them an opportunity to meet each other, share problems, friendship blossom based on mutual interests and concerns about children. Parents also find ways to become more effective as parents and as teachers of their children. One participant pointed out that she learned from the teacher's effective child rearing techniques and what behaviours are appropriate at different stages of the development of the child. However, another participant maintained that the importance of the partnership is that it helps parents to understand their children behaviour and how they perform at the centre. The same participant said there is a shared responsibility in nurturing the child and that the parents will acquire knowledge of what ECD is all about become confident and gain control of their children's education. This is in line with Goffin and Wilson (2002) who assert that the success of any ECD programme depends on the relationship between the teacher and the parent since education of the child is a joint effort between parents and teachers. The parents also said they manage the land by helping teachers build and maintain buildings (classrooms and toilets), the play ground, see to it that children have access to safe drinking water, see to it that the children are well fed and mobilise resources through their fundraising committee.

However, the second group which consisted of participants who categorically said there is little benefit in the partnership between parents and teachers. They said they might confuse children if they become too involved since they are not specialists in the area. The implication of these comments is that some parents need to be educated on the importance of the partnership between them and the professionals. These parents lack knowledge on what the involvement entails. These parents also said that they are not familiar with the expectations of their children's centre and that bureaucracies of schools discourage their involvement. These comments also indicated that some teachers are not involving parents in the ECD programme.

6.3 Forms of Parental involvement.

Face to face interviews also revealed that there are different ways in which parents can be involved in the education of their children. This can be done through participating in educational activities such as seminars, workshops on different early childhood issues, observing classes formally so that they get firsthand experience on challenges teachers encounter with their children. They also can offer special services or courses according to parents profession for example presentation of folk tales and childhood songs by elderly family members, dentists, nurses, lawyers and accountants to mention just a few. They also assist non-instructional activities such as organising ECD sports days, supervising children on field trips. They also assist in instructional activities as teacher aides and this activity help them acquire basic teaching



skill, how to prepare teaching/learning materials such as toys, constructing the outdoor play area, maintain infrastructure and attend special events at the school. They also work as resource persons, pay fees and act as advocacy agents. However two participants said that they can assist by being involved in feeding schemes, help in emergency situations, fund raising and help with birthday parties for children by baking cakes. These responses reveal that the participants think that the only forms of participation is what they do at the school/centre yet Connor and Wheeler (2009) assert that parents should also establish a conducive learning environment at home to complement what the children are taught at the ECD centre. Other roles include making decisions, assisting teachers in instructional and non-instructional activities, passively participating in non-educational activities, attending special events and receiving progress reports about children.

6.4 Factors that Strain Parental Involvement in ECD

The majority of the participants interviewed said that at times lack of knowledge of the pedagogical principles and knowledge of the stages of child development deter some parents to establish a partnership with their children's school.

Participant A said that, *“teaching is the responsibility of the school and the teachers that is why we pay fees. We cannot do their job.”*

Participant B said *‘I am a working parent, the teachers invite us during the week for consultations when I am busy at work.’*

Yet Participant C pointed out that, the parent-teacher's meetings mostly take the form of lectures on issues which they know. *“We are never consulted about what we would like to know about caring and educating our children. Some teachers do not really know my child's strength and weaknesses. Therefore there is no need for me to attend consultation days. I have no confidence in what goes on in the center so there is no need for me to attend the sessions”.*

These comments indicate that there is a strained relationship between ECD teachers and parents concerning the education of children.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Parents and teachers are expected to collaborate to ensure that the children receive appropriate care and that their development is enhanced (NACECE, 2001, p. 104).

Centres should perform the following activities to receive support from the parents

- The ECD policy (from the Ministry of Education, Arts, Sport and Culture) should be accompanied with guidelines on how the parents are to be involved. For example, the policy could outline the roles of parents and teachers in this partnership, ways of managing the ECD centre by the parents and the community, ways of increasing parents involvement in managing the centre.
- The centres should form Management committees with dedicated and qualified parents and teachers and conduct meetings regularly.
- The teachers need to conduct awareness raising programme for the parents and the community on the importance of ECD programmes and their roles in the operation of ECD centres.
- The ECD personnel could mount a training programme on the importance of the ECD programme and include topics such as the use of informal teaching and learning methods used in ECD including Play way methods, Learning Material production, financial management, discipline and punishment, child rearing practices, children's rights and responsibilities, child abuse and neglect, record keeping the indoor and outdoor play area, classroom management, nutrition, health and safety and the ECD policies.



It is hoped that if parents are involved in the activities of the centre from the beginning when they bring their children to the ECD centre then they will contribute effectively in the education of their children. Hence healthy relationships will blossom and this will result in the provision of learning and development opportunities for children.

8. CONCLUSION

This evaluation confirmed that parental involvement in ECD programmes has a positive impact on the children's learning and development. However, it was noted that some parents are often passive participants and rarely take part in making decisions about what goes on in an ECD centre. Parental role in early childhood development involves parents helping teachers to set the stage for children's learning. It is therefore important that ECD teachers strive to establish this reciprocal relationship or partnership with parents in order to expose children to quality ECD programmes. This could be achieved if the ECD personnel recognise that all parents, regardless of income, education or cultural background, are involved in their children's learning.

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