

## Supporting Parents' Needs as Educational Partners to Enhance Children's Classroom Learning

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Keywords:	Abstract
<p>parents; home-school partnership; communication; learner support</p>	<p><i>Parents are essential in supporting their children's learning and development. Parental support to young learners include helping their children with homework, school projects, collaborating with the teachers, participating in school events and school governance. This study argues for strengthening an inclusive home-school partnership to effectively support their learners. The focus of this study was to explore the parents-school partnership in supporting children's learning. The research applied a qualitative approach using a semi-structured online interview questionnaire via Google forms. Fourteen (14) parents met the inclusion criteria, and interview forms were used in the analysis. The study found that most South African parents have minimal knowledge and understanding of how to support their children's learning. There is a lack of communication and partnership between the school and home. This will ensure appropriate communication and participation of parents in the school activities. Schools should recognise that the South African context is diverse and should be inclusive in their policies to accommodate all parents. School governing bodies should be enabled to foster the relationship between the schools and parents since they are representative of the parents. The results showed that to strengthen the home-school partnership, schools must be conscious of applying principles that will advocate for inclusiveness and the recognition of the diversity of the parent population.</i></p>

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Parents have an essential role in supporting their children's learning and development, and this support is even more crucial and significant when their children enter mainstream schooling. Hoglund et al. (2015) highlight that parental support to young learners includes

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several elements: helping their children with homework, school projects, working in collaboration with teachers, participating in school events, and school governance. Furthermore, Høglund et al. (2015) agree that parental involvement in schooling is a multi-dimensional construct that refers to the engagement of significant caregivers in their children's education at home. The authors believe that the working relationship or partnership between the school and parents is imperative in supporting children to achieve their optimal potential. This is clearly articulated in the South African Constitution, The Bill of Rights Section 28 and 29 about children's rights to education. The Bill further stipulates that the state should ensure children's rights are implemented (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The notion of the school as a social construct is a crucial element in this article; it assists in locating the core argument of how parents can be empowered to participate in their children's education. According to Subedi (2014), there has to be a distinction between the school as the insular, individualised institution; and the school as a community that embraces its transformational role and, therefore, parents and other stakeholders as partners. Rogers (2017) agrees that the school is a social construct that promotes the learning and participation of stakeholders. To achieve this partnership, the school must be differently organised, dismantling separation and nurturing cooperation beyond the classroom wall and the school's physical boundaries (Rogers, 2017). Through this thinking, parents can fulfil their critical role in supporting their children with learning activities.

There is consensus (Baumrind, Larzelere & Owens, 2010; Epstein, 1986; Epstein et al., 2018) that parents are the first educators and mentors of their children. For this reason, it will be essential to enable and empower parents to support their children to enter formal schooling and straddle the culture of acquiring knowledge and skills in school in comparison to the learning at home. Empowering parents with the capability to support learners will be particularly important if Rogers' argument is followed, that the school, in its current format, is constructed to offer a curriculum 'as a one-size-fits-all intervention' (Rogers, 2017).

### **Problem of Study**

Parents are often called to the school and asked why they are not supporting their children at home. Too often, parents indicate that they are unaware of how to help their young learners to learn. Le Mottee (2016a) observes that little has been done to contribute to parental development, even though the parental capacity building is crucial for transforming the Early Childhood Development sector; by implication, Early Childhood Education (ECE). This argument is supported by Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004), Le Mottee (2016b) and Walton (2011) that parents must be provided with the necessary knowledge and skills if they are to support their children's learning activities at home. Therefore, this study sought to investigate how parents can be empowered to support their children and enhance home-school partnerships effectively through qualitative analysis. This is generally an essential topic in educational research, as numerous studies have shown an association between parental involvement and children's educational achievement.

This is a South African case study contextualised within Gauteng Province (one of the nine provinces in South Africa). Gauteng has 12 education districts and this study took place in one districts, the Tshwane South District. This choice was because the researcher was granted permission to work in this district since she resides within the educational zone.

### **State of the Art**

A crucial role of parents is the support they give their children once they enter the formal schooling system. The Revised White Paper on Families in South Africa 2021 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2021) recognises the importance of the parental role in education and makes an emphatic statement in this regard. The White Paper states that the family is

indispensable for education. Peterson (2009) espouses that when parents are actively and positively involved in their children's lives, particularly in educational activities, learners will be rewarded by achieving higher academic results. Castro et al. (2015) recognised that active parental participation in the education of young learners could have a broader impact on children's later life.

### Gap Study & Objective

It is assumed that most parents are fully aware of how to support their young children's learning at home. This study, therefore, investigated what support parents need to strengthen their competencies and skills to help young learners in the home-school partnership. The authors, therefore, focused this article on exploring the critical responsibilities of parents in supporting their children and how they collaborate in partnership with schools to ensure quality support for their children. For this reason, the following research questions were developed to guide this study, 'what support do parents require to form partnerships with schools to support their young learners?' and 'how can parents and schools work collaboratively to support young learners to enhance their academic achievements?' The significance of this study is that it will empower and capacitate parents with fundamental skills to support their children at home.

## METHOD

### Type and Design

The qualitative interpretivism paradigm was the most appropriate method to conduct this study. The qualitative interpretive paradigm allowed the researchers to acknowledge the multiple realities shared by the participants of the same phenomenon. According to DeForge and Shaw (2012), qualitative researchers also operated under different ontological assumptions about the world. The biographical data of the participants are displayed in Table 1.

### Data and Data Sources

**Table 1.** Biographical data of the sample

Parent No	Gender	Age range	No of young children	Grade of child	Occupation	Qualification
P1	Male	36-45	2	R	Personal administrator	Grade 12
P2	Female	26-35	1	2	Event Manager	Tertiary diploma
P3	Female	26-35	2	2	Chef	Tertiary diploma
P4	Female	26-35	2	1	Customer service	Grade 12
P5	Female	36-45	3	2	Admin Officer	Degree
P6	Female	36-45	2	R	Team Assistant	Tertiary diploma
P7	Male	36-45	2	2	Director	Grade 12
P8	Male	46-56	2	R	Medical Doctor	Doctorate
P9	Female	26-35	3	1	Project Manager	Degree
P10	Female	46-56	2	1	Health Administrator	Tertiary diploma

Parent No	Gender	Age range	No of young children	Grade of child	Occupation	Qualification
P11	Female	56+	2	R	Operating manager government	Honours
P12	Female	46-56	2	2	Lecturer	Masters
P13	Male	36-45	2	2	Senior Management	Degree
P14	Female	26-35	2	2	Housewife	Tertiary diploma

The authors used purposive sampling as a technique to identify the participants. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys. A sample of 14 parents agreed to complete the online questionnaire and these questionnaires were emailed to each of the parents. As per the inclusion criteria, only parents who had children in Grades R, 1 and 2 could participate by completing the online questionnaire. More females (ten) participated in the study compared to four males. The ages of the parents were between 26 and 55 years. Only one parent indicated an age of more than 55 years. The authors believed that the sample size was adequate to understand the phenomenon in-depth. Based on the occupational profiles of the parents, it is evident that parents' occupations varied across the participants. Parents indicated they were housewives, administrators, chefs, events managers, directors, lecturers, and medical doctors. All parents completed minimum grade 12 education and indicated they are very competent in speaking, reading and writing English. Most participants indicated that they have at least two young children in their families. Their children are in either grades R, 1 or 2.

#### Data collection technique

Data was collected using a semi-structured online interview questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed using the Google forms platform. This gave access to the participants in this study and encouraged parents to write their experiences. Participants could respond to close and open-ended questions by relaying their experiences.

#### Data analysis

The data were analysed using the thematic approach (Guest et al., 2012; Creswell, 2014). The authors compared multiple data sources, searching for common themes (Creswell, 2014). To ensure that the data was correct and without misinterpretation, post transcription member checking took place (Maree, 2016). The ethical consideration of this paper included obtaining informed consent and maintaining anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, and avoidance of betrayal and deception to meet the ethical code of conduct requirements. Ethics clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria's Ethics Committee.

#### RESULT

Based on the data generated and analysed, the following themes emerged: 1) School as a social construct; 2) The partnership between home and school; 3) Involvement of parents in the education of their children.

### School as a social construct

As indicated, the school as a social construct is a crucial element of this study. It highlights the core argument of how parents can be empowered to participate in their children's education (Vincent, 2013). To elicit parents' understanding of the school as a social construct, the authors aimed to explore parents' perceptions of the school their young children attended. Participants P1, P2, P6, P8, P11 and P14 agreed that their children's school accommodated their learning needs.

Furthermore, P1 agreed that "The School has a good ethos of teaching and learning. They follow the prescribed CAPS curriculum from the Department of Education". P2 indicated, "The school leadership and management are well organised and there are policies and procedures for school management and parental support. The school has a good control system regarding curriculum coverage and communication with parents and other stakeholders. The principal is keeping abreast with the latest developments in education by attending workshops and training sessions."

Both P6 and P8 agreed that the schools their young children attend keep parents well informed on the activities at the school. Their schools have established a good working relationship with all parents and their school's academic track record is evident in the high success rate. Although most parents praised and acknowledged the schools their young children attended, some believed there were areas in which the schools could improve.

P1 stated, *"I feel that the school sometimes expects too much from me, especially in terms of homework which my child comes home with. I can understand that my child is attending school every alternative day due to Covid, but that does not mean that I will have to teach my child at home"*. P12 believed that the school could improve her young child's quality of education. She responded: *"I feel that the activities that my child brings home are sometimes too simple and not age-appropriate. I find my child doing more colouring activities than actual mathematics. Teachers need to plan age-appropriate activities, for example, problem-solving math"*. P13 had a very positive view of the school: *"I found the teachers and management of the school very interactive. The curriculum is great for my kid; it positions any learning material that creates an independent way of reading/solving and interpretation. Safety during this trying time is being put first and they take into account on-learning without 'burdening' parents"*.

### Partnerships between home and school

A home-school partnership is built on a healthy relationship between the school and the parents. The second key theme for this study was to ascertain the nature and value of the collaboration between the home and school in supporting children's academic achievements. In this regard, the participants had diverse opinions of how they identified their relationship with the school.

P2 identified it as *"Good, lots of clear and concise communication with the school."* It was noticeable that this parent also had easy access to the registered teacher *"I have regular conversations with my child's teacher regarding his progress and we can address any difficulties immediately."*

Equally, P7, P9 and P13 identified that they have interactive relationships with the schools and that communication is encouraged and welcomed. All three participants alluded that they have transparent communication with the school these parents indicated that they had good communication experiences with the school. They identified that the communication was transparent and that they could communicate with the teacher directly via email. It was noted that the schools also encourage communication between parents and the 'register' teacher. The registered teacher is the class teacher. Parents found that the communication was regular and they could raise issues regarding their children's

academic programme and development. They experienced the teachers to be open and transparent.

Communication is fundamental in establishing home-school partnerships. Often, language can be a barrier to accessible communication between home and school (Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2016). It was evident from the responses that only some parents experienced transparent communication and a sense of welcoming interaction between the school and parents. In this regard, the reactions from P1, P6 and P 11 provided a different impression indicating the lack of home-school relationship and communication.

P1 responded: *"We have very minimal contact with the school. We try to look at our child's book to see his work. This is a challenge for the parents to determine what they are busy with from the child's book and determine what he is struggling with."*

A critical concern is a response from P11, who indicated: *"I have had a few run-ins predominately about how they handled a bullying incident. I was not immediately contacted and had to call the school to find out what happened. I was very concerned about the safety of my child."*

On the other hand, some participants indicated they have no home-school relationship. To this extent, P6 related that she had no working relationship with the school except through report cards and school notices. It was difficult for her to communicate with the school as they have strict communication rules. WhatsApp messages are only allowed during certain hours and because she is working, she cannot easily have a continuous telephone conversation or WhatsApp conversation. Sometimes the response from the teacher can also be dismissive.

Open communication between the school and parents is critical in establishing a home-school relationship. It is recognised that communication between the school and parents is vital in establishing the home-school partnership, mainly focusing on supporting the child's learning. Although most parents indicated that they also speak English at home, it may not necessarily be their first language. Hajisoteriou and Angelides (2016) acknowledge that language barriers can impede communication from the parents to the school.

Parents were asked to comment on their communication with the school, specifically focusing on their children's academic progress. The responses revealed the limited functional home-school relationships. Most parents responded that they have limited to no conversations regarding learners' academic progress with the school.

Three reactions of P3, P4 and P14 stood out. P4 responded that the communication happens incidentally: *"They never do; I was only told when they saw me coming to pick him up from school on the last day of the school. I was so shocked as I thought the issues the teacher raised could have been addressed during the school term. It saddened and made me angry. If she did not see me, I would not have had the conversation with her."*

On the other hand, P3 stated: *"The school very much communicates with me. It is about assisting my child with either his words or with counting. I get instructions to help my son but no guidance on how I must do it. Sometimes he gets frustrated with my way of helping him."*

Equally, P14 stated: *"The teachers communicate weekly with the parents on the development of the children, indicating what they are doing well, the progress on issues they were struggling with and advice on what we as parents have to help with. The teachers don't tell me how to do it."*

Most participants used words like, 'rarely', "when reports are given", and 'once a term', to describe their interaction with the school. This indicates that communication regarding children's academic challenges and progress remains mainly in the formal communication arena related to reporting cards. It also means that their communication with parents is relegated to only once a term when the report cards are distributed. As indicated by P4, this does not mean that teachers and parents are meeting to discuss the report cards, which is

only part of the once-per-year teacher-parent meeting. If such a meeting is needed, the parents must request it as indicated by P13.

### **Involvement of parents in the education of their children**

A key theme for this research was to determine whether parents were involved in their children's education. It was also to explore how schools responded to the capacity-building needs of parents to support their children's learning. P10 indicated that they pay for extra lessons for the child.

P10 responded: *"When we were reading with my child, I realised that he liked drawing the characters and was good with it. I then decided to send him for additional art classes. He made quite remarkable progress."*

The responses revealed a lack in terms of enablement initiatives in schools. Most participants responded negatively, with only P7, P9 and P12 indicating that there were interventions from the school's side to enable parents to support their children. This lack of home-school relationships is concerning as it is one of the transformational tenets of the South African schooling system (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Le Mottee, 2016 b).

According to P6, parents were oriented on checking children's work for the day and consolidating the learning.

P7 responded: *"By checking if he understands everything he learned at school. I try my best. It seems I am doing something right, as shown in his first term results"*. The parent, however, did not indicate how the 'checking' happens and whether they got clear guidelines on how to do 'checking' of the subject areas. The response from P8 is slightly more revealing of the kind of support the school provided parents with.

As indicated by P8: *"Although I marked yes, it is a text instruction from teachers on certain areas. I try to follow this at home but sometimes I get stuck as it's not also useful or clear."*

The response from P12 indicates an individualised intervention by the teacher rather than an institutionalised approach to parental enablement. P12 responded: *"Feedback sessions inform us of areas that need focus for development or attention. Our interaction at home is based on or informed by those areas. We focus then on specific areas and see positive results in our child's development. It works for us at the moment."*

Most parents responded with an emphatic "No". They indicated that they had very little to no conversations with their teachers on their children's academic progress. These conversations are only made at the end of the first term with the school report. The schools set up an afternoon for parent-teacher meetings, which means the conversations are short and kept to a minimum to allow all the parents to speak to the teacher.

As can be deduced from the three parents who had some enablement from the school, such interventions have not yet been institutionalised. Seemingly, it is done more on an individualised basis, depending on the individual child's performance. Rogers (2017) and Epstein (1987) argue that this should be an institutionalised programme with the necessary enablement, such as human and financial resources allocated to plan and implement home-school relationship programmes.

The responses from parents affirm the argument by Singh and Mbokodi (2011) that parents are willing to support their children's learning. The authors agree that this often is not supported by the propensity of the school and the teachers towards parents. I believe parents want to be empowered to support their children. It is evident from the responses that parents are willing to take full responsibility for supporting their children.

As indicated by P5's reaction, parents recognise their commitment: *"Parents must help educators because it is our responsibility to see that the child performs well and understands what they're being taught. Besides, charity begins at home."*

This negates the findings from Munje and Mncube (2018), indicating that parents have neither the will nor the intellectual ability to support their children's learning. The authors shared this conviction with P5 that parents have a sense of responsibility for supporting their children. The authors also concur with P8 that not knowing how to support your child with specific learning content often creates frustration and difficulty between the parents and child. It ultimately influences the home-school relationship when there is no response from the school to the requests made for support, which may give the school the impression that parents are unwilling to participate.

The reactions from P9 illustrate this sentiment: *"As a parent, I do not have confidence in my ability to teach this to my kids, and it worries me that they could be disadvantaged."*

Equally, P14 responded: *"Parents don't always have a lot of time to do homework with their kids, and they may not understand how to do the homework adds to more frustration."*

The comments from P8 contextualise the predicament of parents trying to support their children's learning when she responded as with many things in parenthood, you only learn from your childhood and upbringing with all its faults and outdated or apparent successes. So, you apply to your children what you think worked for you. However, they are so different in a different system and world. So, you try and fail, and now and then succeed. The school could perhaps teach us some basic and up-to-date skills and how to adjust them to your child. A few examples of where I'm unsure or lost homework, how to explain the material to a child, how to respond to errors, what to strive for (a 100% correct or 50%), i.e. strive for perfection or focus on what he got right, how to deal with own frustrations.

As a parent, I can relate to this as my child often told me: *"That is not the way the teacher did it."* or *"You don't do it the same way the teacher did it"*. Fitriah et al. (2013) and Segoe & Bisschoff (2019) acknowledge these comments from parents. It is not that parents do not want to be involved, but they realise that learning content has evolved, and they do not necessarily feel confident enough to help their children without assistance from the school.

Several parents indicated how schools could use online platforms to support them. P2 and P9 provided ideas on how parents can be supported via online media.

As stated by P2, *"If I know what work my child must master and complete, I will appreciate tips from the teachers on how to help the kids and also how to motivate them to learn their work. The teachers can give us these tips as they go through the job. When they start with new words, they can tell us how we need to drill these words with our child and what to look out for and how to correct mistakes. This they can post on the class WhatsApp group then all the parents can do the same thing."*

P9 responded, *"I think teachers can send support videos where they teach the core concepts. They can also show us what to look for, for example, when my child is learning words or writing simple sentences or sums, and I can then refer to how the teacher is doing it."*

Although more conservative in their responses, other parents acknowledged their need for support and made practically sound suggestions on how they think the school can support them. To this extent, P10, P12 and P13 suggested that the school can have workshops once a term where the teachers provide information on the work to be covered for the term and then work with parents on how to support their children. Having this knowledge, parents feel that they will be empowered to track their children's performance. They will also be able to check whether their children have mastered a particular piece of work. P6 expanded on this suggestion, adding that when parents do this, they can identify what the child is struggling with and determine whether the child needs additional help, for example, tutoring or any life skill.



## DISCUSSION

According to Vygotsky (1929), the school as a social construct is shaped by the policy and the political and social agenda. It defines the curriculum and how children and their families engage in and with the curriculum. School or education is offered as a social instrument and a means to obtain success and move beyond the current social and financial status (Orozco, 2015). Getting the parents' perspectives on their children's schools was essential. Rogers (2017) agrees that the school as a social construct is in partnership with the parent community. He further states that the school, as a community, should embrace parents and stakeholders to unite as a whole system rather than in fragmented pieces. He believes that the school as a social construct should promote a conducive learning and development space for parents and learners. The authors agree with Rogers (2017) that although the school plays a significant role in the education of their children., equally parents, too, have a responsibility to ensure that they support the school to provide quality education. Although most parents believed that their young children's schools were good, some parents thought they were burdened with helping their children with too much homework.

According to Caño et al. (2016), Epstein et al. (2007) and Hoglund et al. (2015), it is expected that parents' comments express satisfaction or concern about the attention given to the academic programme. According to my experience, a significant amount of attention is given to how well the school is organised and managed. A minor critique is given to the teachers' class organisational skills. However, this may not indicate the quality of teaching and learning in the same classroom.

The importance of the teacher-parent relationship is recognised in government policy documents (DEEWR, 2008). The school is expected to approach parents to become involved and guide them in entering and participating in such relationships (Epstein, 2018; Epstein et al., 2018; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2002). Therefore, the school must establish appropriate communication channels with parents to ensure and foster a positive home-school relationship. The authors believe that processes of how this relationship can be fostered and implemented are not pre-determined but are determined through collaboration and mutual agreement between parents and the school.

The data confirmed, as posited by Ellis et al. (2015), Santana et al. (2016) and Taylor (2015), that parents have different perspectives on their relationship with schools. In my opinion, parents tend not to be publicly critical of their children's schools. Their responses in this regard were tentative as if they did not want to acknowledge the difficulty in their relationship with the school assertively. This was discernible from their responses as their comments either started or finished with "the relationship is good", as indicated by P1 and P11. Singh and Mbokodi (2011) and Nelson (2019) found that parents want to be involved but often lack confidence, and the terms for parental involvement are then entirely determined by the school. The authors can relate to the comments of the parents. Notwithstanding the difficulty I had with the school in supporting my child's learning, my choices were limited as a parent, and it was better not to disturb the little relationship I managed to establish with the class teacher.

The responses from participants support Stitt and Brooks' (2014) and Antony-Newman's (2019) arguments that the conversation from the school with parents is steeped in the standardised measurement of children's achievement and, therefore, the communication primarily relates to academic report cards. I agree with Georgis et al. (2014) that parents want to have a sense that the schools recognise them as having the ability to make meaningful inputs to their children's learning. The varied nature of such relationships does not diminish the importance of what? thereof. It is also acknowledged by Ellis et al. (2015) that parents and teachers can view the relationship differently. This happens as teachers

are regarded as the professional partners and parents as the laypersons, with the related power tension present (Santana et al., 2016). The authors believe that schools have not yet formalised and institutionalised development interventions guiding parents on how to support their children's learning. As demonstrated by the responses from P2, P4 and P14, the interactions are with the individual parents only.

According to Stats South Africa's (2018) Reading and Literacy study, approximately half of South African children attend daycare or educational facilities. The study further found that most children in this age group do not read, draw or tell stories with their parents (Stats SA, 2018). The finding of the Stats SA statistic was further affirmed by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 report. This report placed South African grade 4 learners' reading ability last out of 50 countries (Howie et al., 2017). Although the PIRLS study focused on grade 4, the authors assume that learners have developed a foundational reading competence from grades R–3.

Contrary to this finding, parents in the research sample indicated that they read to and with their children. They also attempt to help their children with phonics, and some parents help them with numeracy. The closure of schools due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic forced parents to adopt an active role in the education of their children; thus began homeschooling. Dimopoulos et al. (2021) agree that across the world, education systems responded rapidly to this crisis by creating homeschooling and online educational environments so that young children do not miss out on their education. Bubb and Jones (2020) agree that parents have to shoulder a higher degree of responsibility in the education of their children. Despite parents having to shoulder the responsibility of home-schooling, they also experienced challenges such as content knowledge of the curriculum, use of technology, socio-economic conditions and a balance between working from home and home-schooling (Calear et al., 2022).

Most parents indicated that they received no training or formal guidance from the school to support their children. All parents agreed that they needed guidance to help their children. Firstly, parents acknowledged that they must be enabled and empowered to participate in the home-school relationship. Parents were transparent in the responses about their lack of knowledge of how to support their children's learning. Secondly, they clearly articulated how they can be supported and offered different ideas on how the school can facilitate this. Their suggestions considered parents' schedules and acknowledged the use of electronic communication in supporting parental enablement initiatives by the school, as argued by Singh and Mbokodi (2011).

The authors agree with parents that the knowledge of the learning content throughout the term is helpful. For example, schools communicated regularly with parents when children could not physically attend school due to the Covid-pandemic and the restriction of movement (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2020). Communication was bi-weekly via SMS or WhatsApp parent groups, and parents could track the child's work progress, challenges and achievements. The directives supported these communication initiatives on continuing education during COVID–19 (Department of Basic Education, 2020; Macupe, 2020). The authors agree with Singh and Mbokodi (2011) and Michael et al. (2012) that schools often undermine parents' willingness to participate in their children's education. They do not see a continuity between the learning at home and what happens at school.

## CONCLUSION

There should be a close parent-school partnership to strengthen and support the school. This partnership should be based on mutual trust, respect and acknowledgement. This study found that school and home communication has been irregular and often intermittent. Schools only communicated with parents when they wanted to retain a learner in a particular grade. The study also found that no proper structure in the school can champion the required changes in communication. For this reason, the study recommended that the following home-school partnership be designed by applying a more inclusive propensity to refute the school's values and culture of exclusivity. The home-school partnership must be conscious of applying principles that will advocate for inclusiveness and the recognition of the diversity of the parental population of the school. Furthermore, it is recommended that home-school partnerships be formally established and appropriate systems and policies should be in place regarding communication between teachers and parents.

The study was limited to only one district in Gauteng Province; therefore, the authors believe that the findings could vary in the study were conducted in other districts within Gauteng Province. Supporting parents' needs as educational partners to enhance children's classroom learning opens the field for studies and practices on policy implementations. The results of this study can be taken forward through action research and experiential learning studies focusing on the following: 1) Development of the home-school partnership model, testing through pilot studies and determining from these pilot studies the workability of such a partnership in the South African context; 2) The Department of Basic Education and the Department of Cooperation and Governance are working with teachers and subject advisors to develop clear and straightforward formulated tools and tips aligned to the dominant teaching methodologies for a parent to use at home to support learning.

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