

Importance of Parental Involvement in Child's Learning

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Abstract

Parents play a crucial role in a child's life in all fields, parents can make a child's development happen smoothly or disrupted by the different factors which can have both a negative and positive impact on them. In the early years of a child's life, parents are always worried about the different developmental achievements and want the child to excel in all aspects thus sometimes end up disturbing the normal growth pattern. But parents can be seen as the most important and influential resource in child's education and development by supporting them and providing motivation to children.

Keywords: *Parental Involvement, motivation, learning*

Introduction

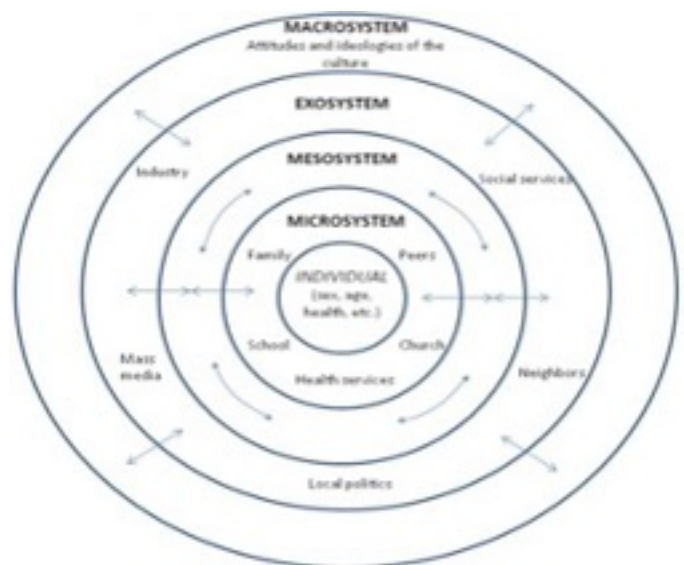
Early childhood, known as the years between birth and the age of eight, is a phase of rapid development, with brain development at its maximum. Children are strongly affected by their surroundings and the people around them at this time. Parents are one of the closest to the children in all aspects, be it literacy development, mental development or physical development. Parents play a very important role in being a constant support for their children's development in all fields and the education is very essential in the growth years. Parents are their first teachers and play an important part in defining their personalities. A student's actual learning is shaped by a blend of learning at home and at school. Encouragement from parents plays a vital role in the success of students. They play a significant role not only at home, but also at school. Family environment is the first educational environment, because in the family every child gets education and guidance. Most of the life of the child is spent in the family, so that education is most widely accepted by the child.

Family lays the basic knowledge of ethics and norms for the child. In fact, today's parents are increasingly aware of the importance of their role in children's education. The role of the family as the main educator is claimed to work together to educate their children.

Children's learning and development does not work in isolation nor does development of a child. Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory views the child, as one growing up in complex 'layers' of environment, each one

having a significant impact on the child's development.

This theory further structures the child's environment into 5 systems which are as follows:



Source [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bronfenbrenner%27s_Ecological_Theory_of_Development_\(English\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bronfenbrenner%27s_Ecological_Theory_of_Development_(English).jpg)

Each layer consists of those structures with which the child is in direct contact. It encompasses the child's relationship and interaction with his/her immediate environment. The microsystem consists of family, school, neighbourhood and any other child care environment. This system has the greatest impact on a child's development.

The Mesosystem

This layer connects the different structures of the child's microsystem. It could be the relationship between a child's parents and teachers;

relationship between school and community or neighbourhood; or one between the parents and day care centres.

The Exosystem

This layer consists of the larger social systems with which the child is not directly in contact. But still the structures in this layer of the child's environment affect his/her development because they are interacting with some structure of the child's microsystem- their immediate environment. Parents' workplace can be one example of structures functioning at this level of the environment as the schedule or environment at the workplace of the parents will have a direct impact on their state of mind which will in turn influence their behaviour towards their child.

The Macrosystem

This is the outermost layer of a child's environment. This layer consists of cultural values, customs and laws. The effects of larger principles defined by the macrosystem influence all other interactions taking place across all other systems of a child's environment. To take an example, how much resources are given to help the caretakers for the child's rearing will be determined by the belief about whose responsibility it is to bring up the child, parents alone or in cooperation with the State.

The Chronosystem

This system encompasses the dimension of time. This can be external to the child, like the time of a sibling's birth or internal to the child related to the physiological changes that occur within the child with age. As the child grows up, they may react differently to their environmental changes. Bronfenbrenner also argues that development takes place as a result of processes consisting of complex, reciprocal interactions among the persons, objects and symbols in the immediate environment. These interactions are labelled as proximal processes and include parent-child activities, teacher-child interactions, and instruction and participation in educational activity.

In the theory 5 systems/layers were defined out of which the first system, 'The Microsystem' consists of those structures with which the child is in direct contact. It encompasses the child's relationship and interaction with his/her immediate environment. The microsystem consists of family, school, neighbourhood and

any other child care environment. This system has the greatest impact on a child's development. According to parents are the ones with whom the child is in direct contact however, family environment is seen as a major determinant of child development.

My experiences during the internship

Internship is very important component in the final year of the Bachelors of Elementary Education (BEIEd) Program of University of Delhi. It lasts for 6-7 months in the primary and the middle school. During my internship period in the online mode due to the Covid-19 pandemic I could observe the importance of involving parents as partners in learning.

During the online internship as a part of my undergraduate course, I got an opportunity to work with children of two different age groups i.e., approximately 150 children from age group of 9-11 years of 5th grade and approximately 50 children in the age group of 11-13 years of 7th grade for a total time period of approximately 6-7 months.

All children, including the very young, are subjected to a tremendous amount of stress and anxiety as a result of the increasingly competitive atmosphere into which schools are being drawn. The ambitions of parents also results in very high expectations from the children hence hampering the joy of learning. Even a small dispute at home may have a significant impact on children. The kind of incalculable fear and depression that is often expressed as violence a few years later in early youth is created by a state of permanent disaffection among the elders in the house or a disintegrating relationship between parents. There is a growing need to get parents and teachers together for reasons other than academics. The love support and affection is the key with which parents involvement can be positive for young children.

So, it becomes very important to make parents as partners in the learning process in a positive manner where instead of creating pressure or anxiety in children they support and help them in learning. I believe that parents get involved with learners due to various reasons like, by helping them in school tasks, answering questions and answers, homework, projects etc. They want the child to improve his/her academics, they feel themselves as an important part of child's

academic achievements and there can be various other reasons like they want their child to be best in academics compared to his/her peers. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, "When the child has little notion of how to proceed, the adult uses direct instruction, breaking the task into manageable units, suggesting strategies, and offering rationales for using them, is referred to as scaffolding". Where the parent, instead of scolding the child or instead giving readymade solutions helps the child in finding the solution on his/her own by providing guidance which can have a positive impact on child's learning as they then feel independent and confident. They feel motivated to try out new things, but over involvement, instead of acting as a merit can hinder child's cognitive development as the child would then always depend on parents/ others to tell the solution/answer.'

According to Black, "When parents reported engaging in more instructional activities with their child, the child's achievement scores decreased."

Harris and Goodall in their study found that, "Parents were more likely to be involved in their

children's education when they believed that such involvement was a key part of what it meant to be a responsible and caring parent."

So here we see that parents see it as their duty or an action of being a caring parent to the child. But excessive involvement can be a hindrance as Jered mentions, "Teachers believed that parents could act as obstacles to their students' learning by being overly engaged in certain types of learning activities." It not only affects the child but also the parent at the same time as Lewis mentions in a study that, "A parent's insertion into the academic process may cause tension between a parent, who might be reluctantly participating in the academic endeavour, and a child who is both exploring autonomy and may be struggling academically.

The school must send a clear message to the community, especially to parents who pressure their children to be perfectionists from an early age. Parents should allow and motivate their children to spend time reading storybooks, playing, and completing a fair amount of homework rather than wasting time in tuitions or at home studying the "perfect answers."

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