ENHANCING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

By

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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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DATE: 6 January 2011
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ABSTRACT

The main research question guiding this study is: “What strategies can be established to enhance parental involvement in primary schools in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth”? To answer this question, this study examines parents’ and teachers’ practices concerning parental involvement in the Northern Areas of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan. Parents and teachers were purposely selected from participating schools. In this qualitative study, the researcher proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement at primary schools. Qualitative research methods, associated with phenomenological inquiry were employed to explore the life-world of the participants who have had personal experience with the phenomenon of parental involvement. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers. This allowed the researcher to gather in-depth information about opinions, beliefs, practices and attitudes concerning the involvement of parents in their children’s education. Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory served as the theoretical framework of this investigation. Since this study is about parental involvement in primary schools educational policies like inclusive education as well as different models of parental involvement were investigated in the literature study. The results of the study indicated several barriers to the enhancement of parental involvement for instance communication barriers between parents and teachers. The researcher established four strategies for the enhancement of parental involvement and recommended that these strategies should be employed by schools and other stakeholders. She also made further recommendations for parents, teachers, school principals, Department of Basic Education and professionals in the community.

KEY WORDS
parental involvement
parents
disadvantaged communities
teacher
primary schools
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASS</td>
<td>Continuous Assessment Support System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS</td>
<td>Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWP6</td>
<td>Education White Paper No. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSRC</td>
<td>Human Sciences Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSST</td>
<td>Learner and Staff Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOLT</td>
<td>Language of Learning and Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCESS</td>
<td>National Committee for Education Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCS</td>
<td>National Curriculum Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCSNET</td>
<td>National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Member of Executive Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Parent Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teachers Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNCS</td>
<td>Revised National Curriculum Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACE</td>
<td>South African Council of Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASA</td>
<td>The South African Schools Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>School Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIAS</td>
<td>National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT</td>
<td>School Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPMT</td>
<td>School Planning and Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBE</td>
<td>Outcomes Based Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIM OF THE STUDY,
METHODOLOGY, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PROGRAMME OF
THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

With the advent of South Africa as a truly democratic country in 1994, following
decades of oppression and inequality, the Department of Education (Republic of
South Africa 1996) positioned itself to foster democratic institutional management at
school level, as part of the transformation process. All stakeholder groups within
society were given active and effective roles to encourage tolerance, rational
discussion, and shared decision-making (Republic of South Africa 1996; Mncube
2009:83). The South African Schools Act (SASA), No. 84 of 1996, which emanated
from the Education White Paper, No. 6 of 2001, and came into effect at the
beginning of 1997 encouraged governing bodies at public schools to become more
engaged in the education of children. This is further discussed in section 2.4.2.

In terms of SASA, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are made up of parents of
learners, teachers at school and non-teaching members of staff. As parents
comprise the majority on the SGBs, they are in a powerful position to influence the
school administrative processes such as budget, policies, appointments and
system of school governance creates an opportunity to establish a better relationship
between the state and parents, charter a new direction for education and provide a
learning space for learners. The South African Schools Act (SASA) further
encourages parents to be more involved in the education of their children.

Unemployed parents at a school may be appointed as chairpersons of the SGB
since they always hold a majority representation. This is irrespective of the number
of learners or the size of the school. The SGB must develop a mission statement,
code of conduct for learners and determine the admission and language policy of the
school. The SGB as part of their duties are to support and assist school staff
including the principal, teachers and non-teaching staff in the performance of their functions (SASA, Republic of South Africa 1996: section 20 & 21). In this regard, it is crucial for parents to become actively involved in the education of their children and to enhance parental involvement.

The need for greater democracy and transparency in education, both nationally and internationally led to the implementation of this act (Mncube 2009:83). Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:301) share a similar view, adding that principals should no longer carry the burden of the management of their schools alone. These authors maintain that principals and teachers should support parents to become more involved in their children’s education.

In terms of the amended provision (Section 16 of SASA), a school management team (SMT) must be formed to assume responsibility for the smooth running of the school, as well as for the implementation of school policies. The establishment of SMTs would ensure that principals are no longer expected to carry sole responsibility for the management of their schools, but to form a partnership with parents, teachers and the school to work collaboratively and to encourage parents to enhance their involvement in their children’s education (as further discussed in section 3.9, 4.3, 4.7 and 6.2.4).

Moreover, parents send their children to school with the belief that they will receive quality education in order to secure their future. Education policy designers view community participation as the panacea for much that goes wrong or is missing in education delivery (Rugh & Bossert 1998:166). However, if parental expectations are to be met, parents themselves must become actively involved in their children’s teaching and learning. This involvement should include understanding their children’s development, participation in planning and decision-making processes and showing an interest in and adopting a critical and analytical attitude towards information on education issues (Hall & Engelbrecht 1999:231). Parents that respect diversity and are enthusiastic to become involved in education will influence the broader school neighbourhood to become more supportive of the school (Hall & Engelbrecht 1999:231).
The researcher is a head of department (HOD) at a primary school situated in Gelvandale in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth where this study has been done. The Northern Areas were created as a result of the notorious Group Areas Act (George, Hendricks & Uren 2003:9), which was enacted and amended by South Africa’s former apartheid government in the 1950s and 1960s. This legislation progressively removed the right of the non-white population of South Africa to live in areas designated as “whites only”. People who had previously lived “harmoniously together, respecting each other’s culture, language and ways of life” (George, Hendricks & Uren 2003:9) were forcibly removed to designated areas with regard to ownership, occupation, and trading rights.

The schools participating in this study are situated in the Port Elizabeth suburb of Gelvandale, which is an economically disadvantaged area with high unemployment and poverty. The participating schools serve predominantly disadvantaged communities battling with serious socio-economic problems, such as alcoholism, women and child abuse, crime, and poverty, to name but a few. The parents of many of the learners at the school cannot afford to pay school fees or buy stationery and other study materials for their children. The perpetual poverty in the community has become a vicious cycle, leading to poor living and domestic conditions, such as undernourishment, overcrowded housing, and substance and alcohol abuse (Lomofsky & Lazarus 2001:311), which all have a detrimental effect on learners. A lack of parental involvement in learners’ education needs (Harris & Goodall 2008:279) is part of the problem. Mathonsi (2001:1), however, notes that principals and teachers are struggling within the school community where parental involvement is lacking. Mathonsi (2001:1) further holds that these communities are generally willing to make a contribution towards educating learners, since they themselves are victims of poor education, unemployment, and poverty.

Many learners in the schools under investigation are exposed to abuse and neglect on a daily basis. In some cases, parents cannot afford electricity, and the learners are therefore unable to do their homework in the evenings. Often learners come to school hungry and this has a negative effect on their ability to concentrate and learn. Most learners rely on the feeding schemes in operation at the schools. However, the food provided does not meet all their needs. Only learners from Grade R to Grade 4
are provided with one basic meal a day. Feeding takes place once a day (from Monday to Friday), and the servings are evidently insufficient, as learners often request a second helping, which is often not available. These factors have a negative effect on learners’ ability to succeed at school (Woods & Weasmer 2004:118; Johnson, Monk & Hodges 2000:183).

The quality of a learner’s education will suffer without parent’s involvement and may lead to poor academic results (Cotton 2001:1, Lee & Bowen 2006:194). Through their involvement at school, parents can promote school achievement, only if they offer time to support their children’s education at home. Previous studies have reported that a problem with parental involvement in formerly disadvantaged communities is that many parents are illiterate and poor and therefore cannot assist their children with their schoolwork or support their children’s schools financially because they lack the educational background, knowledge, and financial means to do so (Bridgemoham, Van Wyk & Van Staden 2005:11; Strauss & Burger 2000:41). This is further explained in section 3.5.2, 5.3.3.5 and 6.2.4.

Parental uninvolve in children’s education was highlighted by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a United States Act of Congress which held America’s schools accountable for academic achievement (Ferrara & Ferrara 2005:77). Hendricks (2008:16) states that illiteracy and dropout rates escalate because of learners’ inability to cope academically. Improving parental involvement in public schools could potentially improve education. The lack of parental involvement unfortunately extends beyond the school, as many learners suffer from various forms of parental neglect. As a result, schools and teachers have become increasingly mindful of the importance of parental involvement in their children’s education.

The number of parents that involve themselves in the education of their children has declined sharply over the years (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila 2004:301). This can be attributed to the current economic climate, which forces both parents to work, leaving them too exhausted to spend any significant time with their children. Long hours spent travelling to and from work further erode the little remaining time available to parents to show an interest in their children’s schoolwork. However, the decline in parental involvement in children’s education could also be due to a number of other
factors, such as a nonchalant attitude of parents towards their responsibilities, or even a fast-paced lifestyle (Mncube 2009:84).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Learners whose parents show an interest in and enthusiasm about their schoolwork at home will be more likely to develop that enthusiasm themselves (Ferrara & Ferrara 2005:77). Conversely, parents who have a negative attitude towards the education of their children will cause that negativity to be transferred to their children’s schooling (Lee & Bowen 2006:194). The schools participating in this study, is situated in an economically disadvantaged area with high unemployment and poverty rates where most parents show apathy towards the education of their children.

The main problem of this study can therefore be stated as follows:

What strategies can be proposed to enhance parental involvement in primary schools in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth?

The main problem statement of the study involves the following sub-problems:

- How can the policy of inclusive education contribute to parental involvement in schools?
- Why is parental involvement important in the education of the child?
- What are the barriers to parental involvement in schools in a disadvantaged community?
- How can Bronfrenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic theory contribute to the establishment of proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement in the education of their children?
1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to propose strategies to enhance parental involvement in primary schools in the disadvantaged communities of the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.

The sub-aims derived from the above aim are the following:

- To establish how the policy of inclusive education could contribute to parental involvement in schools;
- To determine the importance of parental involvement in their children’s education;
- To establish what the barriers to parental involvement in schools are in a disadvantaged community; and
- To establish how Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) eco-systemic theory can contribute to the establishment of proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement in the education of their children.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Type of research

A qualitative research approach was chosen for this study. The rationale for employing a qualitative research approach was that the focus would be on the description of people’s feelings, beliefs, thoughts and attitudes regarding parental involvement (Denscombe 2003:267; Holliday 2002:4). Lichtman (2010:12) adds that qualitative research provides an in-depth description and understanding of the human experience.

The qualitative research approach used in this study enables an investigation of the relations and interpersonal relationships between people (teachers and parents) and environmental conditions (the context) and the meanings (the perceptions) that these people attach to their different contexts. More specifically, this investigation focused on parental involvement within the context of education, the meanings and perceptions held by people and the prevailing conditions thereof. Qualitative
research focuses on human beings and explores people's interpretations of their experiences and purports that the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand the phenomena being investigated (Lichtman 2010:12). Van der stoep and Johnston (2009:167) add that qualitative research is descriptive and that the goal is to have an in-depth understanding of the views held by the research participant.

Heaton (2004:60), Takona (2002:309), and Struwig and Stead (2001:17) echo the above view, stating that qualitative researchers try to see things through the eyes of participants. This was the case in this research. Qualitative researchers as defined by Creswell (2007:37), starts with certain assumptions as a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens (Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory for this study), and the study of research problems (see section 1.2 for research question) inquiring into social or human problem (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:135).

Lichtman (2010:5) asserts that qualitative researchers are concerned with context and therefore collect, organises, collates and interprets data on location using their eyes and ears as filters. They believe that the most appropriate manner to understand any behaviour is to observe and interpret it in the setting it occurs. Bogdan and Knopp-Biklen (2003) claim that such data is often called “soft data” since it has been “submerged deep in the life of the person” therefore, qualitative research is seen as the person itself. Van der Stoep and Johnston (2009:165) describe the qualitative research approach as having a prescribed sequence, required elements, identifiable functions, and a script.

Qualitative research enables the researcher to gain insight how the subjects (teachers and parents) in the study feel about the data they present, as well as understanding the data itself (Holliday 2002:4). In order to discover what the participants (teachers and parents in this study) feel or experience, they become the subjects of the investigation. According to Holliday (2002:4) it is important that they should make it clear to the researcher what their real feelings or perspectives are. For the purpose of this study, qualitative research is the most suitable approach to use because the researcher wants to gain knowledge of the individual’s experiences in the research settings. With this approach the researcher gains an integral picture
of people’s lives and their experiences. Love, Pritchard, Maguire, McCarthy and Paddock (2005:283) add that qualitative research allows the subjects (teacher and parents) or community to have their own opinion regarding the topic being researched. In this study, parents and teachers shared their feelings and experiences of working with children.

Wicks and Whiteford (2006:95) extend the above argument, and stated that qualitative research affords participants the “opportunity to have ownership of or control over data and findings”. The participants become stakeholders in the potential changes that may emerge from the qualitative research.

Baumgartner and Strong (1998:174) postulate that qualitative research is a term referring to numerous research traditions and share certain attributes. These authors emphasise the focus on attributes, beliefs, and thoughts. The participants share their experiences as they interpret their world. Qualitative research strategies enable the investigator to record and understand the participants on their own term. Vivar, McQueen, Whyte and Armayor (2007:64) assert that a qualitative research approach should be documented and experiences during the investigation should be described to those facing a phenomenon or in revising current theories.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:136) stated that qualitative research studies invariably serve one or more of the following purposes: a descriptive purpose, an interpretive purpose, or an evaluative purpose. These different purposes are explained below.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:136) a descriptive purpose of qualitative research studies can reveal the nature of social settings, relationships, certain situations, processes, people or systems. During the interview sessions, the researcher observes the social behaviour of the participants.

Another purpose of qualitative studies, identified by Leedy and Ormrod (2010:136), is that the interpretive purpose enables a researcher to develop new concepts and to gain insights into a particular phenomenon. The researcher discovers solutions that exist within the phenomenon through a theoretical perspective.
In this study, the researcher gain insight into the phenomenon to enhance parental involvement and to develop proposed strategies to help parents become more involved in their children’s education.

Another purpose of qualitative studies is the *evaluative* purpose. According to this purpose, qualitative research provides a means by which the researcher can judge the efficiency of particular policies (SASA), practices, or innovations. In this study, the researcher describes, interprets, and evaluates the phenomenon of the enhancement of parental involvement in children’s education to ensure that sufficient time was spent with the participants to obtain the necessary information, as further explained in section 1.6.

Schurink (1998:241) proposes that qualitative research follows an *interpretive approach*. The main aim of interpretive qualitative research is to understand social life, in addition to the meaning that people attach to it. According to Schurink (1998:240) the term “interpretive” refers to the understanding of the aim of a qualitative research approach, the interpretation thereof and the values and goals that “underlie human actions”. This approach is particularly suitable for this study because the aim is to understand the development and current state of parental involvement, as intended, perceived, or experienced within the schooling system (context).

The approach to this study falls within the interpretive paradigm, as explained by Creswell (1994:147) and Marshall and Rossman (1999:59). The aim of this study is to establish what can be done to promote parental involvement in the education of children. The study examines the causes of the problem and proposes strategies to improve parental involvement in the education of children and bring parents, learners, and teachers together to work harmoniously together.

Furthermore, the researcher employs the interpretive paradigm, with one objective, namely to understand and interpret social situations by becoming part of the situation. McFarlane (2000:27) believes that researchers that use this paradigm believe that the world is “constructed” rather than “found”.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:135) and Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Boshoff (2001:271) indicate that qualitative research has two characteristics, namely focusing on the natural setting of the phenomena and investigating those phenomena in all their complexities. Qualitative researchers simplify what they observe. Struwig and Stead (2001:11,226) maintains that qualitative researchers adopts a phenomenological approach and make use of data collection methods such as observation and semi-structured interviews. The **phenomenological approach** aims to interpret and understand the meaning and attach the circumstances in which they live (Fouché 2001:273).

Struwig and Stead (2001:16) further holds that the main aim of phenomenological research is to identify common themes and sub themes emerging from the participants. Kvale (1996:38-39) asserts that the phenomenological research approach focus on the life world of participants being investigated and attached an openness to the meaning of the participants experiences.

The phenomenological approach in this study was to collect and interpret data to understand the meanings, feelings, and thoughts of teachers and parents with regard to parental involvement in their children’s education. For the purpose of this study, the researcher interviewed parents and teachers to determine their feelings, ideas, thoughts, and actions with regard to the enhancement of parental involvement in the education of their children. Vanderstoep & Johnston (2009:165) note that qualitative research emphases how participants describe define and metaphorically make sense of their experiences.

The researcher analysed the transcribed texts for themes and sub-themes. During this investigation, the researcher extracted common central themes and sub-themes from all the meanings attached by participants to their contexts. The data-collection strategy used in this research was semi-structured interviews. Fouché (2001:273) states that phenomenological researchers primarily use open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews as methods of data collection. The data-collection methods used in this study are now discussed.
1.4.2 Data collection

In a qualitative study data collection takes up a great deal of time. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:145) hold that any potential data that was collected should be systematically and accurately recorded by the researcher. During the study, the data was obtained from the parents and teachers by means of semi-structured interviews. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:144) mention that data collected early in an investigation often influences the kind of data that the researcher gathers subsequently. Such sources of data are limited only by the level of open-mindedness and creativity of the researcher.

The researcher selected a co-researcher who accompanied the researcher into the research field to assist with interviewing the participants. An independent coder for coding the interviews into common themes and sub themes was used to measure and control the researchers own findings collected from the data.

In this study, the researcher obtained permission to make use of an audio-tape recorder to record and capture the exact words of the interviewees (See appendix H and I). During the interviews, the researcher observed the participants and made notes about the responses observed and the participants’ reactions to certain questions. Field notes were taken to capture the richness of what was observed. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:149) maintain that whenever interviews are conducted, all the group dynamics need to be taken into account.

In the following section, the researcher discusses the strategies used to collect the data.

1.4.2.1 Data-collection strategies used

During this study, data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews and observations. These two strategies are discussed in the following sections.

1.4.2.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are described as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data (Nieuwenhuis 2008:87). By
conducting an interview, the interviewer learns about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours of the interviewee. The aim of a qualitative interview is to see the world through the eyes of the interviewee. According to Kvale (1996:6), the purpose of semi-structured interviews is to obtain information from the interviewees, so that the meaning of the described phenomena can be interpreted.

It is the view of Kvale (1996:38) that the researcher should focus on certain qualitative aspects during an interview. During the interviews the researcher focused on: the interrelations between the teachers and the parents, the social construction of reality, and the narratives constructed in the interview. To achieve this aim, Kvale (1996:4) argues that in social research, conversation as a basic form of human interaction must be applied during the interview. Such interviews allow one to get to know people’s feelings, perceptions, hopes and their experiences of the world they live in.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:652) emphasise that semi-structured interviews provide a broader spectrum of data and if used correctly, this method of data collection can be a valuable source of information. Nieuwenhuis (2008:87) explains that the aim is always to obtain rich descriptive data that will help the researcher to understand how the participants construct knowledge and their social reality. Whenever participants being interviewed and they are of the opinion that the subject matter is important and there exist sufficient trust between them, the participants will be more open to provide information which would otherwise not have been possible.

The purpose of conducting an interview is for the researcher to obtain information from the participants about the research topic. In this study, interviews were conducted with parents and teachers, during which the researcher asked specific questions to acquire the information needed to support the parents and the teachers to become involved in the education of their children (see Appendix F and G). Gibson and Brown (2009:88) contend that the entire interview process is managed and negotiated in relation to the concerns of the project and that it therefore requires the researcher to make judgements on the spur of the moment about “what counts as relevant.”
Semi-structured interviews often involve a less formal distinction between interviewee and interviewer. Holstein and Gubrium (1995:119) describe what they call a “creative interview” as one that entails the production of “a climate of mutual disclosure between interviewee and interviewer by allowing the latter to have a deep involvement in the conversational development”.

During this study, the researcher communicated with the participants by making use of semi-structured interviews to generate data to create a situation in which the interviewees would reveal their feelings, intentions, meanings, sub-contexts, or thoughts on the topic, situation, or idea. Lichtman (2010:140) mentions that each thought, interpretation and plan is filtered through the eyes, through the mind and through the point of view of the researcher, with a critical lens.

The researcher has to think beyond the unfolding structure of the conversation taking place and reflect on the overall aims of the research. Semi-structured interviews generally last for 30-35 minutes and can become intense and involved, depending on the research topic. It is imperative that the participants be made comfortable and at ease, in order to facilitate and guide them properly (Greeff 2005:297). According to Greeff (2005:297), conducting interviews is not restricted to asking questions and recording answers, but to rely on monitoring the participants and their responsiveness.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:149) offer the following guidelines for conducting an interview:

• **Identify some questions in advance.** The researcher made use of open-ended questions during the semi-structured interviews and remained focused (see Appendix F and G). She designed questions in advance and kept in mind the aim of the research and what she wished to achieve when posing questions. She asked the questions at appropriate times and remembered the questions that needed to be asked.

• **Consider how the participants’ cultural backgrounds may influence their responses.** The researcher took into consideration the cultural background of the participants when questions were posed, keeping in mind that the
participants’ backgrounds will influence the answers given, as this study was conducted in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.

- **Do not put words in people’s mouths.** During the interviews, the researcher posed questions to the interviewees, listened attentively to the participants, and allowed the participants to do most of the talking. After the questions were posed, probing was done to gain insight into what was meant by the responses. This is discussed in more detail in section 5.2.2.1.

Semi-structured interviews for this particular research took place in such a way that participants were allowed the opportunity to select the venue and time that best suited them for their respective interviews. The participants were teachers and parents of the learners at the participating primary schools. Permission from the parents and the teachers (see Appendices D and E) was sought and obtained.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of a voice recorder after obtaining permission to do so to capture the exact words of the interviewees. Greeff (2005:298) maintains that using a voice recorder allows the researcher to focus on how the interview is proceeding and what they should focus on next. A voice recorder was also used to eliminate the possibility of misinterpretations or misunderstandings that could occur during the interpretation of the data. The participants were assured of their right to request copies of the recordings after completion of the interview, and the researcher checked with the participants to establish whether she had understood the participants’ responses during the interviews correctly.

The voice recorder can also be used for further references in this study, and it allowed the interviewer to concentrate on what the interviewee had to say, and to be a good listener as well. The researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim for the purpose of coding the data and to detect emerging themes and sub-themes.

This study also allowed the researcher to vary the order of the questions according to the “natural flow” of the conversation, bearing her interests in mind. Gibson and Brown (2009:88) and Greeff (2005:287) suggest **distinctive skills** on the part of the researcher which include:
• To steer the conversation towards their (researcher and interviewees) own themes of interest without disrupting the regular flow of the conversation;
• To sense when the theme of enquiry has been exhausted;
• To help the participants make links between the themes being mentioned;
• To determine and manage the duration of the interview; and
• To assess the relevance of the information as it is being produced.

During the interview process, the researcher needs to make judgements about the relevance of what is being said. This requires the researcher to think beyond the unfolding structure of the conversation that is taking place and to reflect on the overall aims of the research. Gibson and Brown (2009:89) state that semi-structured interviews can be a lived aspect of the data gathering process. The interviewers may offer their own experiences or provide evaluations of a particular issue.

In the following section, sampling will be discussed.

1.4.3 Sampling

A sample, according to Arkava and Lane (1983:27), contains elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the investigation and may be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which the researcher is concerned. Samples, therefore, are studied in an attempt to understand the population from which they are drawn. A sample is a portion of the total set of events, objects, persons, which together comprise the subject population of the study (Seaberg 1988:240). The investigation of this study is based on a sample of 10 primary schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth drawn from the population of the study. All the participants were parents and teachers of the Gelvandale schools represented in this study.

Sampling in a qualitative study is used to gain access to relevant evidence on the phenomenon to be studied. Struwig and Stead (2001:111) state that a sample is selected on the basis of expert judgement by the researchers, who choose what they believe to be the best sample for the particular study. Strydom and Venter
(2002:199) stress the point that a sample is studied in an attempt to understand the population from which the sample has been drawn.

Patton (2002:244) suggests that in qualitative studies no rules for sample size is applied, but that it will depend on either what the researcher would like to know, the purpose of the investigation, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, what can be done within the available time and with the available resources. In qualitative research, sampling should be done once the circumstances of the study have been clearly and directly established (Strydom, Fouché & Delport 2005:328).

Gay and Airasian (2000:209) and Leedy and Ormrod (2010:146) point out that qualitative researchers employ purposive selection of participants. In this study, the researcher drew the data from a variety of participants (namely parents and teachers).

According to Nieuwenhuis (2008:5), qualitative research is based on non-probability sampling and in particular purposive sampling. Sampling decisions are made to obtain information to answer the research questions (Nieuwenhuis 2008:5).

For the purposes of this study, a combination of purposive (or judgemental) sampling, and convenience sampling was used. Purposive (or judgemental) sampling will now be discussed.

**Purposive (or judgemental) sampling**

According to Babbie (1999:97), purposive sampling is the process of selecting a sample that is suitable for the purpose of the study based on the researcher’s knowledge. Fraenkel and Wallen (1990:75, 480) state that purposive sampling is the selection of a non-random sample and Takona (2002:311) adds and agrees that purposive sampling is chosen because the participants are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon that the researcher is investigating. Purposive sampling is based on the findings of the researcher in the belief that the sample comprises elements that contain the most representative, characteristic or typical
attributes of the population” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, Poggenpoel, Schurink, E. & Schurink, W. 1998:98). In this study, the researcher will use the terms “purposive sampling” and “judgement sampling” interchangeably.

Struwig and Stead (2001:122) propose that judgement sampling is the most appropriate sampling for qualitative studies as they offer a sample of rich-information. The researcher was able to select an appropriate sample for this study which comprised of parents and teachers (as explained in section 5).

**Convenience sampling**

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990:75, 474) and Struwig and Stead (2001:111), convenience sampling is the selection of a group of people (participants) who are easily accessible for the purpose of a study”.

In convenience sampling, participants are selected based on their availability, and ability to articulate (Struwig & Stead 2001:111; Fraenkel & Wallen 1990:474). In this study, the participants were picked based on convenience, as the researcher chose teachers and parents from her school and from the surrounding schools in Gelvandale where parental involvement is a major concern. This is explained in more detail in section 5.2.2. All the teacher participants had first-hand experience of the phenomenon of lack of parental involvement at their schools. The researcher made use of a combination of convenience sampling and purposive sampling, because it was cost-effective, as all the participants were interviewed where their children attend school in the Gelvandale area. Hence, interviewees were easily accessible after school, and the researcher’s travelling expenses were kept low.

Eventually the sample came to:

- One English-speaking parent and nine Afrikaans-speaking parents of learners at the 10 schools in Gelvandale.
- Thirteen full-time teachers at the participating schools.

The data-analysis process will now be discussed.
1.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the final stage that transforms the data into findings (Patton 2002:432). Therefore, data analysis enables the researcher to reduce the volume of raw information, search for significance in trivia, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals (further discussed in section 5.2.4). McMillan and Schumacher (2001:463) emphasise the importance of taking cognisance of the fact that data can be analysed in more than one way.

Data analysis in the study followed a hermeneutical approach, to elicit essential meanings from the sources utilised. Struwig and Stead (2001:16) define hermeneutics as the way in which meanings from the data analysis originate from sources for example interviews. Kvale (1996:38) indicates that in a hermeneutical understanding of interviews, the common meanings gained from these interviews are pivotal. Kvale (1996:38) further explains that hermeneutical interpretation of a study is to obtain a valid and common understanding and interpretation of the text.

The analysis of semi-structured interviews can be a lived aspect of the data-gathering process, and not just a reformulated strategy (Gibson & Brown 2009:88). According to Gibson and Brown (2009:88), during interviews, researchers working through the ideas with their research participant, perform their analysis, improvising their data as an analytically mediated outcome.

Hermeneutics becomes relevant to qualitative research since the researcher interpret the text of the interview. Secondly the researcher clarifies the meaning derived from the interviews, which may be perceived as a discussion with the text itself (Kvale 1996:38). This hermeneutical circle of interpretation consists of a permanent back-and-forth process between the data of the subject matter and the researcher, in order to identify common themes (Kvale 1996:47-48).

For the purposes of this study, the circle approach was used during the data analysis process. The researcher read through all the data several times to obtain a global picture, and then applied coding to the individual interviews to arrive at general or
common themes. After this process, the researcher and the co-researcher went through all the identified themes and sub-themes to ensure that the results were a true reflection of what was said.

1.5.1 **Determining common themes and coding**

De Vos (2005:333) points out that the analysis of data brings direction, structure, and significance to the mass of collected data. De Vos (2005:333) further describes the data-analysis process as “a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, but fascinating process”.

Creswell (1998:165) conceived of a spiral image, a data-analysis spiral that represents the process of data analysis and interpretation. Creswell (1998:165) states that the researcher moves in analytical circles, rather than using a fixed and linear approach. One enters the spiral with data made up of text or images (for example, photographs, and videotapes) and exits with an account or narrative.

As this study progressed, the researcher touched on several facets of analysis, circling around and “upwards” towards the completion of the process. The process of designing research is ultimately tied to analysis, as in the end, research design entails formulating a strategy for collecting data, in order to explore a set of analytical concerns (Gibson & Brown 2009:63). When analysing the data, the researcher in this study did so with specific interests, questions, and concerns in mind, trying to answer the questions and dealing with the problems posed.

As the researcher continues to interact with the data during this analysis, the common themes will gradually emerge into a broader framework to guide the final report. The researcher should therefore search for themes and sub-themes by reading through the transcribed text, noting down possible themes and codes, after which these notes are grouped together into meaningful units, or themes (Creswell 1998:226).

During the collection of data, the researcher searches for themes in the body of data, and then utilises the collected data which is appropriate for the study as it emerges.
The data collection process therefore can be achieved by a formal analysis of the transcribed text and information derived from semi structured interviews. (Holliday 2002:104-105).

The themes that emerge may possibly have been growing in the researcher’s mind during the gathering of the data. Tesch (1990:154-156) identifies the following eight steps of the data-analysis process which will be adopted for this study.

- The researcher reads carefully through all the transcripts dotting some ideas down as they come to mind to get a sense of the whole transcript.
- The researcher then selects any transcript and starts reading, while asking “What is this about?” The researcher then writes down possible themes in the margin and identifies main categories or themes. The process is repeated with all the other transcripts. The researcher then picks one interview, usually the richest, most interesting one. She reads through it, asking “What is this all about?” The researcher then thinks about the underlying meaning and writes her thoughts in the margin.
- All the emerging similar themes are listed and grouped together. When this task has been completed for several informants, a list of all the themes is made. Similar themes are clustered together. These themes are arranged in columns under “major themes”, “unique themes”, and “leftovers”.
- The selected themes are written down as codes next to the appropriate margin of the text. A list is made, and the researcher then returns to the data. The themes in the list are abbreviated as codes, and the codes are written down next to the appropriate segments of the text. This preliminary organising scheme must be tried out to assess whether any new categories and codes emerge.
- The groups of identified themes are turned into sub-themes, and these sub-themes are grouped together, where possible. This is done to reduce the list of sub-themes. Lines can be drawn to show interrelationships between these sub-themes.
- A final decision is made on the abbreviation for each category, and the categories are then arranged in alphabetical order.
The data belonging to each sub-theme are then grouped from the text. These categories form the basis of the data analysis.

The data are recorded for the sake of triangulation.

For the purposes of this study, the steps above were used for analysis of the data, and for this reason, the researcher has defined coding as a method used to sort data into categories.

Coding is a method of simplifying data by sorting it into categories, where the researcher proceeds inductively; assigning each theme of the data to a category that seems meaningful (Springer 2010:383). This is the procedure that the researcher followed in analysing her data. Coding or categorisation of textual data has an important role to play and is an important step in data analysis in order to organise and make sense of the data. During this study the researcher used labels and tags to group meaningful themes together to compiled information (Basit 2003:144). This was further discussed in section 5.2.2.1

The researcher detects relevant phenomena, he or she must collect examples of those phenomena and analyse them in order to find differences, commonalities, structures and patterns, and then code them accordingly (De Vos 2005:338). De Vos (2005:338) describes the coding of data as the formal representation of analytical thinking.

The researcher and the co-researcher scrutinised the data obtained from the interviews, as well as the available literature, to determine common themes. The information obtained from the interview questionnaires was recorded according to the participants’ responses to the questions posed to them concerning parental involvement.

The researcher applied the coding scheme to the categories and themes, and thoroughly marked passages in the data using the codes. For the purposes of this study, the researcher went through the transcripts with a pencil, marking the meaningful units and grouping them into themes and sub-themes. After the themes
and their corresponding codes were assigned, the transcripts were read and the
sections clearly marked with an appropriate code identifying a certain category.
The ethical measures observed in the study will now be discussed.

1.6 ETHICAL MEASURES

Research ethics provides researchers with strategies on how to conduct research in
an ethical way (Struwig & Stead 2001:66-72). By implementing ethical measures
researchers will therefore be prevented to plagiarise the work of others, engaging in
misconduct, failing to maintain the confidentiality of the research participants or
forcing participant to participate against their own will. Ethical measures safeguard
research participants to ensure that the researcher treats participants with sensitivity,
the necessary care, and respect them as human beings (Oliver 2003:135-138).

Part of the ethical approach to research involves obtaining permission from the
relevant authorities to undertake a study. The necessary informed consent from the
respective participants in this study was obtained, so as to ensure the credibility of
the responses and the confidentiality of the participants (see Appendices D and E).
Informed consent certify that participants taking part in this study was made aware of
the risks associated and benefits of participating (Oishi 2003:205). In this study, the
researcher observed and studied the responses and actions of teachers and parents
of the participating schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, relying on their
willingness and informed consent to participate in the research.

People are more likely to be open and frank, especially about sensitive issues if they
asserts that the privacy, and the anonymity, of participants should be maintained
throughout a study. This was the case in this study. Participants were made mindful
to reveal any information about their family life, relationships, experiences and
details of their personal aspects they felt comfortable to disclose (Kralik, Warren,
Price, Koch & Pignone 2005:540). The researcher wrote letters to the district office
and to the various schools, requesting permission from the principals, teachers and
parents for them to be participants in the study (see Appendices A, B, C, D and E).
Confidentiality was assured. Hence, participants were not requested to disclose their names when interviews were conducted as part of this study.

All the participants were notified about the nature of the investigation and the ethical principle of their right to privacy. Springer (2010:92) suggested that a researcher who wishes to study people should gain approval from an ethics board, select a group of people for the research, and then obtain permission from the people themselves. Permission for this study was granted by the Department of Education (see Appendix A), the Research Ethics Committee: Human of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) (see Appendix J), the principals of the various schools (see Appendix B), and the participants (see Appendix D). A detailed discussion of the above is given in section 5.2.3.

Participants were requested to complete a consent form (see Appendix E), confirming their willingness to participate in this investigation and that they understood that there would be no risk involved, as their confidentiality would be assured. The necessary approval from the District Director: Port Elizabeth Region was obtained before schools were approached to distribute questionnaires to participating teachers and principals (see Appendix G and H).

The validity and reliability of the study will now be discussed.

1.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity refers to the extent to which the interpretation of data is appropriate in the light of existing evidence (Springer 2010:152). Sarantakos (1994:76) explains that validity is a methodological element in qualitative research to ensure that the aims of the research are met. Correct interpretation of data makes the data valid and not the quantity thereof. Holliday (2002:77) expresses the same sentiments, namely that the researcher must interpret the data appropriately, in accordance with the aims of the research. In this study, validity was ensured through the authenticity, depth, richness, and scope of the data, the representativeness of the participants that were approached, the extent of triangulation employed, and the objectivity, of the
researcher (Delport 2005:160, Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:105). The measures taken to ensure the validity of the study are discussed in section 5.2.5.

The term “reliability” refers to consistency of measurement (Springer 2010:158). Findings in a study are reliable to the extent that they yield consistent results. As with validity, reliability is a desirable quality. Bryman (2008:31) asserts that reliability in the context of a qualitative study is whether there is a link between a measure and a concept. Hammersley (1992:67) explains reliability as the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observers on different occasions. As far as measures to ensure reliability in a qualitative study are concerned, Silverman (2006:288) contends that reliability can be ensured by using field notes and proper transcripts, and he offers a method by which the reliability of a qualitative method can be enhanced. Silverman (2006:288) also maintains that reliability can be improved by having the same data analysed by different observers. During this investigation, the co-researcher also analysed data and after a consensus meeting, the themes and sub-themes were identified. (See discussion in section 5.2.2.2).

Punch (2003:42) and Bell (2005:116) describe reliability as an implication of the stability of a response. The implication thereof is that the participants would answer the same question in the same way if they were asked again. For the purposes of this study, the tapes and transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were analysed for their reliability by both the researcher and the co-researcher, so that they can verbalise their ideas about the views of the participants that have been studied.

Furthermore, for reliability to be measured in this study, it is imperative that the researcher document her procedure and disclose whether the categories have been used consistently. By taking into consideration the context of a qualitative study, it is possible for qualitative research to be properly valid and reliable.

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995:85), validity and reliability in qualitative research can be challenging since most indicators of validity and reliability do not fit the requirements for a qualitative research. To apply these indicators to a qualitative study may divert the validity and reliability of the study. Miles and Huberman
(1994:267) contend that no decision-making rules for the validity of a qualitative research study is needed, however certain measures can be applied to ensure the validity of qualitative data is needed.

The measures that can be taken will be discussed after the following paragraph.

Lincoln and Guba (1985:229) and Creswell (2009:218-219, 1998:200) have suggested that terms such as “credibility”, “trustworthiness”, “confirmability”, “verification”, and “transferability” should be used rather than the term “validity”. The “trustworthiness and authenticity of findings” is indicative of the credibility of a study. Guba and Lincoln (1989) in Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2007:65-67) explain that measures of trustworthiness are applied in a study to provide rigour. Lincoln and Guba (1985:229) propose four alternative constructs that more accurately reflect the underlying assumptions of the qualitative paradigm. These are truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. These constructs are briefly discussed below.

- **Truth value.** Truth value refers to the richness of the data and the extent to which it reflects participants’ knowledge. Credibility is the strategy that is implemented to ensure truth value in qualitative research. This entails the researcher’s prolonged engagement with the field, where the researcher should be able to say “I was here”. The researcher keeps a reflexive journal to avoid influencing the research process. In this study, a co-researcher took field notes throughout the interview process to observe the researcher and participants’ behavior during the interviews. After data analysis, the researcher returns to the participants to make sure that the results reflect what participants have shared (Myburgh & Poggenpoel 2007:65-66; Poggenpoel 1998:349). These measures are further discussed in section 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2.

- **Applicability.** Applicability as a measure refers to the degree to which the results of a study can be used in similar contexts with similar participants. In order for other researchers to utilise the results of a study, a clear description of the demographics of the participants should be provided (Myburgh &
Poggenpoel 2007:65-66; Poggenpoel 1998:349. The researcher leaves the decision of applicability to similar settings for the reader to make.

- **Consistency.** Consistency refers to the extent to which one can follow the research methodology of a study and come to a similar conclusion. To be able to do this, a dense description must be provided of the research methodology that was used. There must be a step-by-step replication of the research methodology. Evidence should be available of the assignment of codes during the analysis of the data. For the purposes of this study, a consensus meeting between the researcher and the co-researcher was held and during these meetings, the identified themes and sub-themes were compared and they reach consensus of the emerging main themes and sub-themes of the study (See also section 5.2.2.2).

- **Neutrality.** Neutrality refers to the extent to which the research is free from researcher bias. In qualitative studies, researchers often try to add to the value of their findings by lessening the distance between themselves and their subjects. According to Poggenpoel (1998:350) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), it becomes necessary to “shift the emphasis on neutrality in qualitative research from the researcher to the data, so that rather than looking at the neutrality of the researcher, the neutrality of the data is considered”. The researcher selected an independent co-researcher to validate the data without any interference from the researcher.

A study in which numerous data gathering methods are used can greatly strengthen the usefulness of the study, or its transferability to other settings (De Vos 2005:352). This method described *triangulation*, which refers to the use of more than one source, and to establish the information. (Springer 2010:145; Miles & Huberman1994:266). Triangulation, in this broader sense, will enhance the transferability of research results, so that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation can be acquired (in the case of this study, enhancing parental involvement in primary schools) (Springer 2010:145, 440).
Different forms of triangulation exist, namely triangulation by data source (which can include persons, times, and places), by method (such as observation, and interviews), by researcher and by theory (Struwig & Stead 2001:18-19; Miles & Huberman 1994:267). Duffy (1993:143) distinguishes different kinds of triangulation that are relevant to this study namely data triangulation and investigator triangulation.

During this study, the researcher used various data sources and methods (namely semi-structured interviews), which were triangulated with each other in order to compare and reach consensus on the results and findings. This is explained in more detail in section 5.3.

The following section provides a discussion of the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory as the theoretical framework because it provides a foundation to understand that different systems have an influence on the child's development and parental involvement. Bronfenbrenner (1979:1977) accords relatively equal importance to the environment of development and the developing person. For him, development is effectively the evolving interaction between these two variables (Hook 2009:501). The framework for the ecological systems theory described in Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1992) model suggests that there are levels of interacting systems, such as physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural systems, which result in change, growth, and development. This is discussed in more detail in section 2.6, section 3.10, and section 6.2. Swart and Phasa (2005:214) assert that the three contexts of family, school, and community (see section 3.10), as well as the interconnections between these three contexts, are important influences on parental involvement and the education of the child.

Thus, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems approach provides a conceptual framework for understanding how families and schools are embedded in the
community (Wall 2003:25; Christenson & Sheridan 2001:32, 38; Seligman 2000:60-62). The family, school and community contexts are also influenced by larger social, political and economic realities (Seligman 2000:62). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems approach also highlights the effect of the family-school relationship on children’s learning and development.

In the following section, Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory is discussed.

1.8.1 Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory

Bronfenbrenner developed the ecological theory of human development. In his theory of human development, he analysed five types of systems that aid human development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). These systems have rules, norms, and roles that shape the development of human beings. All systems interact with each other and the environment is important for development of the child and parental involvement.

Frederickson and Cline (2002:212) contend that Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1992) model is useful in understanding classrooms, schools, and families by viewing them as systems in themselves, and in interaction with the broader social context. Bronfenbrenner’s model explains the direct and indirect influences on a child’s life by referring to different levels of environment and context that influence a person’s development. These environmental systems include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. These all interact with the chronosystem Bronfenbrenner’s (1997:514-515).

The different systems of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory will now be discussed in Figure 1.1 below.
Figure 1.1: An illustration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

(Adapted from Seligman & Darling 1989)

- The **microsystem** (grey area) which is the smallest system and refers to the immediate environment in which the child is operating, such as the family, school, teacher, classroom and peer group. This system is made up of the environment in which the child lives and moves. The people and institutions the child interacts with in this environment make up the microsystems (Bronfenbrenner 1997:514-515). The people and the institutions closest to the child have an impact on the child’s development and the role that the family plays in the child’s education. This is further expanded in section 2.6, section 3.10, and section 6.2.1.

- The **mesosystem** (orange area), represents the system where the members of the microsystem interact with each other. For example, this system represents the interaction of two microsystems, such as the connection between a child’s home and school (Bronfenbrenner 1997:514-515). An example is when parents interact with teachers, or when neighbours interact with each other. Another example on the mesosystem is when parents and teachers interact with each
other in order to plan their collaboration in supporting the child. This is explained in section 2.6, section 3.10, and section 6.2.2.

- The **exosystem** (yellow area), includes the broader community, which have an influence on the child. This system is the environment in which an individual is not directly involved, and is external to their experience, but nonetheless affects them. In other words, it is a wider context, as it relates to the broader community in which the child lives. Social organisations and professionals play a key role in what happens in the life of the child. Examples of exosystems are the extended family, family networks, the mass media, workplaces, neighbours, family friends, community health systems, legal services, social welfare services and religious organisations. Although the child may not have direct contact with all these systems, they affect the child’s development and socialisation. Because the people in a child’s life are affected by the exosystems and mesosystems, the child is also affected. An example of how the exosystem affects the child is for example how a parent’s working problems influence their relationship with their children. If the parent has a bad day at work, it has an impact on the family and the child which can be either positive or negative which can be either positive or negative (Bronfenbrenner 1997:514-515). More explanation of the exosystem is given in section 2.6, section 3.10, and section 6.2.3.

- The **macrosystem** (blue area) refers to the attitudes, values, laws, and customs of a particular culture. Each component interacts with other components, creating the highly complex context in which the child is raised. The child is however not just a passive recipient of what goes on in his or her life. The child at the centre of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model interacts directly with the people in the microsystems, and the effects of the interaction work both ways. Another assertion is that nothing ever remains static: the child, systems, and the environments are ever changing. Milestones and life events occur as time passes, as the child grows, and as contexts change (Bronfenbrenner 1977:515). Children’s socio-economic background, as well as the National Education Department plays an important role in the life of the
child. The macrosystem is further discussed in section 2.6, section 3.10, and section 6.2.4.

- The **chronosystem** (green area) develops as a result of a person’s experiences in his or her life. The chronosystem is the context of passing time that surrounds all other systems. The idea here is that development is influenced by the historical features of the period during which the development is occurring. These historical features may contain stable as well as disruptive elements, such as periods of economic depression, political violence, and war. These events shape the children that are growing up at the time in a way that is different to other generations (Bronfenbrenner 1997:514-515). This is further discussed in section 2.6, section 3.10, and section 6.2.5.

The red arrows in figure 1.1, indicates the reciprocal interaction between the different systems.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory therefore represents the family as a system, nested in a number of other societal systems, and graphically depicts the effect of the family-school relationship on the child’s learning and development which is an important fact to take note of in the developing of proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement.

Simultaneously, Bronfenbrenner’s model helps one to understand the complexity of the family as a system and how the individual child functions within his or her family and society. It is also important to remember that the family’s interaction with the school, the community, members of the extended family, and friends is fundamental to the functioning of the family unit and parental involvement.

Frederickson and Cline (2002:110) maintain that Bronfenbrenner’s model is useful for analysing the influence of social factors, such as poverty, discrimination, and immigration, on children’s learning and family functioning. Frederickson and Cline’s (2002:110) interpretation of the model emphasises the critical and continuous role that parents play in the informal education of their children.
Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory is suitable for this study, because it emphasises the continuous role that parents play in the education of their children, which lays the foundation for understanding and prompting cooperation and collaboration between the most important systems in the child’s life. Children are best supported when schools and families work together collaboratively to reach shared goals with regard to education which make parental involvement very important.

The abovementioned implies that when a learner, or any other system, such as a peer group, the family, or the school, experiences difficulties or is situated in a single system, the true ecological systems thinker never debates the cause of this or offers a solution, but considers the interdependence between all the systems. Each system therefore consists of critical, contributing factors, and not causes (Frederickson & Cline 2002:110).

People contribute to their own institutional conditions and the perspective of their society. Therefore, Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical framework was suitable for this study to develop proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement in primary schools in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.

1.9 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS IN THE TITLE OF THE STUDY

The concepts used in this study are defined below.

1.9.1 Parental involvement

Parental involvement can be considered to be parent-child interactions relating to school or other learning activities. Epstein and Sheldon (2000:83) refer to this type of involvement as “the curriculum of the home”, and he believes that it is an important contributor to children’s education, development, and success at school.

Parents are the most important people in their children’s education and have the greatest influence on their development, particularly their personal development (Bester 2007:177). Parental involvement in school includes interaction with the teachers, through which parents demonstrate to their children that education is an
important and valuable activity. Epstein and Sheldon (2000:83) asserts that parental involvement provides parents with first-hand information about the school environment and enables parents to observe their children’s interaction with other learners.

1.9.2 Parents

Parents are children’s biological forebears. Other family members, such as guardians, uncles, aunts, grandmothers, grandfathers, siblings, adult friends, and other individuals, may also take an interest and help the child develop and build his or her self-confidence (Ramirez 2001:113). These individuals are also sometimes referred to as significant others, because of the significant role they play in the child’s life as further discussed in section 3.1 and 3.2

1.9.3 Disadvantaged communities

The term “disadvantaged communities” refers to communities in which the unfavourable conditions occur. In these communities are characterise by, low socio-economic status, limited community involvement, limited potential for upward mobility, low wages, or unemployment (Pretorius & Le Roux 1998:301; Le Roux 1994:12). This context could have an adverse effect on the development and learning that takes place in such societies (Pretorius & Machet 2004:49).

Within the context of this study a lack of access to basic resources, such as health or welfare, have a detrimental effect on learning and development (Lomofsky & Lazarus 2001:311). Under the education system imposed by apartheid, schools in lower socio-economic areas generally provided education to black and Coloured learners. Today, nearly a generation later, black and Coloured learners are still struggling with dilapidated and poorly maintained school buildings, a lack of resources, and, in some cases, a lack of parental involvement, which has a negative impact on children’s education as further discussed in section 3.5.1

The Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth originated as a result of apartheid legislation. The Group Areas Act, No. 41 of 1950, enforced physical separation between races by creating different residential areas for different races. Implementation began in
1954, and it led to the forced removal of people living in “wrong” areas, and the disruption of communities (Boddy-Evans 2012:1). “The Group Areas Act meant that each population group was restricted to a specific area with respect to ownership, occupancy, and trading, and those residents consequently had to move to areas allocated to the various population groups”. The people were dispersed to distant and isolated areas. Coloureds were moved to the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, namely Helenvale, Gelvandale, Gelvan Park, Salt Lake, Arcadia, and West End (George, Hendricks & Uren 2003:9).

1.9.4 Teacher

A teacher is a person who provides education for learners at a school or other places of formal education. Teachers use a lesson plan to facilitate learning, providing a course of study which is called the curriculum. A teacher's professional duties may extend beyond formal teaching. Outside of the classroom, teachers may accompany learners on field trips, supervise study halls, help organising school functions and serve as supervisors for extracurricular activities (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013).

1.9.5 Primary Schools

A primary school is a school in which children receive primary education between the ages of about six to thirteen years. It is the first stage of compulsory education in most parts of the world, and is normally available without charge and in some cases, may be a fee-paying school (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013).

1.10 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study will be structured as follows:

Chapter One

This chapter contains an introduction to the study, stating the research problem and sub-problems. The aim of the study and the research methodology are discussed, as well as Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory as the framework of the study, after which key concepts in the title are explained.
Chapter Two
This chapter provides a literature review on inclusive education and education policies in South Africa. The aim of this chapter is to indicate how the policy of inclusive education has influenced parental involvement and how Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory could contribute to establishing proposed strategies for parental involvement in children’s education.

Chapter Three
This chapter offers a comprehensive literature review on parental involvement, and it explains why parental involvement is important, what it entails, and the benefits to the child, the school and the parents becoming more involved in their children’s education.

Chapter Four
In this chapter, the researcher discusses different models of parental involvement. The models provide clear guidelines on how parents can become more involved in their children’s education.

Chapter Five
This chapter contains a description of the execution of the empirical research, as well as a discussion of the results of the study.

Chapter Six
In this chapter, the researcher recommends strategies to get parents more involved in the education of their children.

Chapter Seven
This chapter will present the summary, the conclusions, and the recommendations of the study.
1.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, the researcher introduced the study and clearly stated the main problem of this research, which is “What strategies can be established to enhance parental involvement in primary schools in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth?” The sub-problems involved in the main problem were also outlined, as were the main aim and the sub-aims of this study.

The qualitative research method employed in this study, and the rationale for this particular method, were explained. The data-collection methods used such as semi-structured interviews and the data-analysis, coding and sampling procedures that were followed were also discussed. In addition, the ethical measures taken, as well as measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, were described. Methods of triangulation were also explained, all of which are very important and relevant to this study.

Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory as the theoretical framework of the study was introduced. An explanation of concepts used in the study was also given. The programme of the study was also outlined.

In the following chapter, the researcher undertakes a literature review on inclusive education.
CHAPTER TWO

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this chapter is to outline the policies of inclusive education, the theoretical framework of this study, and how important parental involvement is in an inclusive education environment. The benefits of inclusive education, as well as the Education White Paper No. 6, are also examined, and it will be investigated how schools, the community, and parents can support learners according to inclusive education policies. Since learners enter the classroom with specific needs, teachers have to teach learners according to their needs. Therefore, the successful education of children and to meet their needs is dependent upon full involvement of the parents, as well as support from teachers and the school. Furthermore, an inclusive environment is a place in which teachers and parents hold high expectations for learners, by working together to support them (Grenier 2006:257). It is therefore an essential part of this study that parents must be advised, encouraged, and supported, so that they can, in turn, effectively help their children.

The researcher will briefly explain what inclusive education is in the following section.

2.2 THE DEFINITION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Stainback and Stainback (2002:3) stated that inclusive education is to include every learner regardless of their background, talent, cultural origin, socio-economic status or disability to be supported in mainstream schools and classrooms to meet the education needs of all the learners. Chambers (2001:12) regards inclusive education as a privilege for every child to partake and benefit from all the activities that the mainstream school offer.

It is the view of Goduka (1994:144) that inclusive education identifies the learner’s values and encourages all learners in a diverse classroom by developing teaching and learning styles that enable all learners to benefit from education. Armstrong and Moore (2004:36) define inclusive education as the principles and processes that are
involved in increasing a school’s capacity to promote diversity and greater involvement for all learners. In addition, the Salamanca Statement (Naicker 1994:14; UNESCO 1994: iii) emphasises that all learners should be included in mainstream schooling, basing this statement on an education for all policy. Moreover, the Salamanca Statement provides a vision, creates a standard, and provides a benchmark for measuring the progress of learners in schools (Lipsky & Gartner 1997:258). Hodkinson (2005:18) claims that the above definitions refer only to children whom society and institutions believe to have “special needs”. These learners are consequently labelled as having special educational needs and are placed in special settings, therefore parents need to support their children with their teaching and learning.

The Department of Education and Skills (2004) holds that inclusion entails valuing every child, facilitating their learning in order to achieve, and participating in their own education at school. For the same reason, UNESCO (2005:15) defines inclusive education as the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners and reducing exclusion within education, in order to provide for all basic human rights concerning education and social membership. All role players must see education as all-encompassing, entailing more than just schooling, and that inclusive schools need to support education within the community, instead of being the only source of education (Booth, Nes & Stromstad 2003:2). The implication of the above is that parents should be involved in the education of their children.

The Universal Human Rights Movement emphasises that learners with special educational needs or barriers to learning must be placed in mainstream classes as part of their human rights. For the same reason, the Universal Human Rights Movement insists that it has become important for all countries to establish equal opportunities for all learners to learn and succeed (Department of Education 2006:3). In order to achieve this, inclusive education must focus on a collaborative approach to education, in which parental support is essential. This approach can be defined as an approach that focuses on all influences that could affect learners’ ability to cope in the classroom environment (Swart & Phasa 2005:215; Wall 2003:25; Macbeth 1989:2; Bronfenbrenner 1979:6-8). Therefore it is essential that parents know what is expected of them and the role they need to play in their children’s education.
Learners with disabilities have different kinds of needs, since their lives develop and change. As a result, some of their needs may receive short-term or long-term support, but irrespective of the kind of support, all needs require support of some kind (Grenier 2006:257; UNESCO 1994: viii). Educators should therefore endeavour to provide effectively for the individual needs of learners at all times, in order to enable them to achieve their maximum potential. Every learner should be offered a range of appropriate, challenging experiences to support development at their own pace. For that reason, educators should be successful in the delivery of general content instruction and the overall quality of learning in the classroom, and also outside the classroom and for parents to be involved in their children’s education. All children have a legal right to be included in the mainstream to support them in their teaching and learning (Kenworthy & Whittaker 2000:219-231). In this regard, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) stipulates that every child has the right to basic education and that it is the responsibility of government to ensure effective access to and implementation of this right.

Governments and school curricula within the same education system have their own descriptive meaning of the term “inclusive education”, which differs from country to country (Swart & Pettipher 2005:3). It is the view of Green (2001:4) that the term “inclusive education” is used to describe educational policies and practices (as discussed in section 2.3.7) that support the right of all learners to belong and learn in mainstream education. Therefore, the two main goals of inclusive education are that learners with barriers to learning or without barriers to learning should be treated and accepted as fully-fledged learners and that these learners should make suitable progress towards achieving academic and functional competence (Janney & Snell 2006:215). Furthermore, parents should be involved in encouraging and supporting their children in their educational activities at home and at school in order for their children to progress academically (Xu & Filler 2008:53).

For the purposes of this study, inclusive education is an education system in which all learners, irrespective of any barriers to learning and development they may have, are accepted. Parental involvement in inclusive education is possible, and it is actively encouraged through changes that have been made in education policies in South Africa (Engelbrecht & Green 2007:200).
In the following section, the researcher discusses the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa and the involvement of parents in their children’s education.

2.3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since 1994, the new democratic South Africa has been in a process of social, political, economic and educational transformation, aimed at developing an egalitarian and healthy society (Ngidi & Qwabe 2006:529). Education, which under the previous system of apartheid constituted separate education and separate education departments for each of the various ethnic groups (black, Coloured, Indian, and white), has been integrated into one unitary, non-racial education department. The previous education system, under central government control, introduced and enforced discriminatory practices. For example, all educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities) were segregated along racial lines.

As a result, a series of events took place prior to and after 1994 and influenced the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. Up to 1994, education in South Africa was divided into 17 ethnic education departments. Every department had its own policies regarding learners with barriers to learning and the role parents needed to play in the education of their children. However, no specific provision was made for learners with barriers to learning from the disadvantaged communities, or for parental involvement in the education of their children.

According to Nkabinde (1993:107-115), the Population Registration Act of 1950 classified all citizens in South Africa into four race groups: whites (15.5 percent); Coloureds, or people of mixed race (9.0 percent); Indians (2.8 percent); and blacks (72.7 percent). The separate development of these groups was envisaged through 10 separate homelands established for the different black ethnic groupings. The 10 separate education departments also provided for separate education systems, which ran parallel to each other but were controlled by the central government (Nkabinde 1993:107-115).
Special education for non-whites was administered in terms of the Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953), the Coloured Persons Education Act, 1963, and the Indians Education Act, 1965. It is the view of Nkabinde (1993:107-115) that almost all black South African youths were denied the right to equal and effective education. As a result, their parents show little or no interest in their education.

Traditionally, church and humanitarian organisations supported black learners requiring special needs education. Therefore, parents of such learners usually left the responsibility to churches and organisations to support their children in their education (George, Hendricks & Uren 2003:57). White learners in South Africa, received the highest standards of education in the world: well-equipped schools and special facilities were provided, while black learners in South Africa suffered in a system that was poorly funded and generally sub-standard (Ngidi & Qwabe 2006:529; George, Hendricks & Uren 2003:57).

Learners with barriers to learning were placed in “special classes” (Esterhuizen 1968:4). In 1948, these “special classes” were legalised by the Special Education Act. In fact, this Act also predetermined special education and introduced the practice of the diagnosis and treatment of medical and mental disorders in learners in South Africa (Du Toit 1996:9).

Since the transition to democracy in South Africa in 1994, many studies have been specially conducted or undertaken to review South Africa’s education system and to ensure that the new education system will not discriminate against learners of any race (Armstrong & Moore 2004:36). These studies have played a very important role in the integration of inclusive education into the mainstream education system (Armstrong & Moore 2004:36) and have highlighted the importance of parents being actively involved in the education of their children (Hornby 2002:1-2).

In the section that follows, the researcher will discuss some of the important documents that had an influence on the development of inclusive education in South Africa and parental involvement.
2.3.3 The Warnock Report

In March 1978, Mary Warnock wrote the comprehensive Warnock Report, in which she proposed recommendations for the education of handicapped children and young people, as well as the role parents have to play. This report was also published in Wall (2003:17) and Rayner (2007:19). Some of the key issues raised in the report were that all children have the right to education, society has become more accepting of “difference”, and children experiencing difficulties should be educated as a matter of right, so that they can develop to their full potential. The report further suggests a continuum of special needs, as opposed to children fitting into one or more categories. The report clearly states that children with special needs may experience short-term and long-term needs, and that provision must be made to accommodate such change.

The Warnock Report also emphasises that parents should be involved in their children’s educational needs. Therefore, in the Warnock Report (1978:150-161), the need for the closest possible involvement of parents in the assessment of their children’s educational needs is consistently emphasised. It follows that special emphasis must be placed on involvement as an important feature of any form of special educational provision in ordinary schools, no less than in special schools.

Furthermore, the report states that the parents of children registered in a special class or unit should be treated in exactly the same way as the parents of other children in the school with regard to, for example, invitations to school functions and membership of governing bodies. It emphasises the importance of regular parental attendance of school functions, also by parents in rural areas. Teachers are hopeful that, wherever possible, local education authorities will offer assistance to parents by contributing to cover their travelling cost to enhance parental involvement, particularly to those parents in rural areas. Since problems in integrating individual children with disabilities or significant difficulties into ordinary schools may sometimes stem from a lack of unconditional acceptance by the family, parents must be assisted and educated to understand the difficulties and challenges that children with special educational needs face (Farrell & Ainscow 2002:3).
Special needs learners must also be helped to adopt attitudes that will make it easier for them to be accepted. They must be accorded the same status in the family as their siblings. This acceptance by their family is a requirement for the successful integration of these children into ordinary schools. The integration of children into ordinary schools, particularly those with severe or complex disabilities or disorders, may be jeopardised if the parents of other learners are not informed of the arrangements: it is important that they be clearly and timeously informed of the nature of the special provisions made. All relevant parties must then have the opportunity to discuss the issue at length, since all will be affected.

A variety of assessment methods must be employed to ensure the most effective educational provision to address the individual needs of learners. According to Rayner (2007:19), the Warnock Report states that parental partnership is crucial in effective educational provision to ensure that all children with special needs achieve their full potential. Keilty (2010:49) states that professional partnerships (as discussed in section 3.10.2, 4.7.4, 5.3.1.1, 6.2.4) support, connect, and assist families by equipping them with what they need to help and support their children with special educational needs. Therefore, it is important that parents and the school form a partnership to assist children with their educational needs.

Parents are often the first to detect signs of a handicap or a special need after the birth of their child (Pillay & Di Terlizzi 2009:2). It is therefore important that parents are kept informed about childhood development. The child should be assessed as an individual and should follow a differentiated curriculum, should the need occur (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht 1999:7; Burden 1995:47).

The Warnock Report (1978:150-161) identifies parents as partners in the education of children with learning disabilities:

- Children with special educational needs are entirely depended on their parents for their support.
- Parents need support in attending to the special needs of the children in their care, especially if these children have missed the normal relationships and experiences of early life.
• The needs of individual parents will reflect the nature of their children’s disability, especially regarding dependence on parental and family support.
• Children with disabilities are generally resilient in overcoming their disabilities, whereas parents differ widely in attitude, temperament, insight, knowledge, ability, and other personal qualities.
• Special arrangements must be made to support the parents of children from ethnic minorities who have difficulty in speaking and understanding English.
• Parents can be seen as actual partners in their child’s education that express their needs and see that their role is important.
• Parents of children with special needs require three forms of cooperative support, namely information, guidance, and practical help.

The extent of parents’ need for support will therefore depend on various factors, including their age, their family circumstances, and the parents’ own resources and level of independence (Keilty 2010:49). Furthermore, the support given to parents will help them become more effective in helping their children at home and at school and should form an integral part of the provision made for children with special educational needs (Warnock Report 1978:150-161).

During the 1980s in South Africa, the education system went through various changes in policy development. The De Lange Report is one of these changes. For this reason, the researcher will briefly discuss this report as it pertains to parental involvement in the following section.

2.3.4 The De Lange Report

During 1980, the then South African government requested the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to examine education in South Africa and to make recommendations to improve the entire education system. This led to the establishment of the De Lange Commission consisting of 26 members representing all the different population groups in South Africa. According to Hall (1998:36), the findings with regard to learners with educational needs can be summarised as follows:
• Different departments with provision for special educational needs was challenging.
• There is a shortage of trained professionals to offer support to learners identified with special needs.
• A shortage of remedial teachers in mainstream schools was identified.
• A large number of early school dropouts was identified, who were not receiving any individual educational support from the government.
• A lack of parental involvement in the education of learners with barriers to learning was also identified.

Van Zyl (1991:41-44) wrote the following in a section of this report (the De Lange Commission’s report) regarding parental involvement:

• **Decision-making powers at school level:** Parents and teachers should be directly and continually involved in the education of children. In 1991, a discussion document on an education renewal strategy introduced the idea that school management councils should in future be accorded decision-making and executive functions. These included control over and maintenance of school buildings and grounds, educational media, textbooks, stationery, finances, salaries for teachers and non-teaching staff, and the admission policy of the school.

• **School governing bodies (SGBs):** Provision was made for parental involvement and the establishment of councils, committees, or boards for public schools (De Villiers 1989:80, 82).

• **Parental choice:** Education must give positive recognition to the freedom of choice of individuals, parents, and organisations. Education must endeavour to achieve a positive relationship between the formal, non-formal and informal aspects of education in the school, society, and family.

The following section will examine the role of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the role that parents and the community have to play in the education of their children.
2.3.5 The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Report on Education for the Black Disabled (1987)

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Report on Education for the Black Disabled (1987) confirmed the inequalities in the provision of special education. It reflected an exceptionally high incidence of barriers to learning in South Africa’s black population groups. The nature and scope of these barriers were attributed to the detrimental factors characteristic of a Third World country associated with poverty, ignorance, traditional birth customs, and lack of health care facilities and access to these facilities. Various recommendations to create a more just education system with regard to parental involvement were presented by the HSRC (1987:161-163), including community involvement and parental involvement. The recommendations proposed for improving community involvement and parental involvement, respectively, are discussed in the following two paragraphs.

The following recommendations were proposed to improve community involvement:

- The provision of financial resources for impaired black children is an enormous challenge, and society’s focused and continual involvement in the education of such children is imperative.
- Community organisations such as churches and women’s organisations must become involved in the education of impaired black children. Information on the availability of services, resources, and home programmes for parents and the community must be freely available.
- The financing of these organisations must be professionally and expertly coordinated and addressed.
- The community must be educated to accept and assist impaired people and to encourage public awareness, empathy, and involvement with regard to impaired children.
- Community centres could serve as a base for the provision of community education and training regarding the needs of impaired children.
- The private sector must be involved in the vocational training and work placement of the impaired.
The following recommendations were proposed to improve parental involvement:

- A guidance approach to parental education could be followed (community guidance).
- Parental education must be supported by social welfare and medical services.
- Multi-professional team members (social workers, psychologists, medical staff, etc.) should play a key role with regard to parental counselling and education, as is also indicated in Bronfenbrenner’s exosystem, which is discussed in section 1.8, 2.6, 3.10, and 6.2.
- The mass media could be employed for the purpose of parental education and to influence parents to accept their children and their impairment.
- Parental involvement is especially achievable through group involvement, group action, and group projects regarding the management and support of schools for impaired children.
- Parent-teacher associations must be formed to encourage parental involvement in the education of their impaired child.

To conclude, the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) emphasise that the community and parents must become involved to support their children with their educational needs.

Below, the researcher will briefly discuss the Children’s Charter of South Africa and its implementation of the right to basic education for children and the role that the family and the community have to play in nurturing and caring for the child.

2.3.6 The Children’s Charter of South Africa

The International Summit on the Rights of Children in South Africa was held in Somerset West, Cape Town, from 27 May to 1 June 1992 (Children’s Charter of South Africa 1992:1-5). Representatives from all nine provinces in South Africa gathered to draw up and adopt the “Children’s Charter of South Africa”. The summit brought together 200 learners between the ages of 12 and 16 years from 20 different regions all over South Africa. The representatives agreed to a broad spectrum of educational rights for South African learners. The following educational rights of
children were identified and declared as the Children’s Charter of South Africa (1992:1-5):

• The right to quality education which is in the interests of children, and to develop their talents through education, both formal and informal.
• The right to have qualified teachers and to be treated with patience, respect, and dignity.
• The right to have their lives improved and their rights protected and not to be discriminated against because of their parental or family background.
• The right to a safe, secure and nurturing family and the right to participate as a member of that family.
• The right to clothing, housing, and a healthy diet.
• The right to clean water, sanitation, and a clean living environment, which includes being protected from domestic violence.
• Communities and families have a duty to protect their children from becoming homeless and abandoned. Therefore it is the core responsibility of parents to see that their children are in a safe and healthy environment and that their children have something to eat, in order to ensure quality education for the child.

The researcher will now discuss the period after 1994 based on an envisaged democratic education system and society in South Africa as far as parental involvement is concerned.

2.4 THE PERIOD AFTER 1994

After South Africa’s first democratic elections in April 1994, a period of democratic decision-making followed, with policy-makers, professionals, teachers, parents, and people with disabilities meeting to plan the future of specialised education (Du Toit 1996:14). After 1994, many documents on barriers to learning and parental involvement were published internationally as well as locally, which influenced the implementation of an inclusive educational policy in South Africa and parental involvement. Some of these documents will be discussed below.
2.4.1 The Salamanca Statement

At the World Conference on Education held in Thailand in 1990, the importance of inclusive education was highlighted. At the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Spain in 1994, inclusive education was adopted as a global strategy for addressing the learning needs of all disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded learner groups. At the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education, inclusive education was identified as the fundamental way of realising the vision of Education for All (EFA). The purpose of this conference was to address the rights of learners with educational needs and the role parents have to play in their children’s education (Ainscow & César 2006:231-238; Salamanca 1994; UNESCO 1994:viii). The conference made recommendations relating to the support of parents attending to the special needs of children in their care, particularly where the children have missed the normal relationships and experiences of early life.

The Salamanca Statement (1994:37) claims that children with special educational needs rely on their parents and professionals for help to support them in with their education. The role of families and parents could be enhanced by provision of necessary information such as: addressing the needs for information and training in parenting skills is a particularly important task in an environment where there is little of schooling. Therefore it is imperative that both parents and teachers may need the support and encouragement in learning to work together as equal partners (further discussed in 3.10.2, 4.7, 6.2.4).

Salamanca Statement (1994:38) also asserts that the partnership between the school, teachers and parents should be regarded as active partners in decision-making to participate in their children’s activities at home and school. Therefore the Government should take a leading role to promote parental partnership, through both policy and legislations concerning parental rights. Therefore, the SGBs and their representatives at school should form part in the development, design and implementation of programmes intended to enhance parental involvement in the education of their children.
The message from the Salamanca Statement was straightforward, with the focus on critiquing and changing systems to accommodate the unique and diverse learning needs of all learners (Oswald 2007:140). The Salamanca Statement is therefore very explicit about the fact that schools should be developed to cater for the education of all learners, and that parents must play a pivotal role in the education of the child. Learner-centred schools act as the training ground for a people-oriented society that respects both the differences in and the dignity of all human beings. The focus of attention should be on the potential of all people, rather than on their problems and barriers (UNESCO 1994:6-7).

From this explanation, it is clear that the Salamanca Statement has had a significant influence on the manner in which learner support has operated in an education system. Consequently, this inclusive approach was accepted by all the governments attending the Salamanca Conference, but was only implemented in South Africa’s education system in 2001 (Bouwer 2001:1).

Special needs education does not exist in isolation; it can be understood and developed only in the context of its community, including parents, the neighbourhood in which a school is situated, and the attitudes of local people to schooling in general, and to the local school in particular. Therefore community involvement should be sought in order to provide help in doing homework and compensate for lack of parental support. Various partners in the community including organisations involved in the support of children should be empowered to support families to enhance their involvement in their children’s education. (Salamanca Statement 1994:39).

Two years later, the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) was promulgated, which has much in common with the principles espoused in the Salamanca Statement, as discussed below.
2.4.3 The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996)

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996) came into effect in January 1996. The aim of this act was to transform education in South Africa from the discriminatory policies of the past. It’s main thrust was the normalisation of South Africa’s education system, the advancement of the democratic transformation of the country, the combating of racism, sexism, and all forms of unfair discrimination, the promotion of the rights of learners, educators, and parents, and, most significantly, the involvement of parents in school governance. SASA is, in fact, the engine of school governance.

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) abolished compulsory exclusion. Section 5(1) of the Act states that “public schools must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way.” School governing bodies (SGBs) have been introduced at most schools allowing for greater autonomy in school governance and funding at local level. The main stakeholders are the principal (ex officio), teachers, parents, and community members, who all need to engage in capacity-building programmes. The Act stipulates that the rights and wishes of parents must override the admission policy of SGBs, giving the parents of the child the right to choice of placement. The SGB must include representation for learners with “special educational needs”, as the SGB deals with the most important administration policies of the school. Some of the stipulations of South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) that could help ensure the smooth implementation of education are:

- School attendance is compulsory for all learners from the first school day of the year in which they reach the age of 7 years. Learners are required to attend school until the last school day of the year in which they reach the age of 15 years, or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first (2A-5.1).
- A public school should admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. This issue was emphasised in the Matekane and Others v. Laerskool Potgietersrus court case 1996 (3) SA 223 T, which concerned the right of a learner not to be unfairly discriminated against (2A-6.1).
• The governing bodies of public schools may not administer any assessment related to the admission of a learner to the public school or direct the principal or any other person to administer such an admission assessment or approve such an assessment (2A-6.2).
• In determining the placement of a learner with barriers to learning, the relevant head of department (HoD) and the principal must take into account the rights and wishes of the parents of the learner (2A-7.6).
• The governing body of a school plays an important role in the development of the school's potential to provide quality education to all learners. Where learners with barriers to learning are placed in mainstream schools, the governing bodies of such schools should co-opt health professionals with the necessary expertise to provide for and accommodate the special educational needs of these learners.

The fragmentation of South Africa’s former education system along racial lines entrenched parent governors’ involvement in school governance. Under the apartheid regime, the participation of parents in school governance was limited and exclusive. The role of parents was limited to that of mere backbenchers and fundraisers. Furthermore, parent governors were often appointed rather than elected. The current situation demands that all schools, including rural schools, have democratically elected parent governors. Parents, who previously had no legal authority on issues of school governance, are now legally required to be involved in the governance activities of schools. This involves high-level responsibilities, such as policy-making, coordinating, controlling, and evaluation, which require competent and motivated parent governors. Having taken into account the high rate of illiteracy and semi-literacy in rural school areas, the South African Schools Act aims to provide support to rural school parent governors to understand the legislation and policies that have an impact on school governance.

As mentioned above, schools experienced major challenges in meeting the requirements for implementing inclusive education successfully. As a result, the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services were established in 1997.
2.4.5 The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services of 1997

In October 1996, the Minister of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of “special needs and support services” in education and training in South Africa (Department of Education 2001:5). In 1997, the findings of these two bodies were presented and were subsequently published in 1998 for public comment.

This report highlighted the need for better services for learners with barriers to learning, and therefore the need for training of personnel for specialised education and learner support services. Throughout the report, the need is stressed for the closest possible involvement of parents in the child’s educational needs. Such involvement is an important feature of any form of provision of special education in ordinary schools, no less than in special schools.

Key aspects of the newly envisaged education system were outlined as follows in this report:

• Learners must be prepared for a lifelong future career.
• All learners must have access to lifelong learning.
• Maximum opportunities must be provided for all learners to engage with one another in inclusive settings.
• A flexible curriculum must be introduced that reflects the philosophy of inclusiveness and supports a culture of teaching and learning, effective community relations, and ownership.
• Centres must be established to support learners with the necessary learner strategies.
• Centres of learner-based support structures that predominantly comprise teachers but also draw on community resources and specialist services must be put in place.
• Support must be community-based at Early Childhood Development Phase, at Further Education and Training Phase, and at General Education and Training Phase.
• Parents, teachers, and learners must be involved in the governance of all centres of learning.
• Education support personnel must receive appropriate preparation through pre-service and continuing education programmes.
• Every district or equivalent area should have some form of district support centre or facility where specialist and other support services can be accessed by centres of learning in that specific area (Department of Education 1997:ii).

This report started the process of transformation of education in South Africa by embracing all previous reports and giving clear guidelines and strategies to achieve a fair education system for South Africa.

Three years later (in 2000), a conference was held in Dakar, Senegal, to oblige governments to commit themselves to quality education for all.

2.4.6 The Dakar Framework for Action of 2000

In 2000, on April 26 to 28, a group of 1,100 participants met in Dakar, Senegal, to investigate the likelihood of the achievement of an Education for All Policy (UNESCO 2005:1-15). The people who attended the conference ranged from teachers to prime ministers to academics to non-governmental bodies to heads of major international organisations. The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All stated that collective commitments were duly adopted at this meeting. The goal of Education for All was emphasised as having been first conceived of at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and other international conferences. Government’s commitment to quality education for all by the year 2015 was the main goal and focus.

The participants committed themselves to the attainment of certain goals, two of which were
• To create safe, healthy, inclusive, and equitably resourced educational environments which are conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all; and
• To enhance the status, morale, and professionalism of teachers (The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All, 2000).

The above-mentioned goals led to the declaration that the education and training system in South Africa should be amended so that all learners can actively participate in the educational process and reach their full potential. The Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001 was therefore introduced and contained guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education. Draft papers were initially presented in 1994 and revised in 1995, before the Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001 was finally presented and duly adopted.

The Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001 will be discussed next.

2.4.7 Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System

The recommendations of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training informed the development of a policy on inclusive education. The Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001, Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System defines inclusive education and training as:

“Acknowledging that all children and youth are entitled to learn and require support” (Department of Education 2001:6). The following advice clarifying what is meant by “an inclusive education and training system” was embraced:

• Requiring of educational structures, systems, and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
• Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners;
• Acknowledging that learning takes place not only in formal schooling, but also in the home and in the community;
• Requiring educators to change their attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula, and environment to meet the needs of all learners; and
• Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of educational institutions, through the timely detection of barriers to learning (Department of Education 2001:6).

Education White Paper No.6 regards parental involvement, community partnership and collaboration as key in the implementation of inclusive education. This depends on various individuals capacities to perform their tasks effectively. Parental involvement depends on the parent’s ability to make a meaningful contribution to the preventing, identification and removal of barriers to learning. In the light of the discussion above those parents from poverty-stricken households are viewed by both teachers and learners as “different”, because teachers are unable to grasp the fact that their own attitudes towards diversity contradict basic human rights and parents are uninvolved in their children’s education (Peters, Johnstone & Furguson, 2005:146).

According to Reisner (2008:59) community involvement is identified by teachers and parents as problematic, leaving the school with the sole responsibility for education of a large number of learners. The active involvement of the community in collaborative partnership with teachers and a mutual recognition of each other’s needs are therefore almost non-existent. Reisner (2008:59) further claims that no effort has been made to build on the strengths of existing community support system and efforts in the community to enhance parental involvement in primary schools.

The Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001 also stated that educational policies should systematically move away from using segregation according to the medical classification of learners’ disabilities, to a more learner-friendly and learner-centred system in which each learner’s potential will be realised.

This White Paper also described how special schools could serve learners on site who have barriers to learning and how some schools could serve as resource centres by assisting other schools in their immediate areas (Department of Education 2001:29). The Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001 further postulated
that such learners would be assessed, identified, and incorporated into special schools/resource centres, and ordinary schools (Department of Education 2001:6).

Therefore, it was deemed necessary that the Department of Education should have realistic proposed steps for the implementation of inclusive education in schools. These proposed steps will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.8 Proposed steps for the institutional development of full-service schools for the development of support networks as indicated in White Paper No. 6 of 2001

The White Paper No. 6 of 2001: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System is a framework to build a single, inclusive system of education and training. One of the 10 steps proposed for the institutional development of full-service schools is to develop support networks (Department of Education 2005:20). The various types of support networks are discussed below (Department of Education 2005:20-24).

- *Interactive support network:* The Education White Paper No. 6 (EWP6) recognises interactive support as one of the key strategies in reducing barriers to learning. As a result all stakeholders have important contributions to make to support learning and teaching through interaction.

- *Caregivers and families:* Caregivers and extended families are integral to the functioning of a full-service school, and full use must be made of their knowledge and skills. In order to foster fruitful cooperation with families, caregivers need to feel that they are valued and that their efforts are not being undermined. There should be regular communication between schools and families through reports on successes and challenges. Families need to be empowered in order to support their children at home and at school. Families should be encouraged to be involved in developing policies and resources for the school.

- *Community:* The school belongs to the community, and vice versa. The community may be involved in upgrading physical facilities, participating in health promotion, and taking care of the environment by “adopting” or “owning”
the school. Community members could provide security services and initiate maintenance tasks and, in turn, be allowed to use the school facilities for community functions.

- **Stakeholders**: The school should be proactive in reaching out to the different stakeholders, who should be sensitised to the values of full-service schools and be consulted on ways in which collaboration can be enhanced.

Table 2.1 depicts the proposed time frame for the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

**Table 2.1: The proposed time frame for the implementation of inclusive education** (The White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001:37)

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<tr>
<td>Advocacy and orientation (provincial schools)</td>
<td>Higher education and training institutions offering INSET and PRESET</td>
<td>Expanding provision to 380 resource centres and 500 full-service schools and colleges</td>
<td>Expansion of the district support teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>An audit of facilities at special schools</td>
<td>Expansion of resource centres and full-service schools.</td>
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<td>Establishment of the final outreach programme to target the 280,000 youth at risk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A pilot project – establishment of resource centres and full-service schools in nodal areas</td>
<td>Establishment of district support teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishment of district support teams</td>
<td>Expansion of the outreach programme to target youth at risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early identification of barriers to learning (Foundation Phase)</td>
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<td>Establishment of an outreach programme targeting school youth with disabilities</td>
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Currently we are in 2013 and in the long-term range of the time frame, but South Africa's education system has not yet made adequate provision for resource centres and full-service schools and colleges to support our learners, parents, and teachers in the implementation of inclusive education. When a learner is referred to a special school for support, the teachers have to complete all the necessary forms, and such learners are placed on a waiting list for referral.

2.5 CURRICULUM 2005 (C2005)

South Africa has gone through a comprehensive process of curriculum changes over the past few years, as discussed in section 3.4.8. Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which adopted an outcomes-based approach to teaching, learning, and assessment, was introduced into the Foundation Phase in 1997. C2005 was introduced in March 1997 by the then Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bhengu. It was described as a strategy for moving away from the past racist, apartheid, rote-learning model of learning and teaching to a liberating, nation-building, learner-centred, outcomes-based one (Engelbrecht & Green 2007:128).

C2005 set specific outcomes for all learners, addressing their barriers to learning. Two of these outcomes were the following:

- Schools must organise teaching and learning in such a way that all learners can attain the envisaged outcomes; and
- Any barriers to learning and development must be identified and understood, so that learning and assessment can be adapted or modified appropriately.

The parents had to play an important role in the education of their children with the implementation of Curriculum 2005. According to Laine (2005) the role of parents with regard to Curriculum 2005 was as follows:

- Involvement of parents in the functioning of the school would hold great benefits for the school, learners, and parents.
• With South Africa’s move towards a democratic society, parents would have a say in the education of their children. Parents should, form a partnership, and be involved in the local school management.
• Curriculum 2005 was responsible for giving parents more rights and responsibilities within the school than any previous national curriculum in South Africa.
• A curriculum works on many levels and forms the heart of the education process (Donald et al. 1997:8). It is therefore imperative that all participants and also parent in the education system agree with and support the curriculum.

2.5.1 Outcomes-based education (OBE)

With the implementation of outcomes-based education (OBE) in schools in South Africa, the focus was on what was learned and how it was learned, rather than on what was taught. Learners were actively involved in all lessons. Outcomes-based Education was based firmly on the Constitution of South Africa and the rights of children. According to the Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (Department of Education 2005:76), assessment in OBE focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, making it possible to credit learners’ achievements at every level, whatever pathways they may have followed and at whatever rate they may have acquired the necessary competence.

Outcomes-based Education was introduced in South Africa with the hope that it would guarantee academic success for all learners, devolve ownership to educators by means of decentralised curriculum development, and empower learners in a learner-centred ethos (Steyn & Wilkinson 1998:203). However, the implementation of OBE proved to be very problematic, particularly among learners from impoverished backgrounds, as their experiences and knowledge could not be used as a point of departure in a lesson because of poor literacy skills. Parents’ poor participation in educational matters due to, among other things, illiteracy and a lack of interest, also contributed negatively to the implementation of OBE (Mboyane 2000:17; Coetzer 2001:77). In this regard, lack of parental involvement was a major concern in the implementation of this new curriculum (Mboyane 2000:17).
The C2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion indicated that “teachers should assist learners to reach their full potential” (Department of Education 2002a:5). Teachers should also find various ways of exposing learners to learning opportunities that will help them demonstrate their full potential in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. According to the C2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion, outcomes-based assessment was expected to assist learners to reach their full potential and was expected to be less likely to be culturally biased against learners who are limited in proficiency in the language of teaching and learning or in any other intellectual, physical or emotional capacity (Department of Education 2002a:5).

Outcomes-based Education, as a system of teaching and learning, was based on the ability of all learners to succeed. The learner had to be guided towards the achievement of outcomes, and all stakeholders, including parents, had an important role to play in the teaching and learning process (Singh & Manser 2000:110; Van Der Horst & McDonald 1997:7, 13).

In order for OBE to have been implemented successfully, it was important that parents played a role in the education of their children. The role of parental involvement in OBE is discussed below.

2.5.1.1 The role of parental involvement in outcomes-based education (OBE)

Outcomes-based education (OBE) emphasised parental involvement in learners’ education and school tasks (Onderson 2002:14; Van Der Horst & McDonald 1997:6). Possible reasons for the lack of parental involvement in OBE could include the high rate of illiteracy and lack of interest in school matters among parents. While a few learners were helped by their parents with homework and projects, the majority were not. Parents from poor economic backgrounds generally felt inadequate to contribute, and consequently avoided participating in school matters, including helping their children with homework. At any rate, they had little or no time to apply their minds to school matters, since they were occupied with basic survival (Mpeta 2000:9).
The above discussion implies that basic OBE principles that required parental involvement were not fully developed to schools in South Africa. This impacted negatively on the implementation of OBE in schools. Schools needed to embark on an intensive programme of educating parents regarding their rights and role in the education of their children, as well as the importance of such involvement.

In the following section, the researcher will briefly discuss the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and the implementation thereof in schools in South Africa.

2.5.2 The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) is underpinned by principles that are crucial for working towards the aims of the education system (Department of Education 2003:5). These aims are as follows (Department of Education 2003:5-6):

- **Social justice**: This refers to one's responsibility to care for others to the common good of society. The needs of all individuals and societies must be met, and all should have equal opportunity to improve their living conditions.

- **A healthy environment**: This refers to the social, political, economic and biophysical dimensions of all life and life-support systems (air, water, and soil).

- **Human rights**: Human rights are grounded in the daily experiences of people within their local environments and are an inextricable part of our lives.

- **Inclusivity**: This taps into the rich diversity of South Africa’s learners and communities for effective and meaningful decision-making and functioning of a healthy environment. Schools must be encouraged to create cultures and practices that ensure the full participation of all learners, irrespective of culture, race, language, economic background, and ability. Learners’ own experiences, interests, strengths, and barriers to learning must be accommodated.

According to the RNCS (Department of Education 2005:10), a lack of parental recognition and involvement was identified as a barrier to learning. Barriers and difficulties that were identified and that arise as a result of a lack of parental
recognition and involvement were the following (Department of Education 2005:12-13):

- Parents whose children do not utilise oral communication, experience difficulty with communication.
- Difficulties around parental support of learners may arise due to a range of situations. For example, parents who cannot read Braille would not be able to support a Grade 1 learner with his or her Braille homework.
- Parents who are unable to understand the emotional and/or behavioural problems of their child may aggravate the child’s barriers.
- Non-involvement and non-recognition of parents by the system creates a lack of respect for parents as informed role players in the assessment and future development of their children.
- A lack of communication and support around HIV/AIDS-infected or -affected families creates barriers for learners from such families, as indicated in section 3.6.5.
- Some parents abdicate all responsibility for all their children.

The RNCS document goes further to highlight guidelines for addressing the lack of parental recognition and involvement as follows:

- At school level, partnerships should be established with parents in order to equip them with skills and knowledge to participate effectively in their children’s learning and school life, as mentioned in section 3.9, 4.7.4, 5.3.1.1, 6.2.4.
- Parents should also be fully involved and informed regarding the identification, screening and assessment, and placement of their children.
- Parents should be encouraged to take an active interest in the teaching, learning, and assessment of their children.
- In order to facilitate early intervention for children with disabilities, parents may consult community-based clinics and/or other professional practitioners, including teachers, to conduct an initial assessment and to plan a suitable course of action for the learner.
- Schools which use South African Sign Language are encouraged to run accredited SA Sign Language courses for both parents and teachers.
• Braille courses should be run to enable parents to communicate with their children and assist them with homework and reading and writing in Braille.
• General newsletters can assist in keeping parents informed of developments and programmes at the school, as explained in sections 4.3 and 4.4 (Department of Education 2005:12-13).

Schools can also run information sessions and workshops to enable parents to better understand their children and their emotional and behavioural problems. Staff from district-based support teams, including psychologists and social workers, could assist at such workshops, as mentioned in section 2.8. Where appropriate, school-based support teams should be strengthened with expertise from the local community, district-based support teams, and higher education.

It is essential that schools maintain open channels of communication with families infected with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS and render support to parents and learners wherever possible. This could be facilitated by openly displaying a clear HIV/AIDS policy for the school, as outlined in section 3.6.5. Shared HIV and AIDS status could also help to destigmatise the disease.

2.5.3 The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is the new curriculum (as discussed in section 3.4.8) that was implemented in schools in South Africa at the beginning of 2012 in the Foundation Phase and proceeds to the following phase in 2013. This curriculum was introduced after the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) proved not to be as effective as was expected. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011), CAPS clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities that parents need to adopt as follows:

• involve themselves actively in the activities of the school, including the school governance structure;
• have regular discussions with their children about general school matters;
• cultivate a healthy, open, and cooperative relationship with their children’s teachers;
• create a home environment that is conducive to studying;
• assist in protecting educational resources such as textbooks, chairs, tables, and other objects; and
• contribute within their means the necessary resources to the schooling of their children.

CAPS clearly states that parents have a vital role to play and that they must become actively involved in their children’s education.

In the following section, the five components of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems approach that have an influence on the inclusion of the child are discussed.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DEVELOPMENTAL ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS APPROACH

Active parental involvement is known to be an important factor in improving the outcomes in the education of children, with and without disabilities, in an inclusive education setting (Xu & Filler 2008:53).

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979,) ecological model, which consists of five interconnected systems, namely the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem, is relevant to this study, because all these systems have an influence on the development of the child (as mentioned in section 1.8, 3.10 and 6.2. An ecological systems view of inclusive education suggests that children with or without disabilities develop in a complex social world, and that it is necessary to observe interactions at all levels and to examine changes over time at all levels (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, Xu & Filler 2008:54). To ensure the success of inclusive education and parental involvement, it is critical to integrate individual and contextual processes and to examine interrelations between these systems (Xu & Filler 2008:54). These systems will be explained in turn below.

The microsystem: This system consists of the immediate family in which the child lives, such as the parents and siblings (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:40; Xu & Filler 2008:54). When children experience learning problems, the immediate family
members support the child with its teaching and learning as discussed in 1.8.1, 3.10, and 6.2.1 (Xu & Filler 2008:54).

Sibling relationships may be even more significant, because siblings spend a significant amount of time with each other. Sibling interactions often directly affect the larger set of peer interactions that occur outside the family (Xu & Filler 2008:60). It is therefore important that siblings learn important social skills from each other, such as sharing, negotiation, and competition (Xu & Filler 2008:61).

However, this interaction may be disruptive, for both the child and his or her siblings (Xu & Filler 2008:61), since the siblings are all equally important. However, the child with special needs receives additional attention and care and siblings may often feel ignored or neglected, which could leave them feeling resentful (Xu & Filler 2008:63).

The mesosystem is the next level in the ecological systems approach and will be discussed below.

**The mesosystem:** The mesosystem is a set of microsystems that continually interact with one another, as explained in section 1.8.1, 3.10, and 6.2.2. The mesosystem is the interconnection between two or more settings outside the family, such as the school and peer influences (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:41; Xu & Filler 2008:54). What happens in the family or peer group influences how children respond at school, and vice versa. For example, a child who is not supported by a family may experience care and understanding from a neighbour, peer or teacher. Although the lack of support from the family may make the child feel anxious and insecure, such interaction with the neighbour, peer or teacher may over time strengthen the child’s sense of security (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:41).

**The exosystem:** The exosystem refers to the community, which may not be directly experienced by the child, but which may influence the elements of the microsystem, such as sibling interactions (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:40; Xu & Filler 2008:54). Examples of the exosystem are the parent’s workplace, a brother’s peer group, or a teacher’s involvement in a local community organisation. The parent’s workplace can form a partnership with the school, by allowing the parent to attend a
parent meeting, or a teacher’s involvement in the community can assist the school with coaching sportcodes etcetera.

The child’s schoolwork may be affected by the mesosystem, which may lead to a negative relationship with teachers, peers, or parents, as explained in section 1.8.1, 3.10, and 6.2.4.

**The macrosystem:** The cultural and social environmental factors that influence the beliefs and behaviours of the individual are involved in the macrosystem (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:40; Xu & Filler 2008:54). Cultural influences exist in all contexts, from the immediate family environment to larger social settings within the ecological systems, as explained in section 1.8.1, 3.10, and 6.2.4.

For example, a cultural value may include obeying authority and respecting senior members of the community. This value will then influence interactions in the child’s microsystems, and most probably their entire mesosystem too. The macrosystem is equivalent to two systems, namely the wider community and the entire social system (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:41).

**The chronosystem:** The chronosystem refers to the developmental time frames that affect the interactions between the above systems, as well as their influences on individual development, as explained in section 1.8.1, 3.10, 6.2.4. For example, families and all the other systems in which developing children are involved continually change and develop the child. These changes all interact with a child’s successive stage of development (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:40; Xu & Filler 2008:54).

An important part in Bronfenbrenner’s model is that the environment does not simply have an impact on children, but that children are active participants in their own development (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:42; Swart & Pettipher 2005:12). The way in which children become aware of their circumstances determines the way in which they will respond to their human and physical contexts (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:42; Swart & Pettipher 2005:12).
In conclusion, the developmental ecological systems approach is supported by well-established research and evidence-based practices. When educational practices that support inclusion focus on all systems, with active family involvement as the focus of concern, the ultimate goal of education will be achieved, namely to prepare our children for a life that reflects an appreciation of the value and fundamental worth of each individual (Xu & Filler 2008:68).

In the following section, the education support and parental involvement in inclusive education will be discussed.

2.6 EDUCATION SUPPORT IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In an inclusive education system, the term “education support” refers to the assistance given by teachers, parents, and the community to help and support children in the education system (Engelbrecht & Green 2007:160). Through supporting teaching and learning, children will therefore be equipped to overcome their learning barriers in order to reach their full potential and add value to their educational experiences (Xu & Filler 2008:67).

From an ecosystemic perspective, Bronfenbrenner (1979) sees learners as located within a complex network of intersecting contexts, all of which influence the extent to which they can benefit from instruction and make academic progress. The many learners in schools in South Africa who struggle to learn, not because of an intrinsic intellectual impairment, but because their development has been limited by lack of appropriate mediation, are a case in point (Engelbrecht & Green 2007). Engelbrecht and Green (2007) hold that this conceptualisation of support implies that all learners may at times require support and the removal of barriers to participation and learning, since changing contexts may affect learning in different ways at different times. The purpose of education support is to respond to the learning difficulties of individuals, to prevent problems, wherever possible, and to work actively together to enhance parental involvement the academic success of all learners.

Some aspects of departmental support structures will be discussed below.
2.7 EDUCATION SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN AN INCLUSIVE SYSTEM

The Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001 makes provision for support by means of a systems approach and collaboration between systems.

National level

The function of the national Department of Education (2001) is to formulate policy, which is done in collaboration with all the stakeholders, including the parents that will be involved in the education of their children.

Provincial level

The education departments of the nine provinces of South Africa are expected to implement the policies accepted by the national Department of Education. The provinces are also responsible for resource development, the building of schools, the distribution of finances and resource material, the employment of educators, and the admission of learners who experience barriers to learning, among other things (Department of Education 2001:46).

District level

Each of the nine provinces is divided into several districts, each with a team that manages inclusive education in that district. This team is called the district-based support team, which is mandated “to provide a co-ordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions”. According to the Draft Guidelines (Department of Education 2001:47), the core education support service providers at district level, as stated in White Paper No. 6 of 2001, include the following:

- Support personnel currently employed by the Department of Education, such as therapists, psychologists, learning support teachers, experts on specific
disabilities, and other health and welfare professionals (medical doctors and social workers).

- **Curriculum specialists**, who can provide curriculum support to teachers.
- **Management specialists**, to provide guidelines on management to schools.
- **Administrative experts**, who provide administrative and financial management support to schools.
- **Specialist support personnel** from existing special schools and other education institutions, such as higher education and further education institutions.
- **Other government professionals**, such as local government structures, the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare, the Department of Justice, the Department of Safety and Security, and the Department of Sport and Recreation, which can be co-opted, depending on the particular needs in the district.
- **Community role players**, such as parents, grandparents, and other caregivers, NGOs, organisations for people with disabilities, SGBs, teachers, and learners (Bronfenbrenner 1979).

Based on the **time frame** of inclusive education in South Africa, as mentioned in section 2.4.8, the funding strategy that is proposed in Education White Paper No. 6 is a realistic one, which takes into account the country’s fiscal realities (Department of Education 2001:43). For the short to medium term, that is, for the first eight years, a three-pronged approach to funding is proposed with the main sources being new conditional grants from government, funding from the line budgets of provincial education departments and donor funds.

Furthermore, to get all role players and stakeholders on board, well-structured and co-ordinated provincial advocacy campaigns for Education White Paper No. 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System need to be designed. In the advocacy of Education White Paper No. 6, strong emphasis should be placed on the management of diversity within our societies and education system and the important role that parents have to play in the education of their children.
As the education system is at the beginning of an inclusive paradigm, there can be no doubt that a non-segregated, anti-discriminatory environment for a diverse population of children and young people in schools will produce schools that are more sensitive and more people-oriented. It will also produce a younger generation that is more tolerant and accepting of differences and the positive influence parents can have on the education of their children with barriers to learning (Education White Paper No 6 of 2001).

The role of parents in inclusive education will be discussed in the following section.

2.8 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In order for parental involvement to be successful, the Department of Basic Education needs to look at the role of parents in their children’s education, to ensure that the education system is implemented successfully (as indicated in Chapter 6). In order for the education system to succeed, three important partners have to work together, namely the teachers, the learners, and the parents (Swart & Phasa 2005:215) (as explained in section 3.9).

Over the last decade, the terms “inclusive education” and “inclusive parental involvement” have become part of most schools’ discussions around education (Department of Basic Education 2011:1). However, schools need to be places where everyone is involved and enthusiastic, that children are keen to go to, where they can achieve, and at the end of their school career walk away with a sense of self-worth and a sense that they have received the best they could from their education (Ebersohn & Eloff 2002:79).

Therefore, irrespective of how families have responded to the birth of children with special needs, professionals have traditionally had interpretations of pathology, such as denial, displaced anger, or feelings of guilt. So, when parents have expressed dissatisfaction with professional services, this dissatisfaction has traditionally been interpreted as displaced anger towards their child with special needs (Swart & Phasa 2005:223). Even parental involvement itself was postulated as being compensation for underlying guilt feelings. As with learners and teachers, family members have
different views and experiences of inclusion. Their reactions can influence the important role they have to play in the implementation of successful inclusion programmes and the establishment of meaningful and reciprocal family-school collaborations (Salend 2011:37).

However, a significant number of parents have reported several benefits and positive effects of inclusion, such as the development of coping skills, family harmony, spiritual growth, shared roles, communication, personal growth, lessons learned, a sense of meaningfulness, and the strengthening of marriage (Singer 2002:134). With regard to family involvement, Wall (2007:32) states that families, including divorced families, that are raising a child with special needs can be traumatised in many ways (as explained in section 3.6.1), such as:

- possible feelings or grief and loss;
- having to deal with a diverse range of “expert” professionals, each with his or her own perspective on the child;
- possible feelings of loss of control over decision-making; and
- feeling confused in an unfamiliar and complex system.

It is important to note that families raising children undergo a range of experiences that can have positive or negative effects on the individuals concerned. Hence, it is imperative to listen to and attempt to understand and respect these families’ perspectives and feelings. Wall (2007:36) holds that parents may have different perspectives on development, learning, opportunities, and the future of their children, themselves, and the family as a whole. Carpenter (2000:49) asserts that “[w]here professionals can enable support for the whole family, including siblings, parents are more likely to acquire better adjustment”. It is the view of Lee (2005:65) that parents of young children with special needs often tread a path that is “steep”, “rocky”, and “fraught with pitfalls”.

When state schools were introduced, schools became institutions, separated from surrounding communities and the parents of learners had to become involved in their children’s education (McKenzie & Loebenstein 2007:186). Therefore, in terms of inclusive education, parents play an important role as agents of change in the
movement towards inclusive education. According to Salend (2011:39), inclusion is a complex undertaking that can have a positive impact on learners, their teachers and their families. This impact appears to be related to educators’ willingness to accommodate the diverse needs of learners and their families.

2.9 THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Besides issues with regard to the educational outcomes of lessons, one of the many reasons for the controversy surrounding inclusive education is the lack of preparedness of teachers in mainstream schools (Reid 2005:105). Inclusive education encourages mainstream schools to review their structures and approaches to teaching and learning, learner grouping, and the use of support, to meet the diverse learning needs of all learners (Farrell 2003:27-31). Support for diversity therefore includes inclusionary policies to reduce barriers to learning and encourage the participation of all learners to meet their educational needs and will benefit schools and their learners.

Lorenz (2002:11) highlighted the following benefits of effective inclusion for learners:

- They can learn new skills through imitation;
- They are with peers, from whom they can learn new social and real-life skills that will equip them to live in their communities;
- They have an opportunity to develop friendships with typically developing children; and
- They get access to education in their communities, instead of being sent away to special schools or staying at home.

However, it should be noted that inclusive education is a process that needs to engage all stakeholders of the school including parents and teachers are part of the stakeholders. The school is a platform for teachers to empower themselves to develop their practices in relation to their acceptance of diversity in the classroom (Nind, Sheehy, Rix, & Simmons 2003:202). Teachers are held accountable for the learning and development of all learners, as well as the progress of learners, which
needs to be assessed on an ongoing basis (continuous assessment, or CASS) (Department of Education 2005:25).

The benefits to teachers in an inclusive environment are as follows (Department of Education 2005:25; EWP6):

- They can provide one programme for all children with learning disabilities, rather than separate programmes;
- They can invite people who have experienced barriers to learning who have developed their full potential through effective education and who are not a burden to society to make a positive contribution within the education of the children; and
- Teachers will learn to appreciate the diversity in their midst.

Inclusive schools are expected to provide for all children. Children with learning, communication and behavioural difficulties want to be a part of society, they want to please and they want to be successful, but they may not know how and therefore it is important for their parents to support their children with their education (Thomas & Vaugh 2007:16). Inclusive education means ensuring that all learners have access to quality education. As a result, schools need to create an environment in which all children can learn, regardless of their barriers to learning (Thomas & Vaugh 2007:3).

Thomas and Vaugh (2007:31-32) maintain that a school that is serious about being an inclusive school should involve all parents at all levels of the school:

- Parental involvement at every level must be encouraged; and
- The school governing body (SGB) should continually discuss inclusion matters pertaining to access, achievement, and issues of diversity, bullying, and racism.

In order for inclusive education to be implemented successfully in schools in South Africa, support structures and services that can assist parents to become involved must be put in place. The benefits for parents of being part of an inclusive education are as follows (Education White Paper No. 6 (EWP6)):
• They will feel less isolated from the rest of the community;
• They will develop relationships with other families, who can provide them with support;
• They can enjoy having their children at home during their school years without needing to send them away to special schools or hostels;
• They can develop relationships with other families with children with learning disabilities and can be able to make a contribution; and
• They will be able to teach their children about individual differences and the need to accept those who are different.

The above sections focused on the respective benefits for all the various stakeholders in an inclusive educational environment.

2.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presented an introduction to the concept of inclusive education, highlighting various definitions of inclusive education, the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, documents such as, The Warnock Report, The HSRC, The Children’s Charter of South Africa, The Salamanca Statement, the Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001, and Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical framework, as well as the benefits of inclusive education were given.

In closing, inclusive education and the enhancement of parental involvement can be a success if all stakeholders recognise that education is the joint responsibility of parents, teachers, curriculum advisors and the community. A community-based approach to inclusion is a central feature of inclusive schools and the role parents have to play in the education of their children. Therefore the strategic planning within the Department of Education is crucial to ensure that management of inclusive education is recognised and addressed to enhance parental involvement at all levels and to drive the process of building inclusive education in the district, province and country.

The following chapter will present a literature review on parental involvement and the important role that parents have and need to play in the education of their children.
CHAPTER THREE

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement refers to a variety of parenting behaviours, which can either directly or indirectly affect children’s educational achievement (Bakker, Denessen & Brus-Laeven 2007:178; Barton, Drake, Perez, St Louis & George 2004:4). Parents send their children to school with an expectation that they will receive quality education, ultimately securing their future with a decent career (Strieb 2010:2; Wei Gu 2008:570-578; Prinsloo 2005:459; Smit & Liebenberg 2003:1). Some parents however are holding the school and teachers responsible for their children’s education, without them being actively involved in their teaching and learning as they should be.

For the purpose of this study, the term “parental involvement” focuses on the part played by biological parents, or those who are placed in a guardianship role, as supervisors and educators of the children. Parental involvement is important in children’s personal and social lives, as the actions of parents have a major impact on children’s development. The active role that parents need to play in their involvement is praising their children for doing good work at home, and also encouraging their children to achieve academically (Bailey 2006:165). It is also important to note that, according to Bronfenbrenner, the microsystem includes the immediate family, early learning centres, and social development. The microsystem should provide a positive environment for children to learn and experience new challenges that improve their development (Alant & Harty 2005:80; Bronfenbrenner 1979).

Western cultures place emphasis on the nuclear family, the core unit of parents and children, whereas African cultures traditionally embrace not only the immediate family, but also other relatives, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and nieces who may live under the same roof as part of the extended family (Mwamwenda 1995:429).
This chapter will review literature on parental involvement. It will focus specifically on the importance of parental involvement, the historical background, the rationale for parental involvement, different types of parenting, and how to deal with the school, family, and community as partners in the education of the child. Parents are children’s most enduring educators (Alant & Harty 2005:84; Springate & Stegelin 1999:75), and they should therefore involve themselves in the teaching and learning of their children. Ideally, parents and teachers should form a partnership in order to support the children. Based on the aforementioned, the quality of learners’ education will improve if parents are involved in their children’s education and schoolwork (Springate & Stegelin 1999:75).

3.2 THE PHENOMENON OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION

Squelch (1994:52) describes parental involvement as occurring when parents are willing to participate in school and home activities. Cotton (2001:1) states that parental involvement means that parents support their children’s schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations. Parents can become involved in their children’s education by “helping their children to improve their schoolwork, providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modelling desired behaviour (such as reading for pleasure) and monitoring, their children’s homework” (Feiler, Andrews, Greenhough, Hughes, Johnson, Scalan & Yee 2008:12-18).

Research and major reform efforts recognise parental involvement as a critical ingredient for children’s success at school (Anderson & Minke 2007:311; McKenzie & Loebenstein 2007:187; Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004:260; Kruger 2003:9). Parents are thus increasingly viewed as the most important people in their children’s educational environment, who have the greatest influence on their children’s success at school. Essentially, parental involvement improves children’s chances of performing better at school. Parental involvement, including parental engagement and community participation, therefore directly and positively affects learner outcomes (Sheely & Bratton 2010:3; Van der Werf, Creemers & Guldemond 2001:448).
Parents who are concerned about their children should invest their time in their children’s education. This is seen by the Department of Education (1996:13) as a legal responsibility of any parent or caregiver. The basic rights of children imply that parents must accept responsibility for their child’s well-being, protection, and growth towards adulthood. Children’s rights require parents to play an integral part in their children’s education. This means that the parents become the primary support structure for their children’s education and training. Schools and parents must therefore collaborate to ensure that learners are provided with effective education. Schools are a formalised extension of the family and, according to Van der Walt (1992:226), Wolfendale (1992:32), and Heystek (2002:111), they should thus adhere to the same norms and standards as the family. This relationship of the school and the parents with the child creates an opportunity for parents and teachers to enter into a more formalised and structured partnership regarding the education of the child.

Families play a vital part in the education of children (Frederickson & Cline 2002:212). Children perceive their families as consisting of people who are closest to them and who care for them day after day. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem consists of family members, which may include a mother, a father, and their children. The microsystem may also include neighbours, family friends, and partners. (Donald et al. 2002:47; Bronfenbrenner 1979), as discussed in sections 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10, and 6.2. This implies that family members are shaped through patterns of daily activities, roles, and relationships. Family units shape children’s social and emotional development, provide the most essential educational environment for children, and act as the main vehicle through which community and broader social values are transmitted (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan 2009:505; Donald et al. 2002:259-260).

It is important to note that families are the building blocks for a strong society and nation. Firstly, parents play an influential role in teaching children their vernacular languages, goals, and values. This may take place while talking at breakfast, chatting on a bus ride, reading a bedtime story or having a general conversation. Secondly, parents need to spend time listening to their children, discovering what their interests and problems are, and passing on advice and values, such as the
importance of hard work and respect. Thirdly, family involvement in school activities is commonly recognised as a substantial benefit to everyone involved (Canfield & Hansen 1993:57). It can be assumed that the family’s involvement in school activities has a positive effect on the child (Ferrara & Ferrara 2005:77; Hawes & Plourde 2005:50; Dearing, Kreider & Weiss 2008:228) and that children that grow up in such an environment will generally do everything in their power to make their parents proud. This means that the influences at home and at school, as well as the influences of peer and family groups, play a pivotal part in the education of the child (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan 2009:506).

Collaboration between parents and teachers’ thus becomes essential, and the actual roles of parents should be explored within this dynamic collaboration. Parents serve as advocates for the school in a wider community (Shepard & Rose 1995, as mentioned in section 4.4). For instance, parental involvement, and its influence on a learner’s achievement, is far-reaching (Van der Werf, Creemers & Guldemond 2001:448). It is important, because it results in better learner attendance and fewer discipline problems in the classroom. Teachers can benefit from parental involvement, because the parents offer them useful insight about their children in terms of learning and discipline (Hayden 2009:205), which enables teachers to teach in an environment where learning will occur, without them having to be concerned about social problems (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan 2009:507; Bronfenbrenner1979).

Involved parents can also assist with school activities, for example by working in the classroom to help the teacher with supervision, creating a garden, or playing an active role in the school governing body (SGB). The involvement of parents can take various forms, such as attending school functions, serving as classroom volunteers (Epstein 2002), and written homework activities (as discussed in section 4.3). Edwards and Alldred (2000:3) support this view, suggesting that the home setting should be adapted to create an educational environment, with a suitable homework environment to develop children’s learning. Parental involvement can benefit the teacher as well as helping and thereby empowering parents to support their children’s learning.
As a given framework for parent-teacher interaction, the No Child Left Behind campaign (White House 2001:32) recommended the following:

- That parents play an integral role in assisting in their children’s learning;
- That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s education at school; and
- That parents become full partners in their children’s education and are included, where relevant, in decision-making and serve on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children.

In the next section the importance of parental involvement will be discussed.

3.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Children need two important gifts from their parents, namely their time and their example as role models. Children who are denied these gifts have a weak foundation for academic achievement thus highlighting the importance of their support for their child. It is also evident that parents and teachers view the role of parental involvement in the teaching of children as important. Essentially, education forms the foundation of every child’s upbringing.

According to Anderson and Minke (2007:311), parents and educators view parental involvement differently. For example, parents have a more community-centric view of parental involvement, such as keeping their children safe and getting them to school on time, while teachers see parental involvement as requiring the presence of parents at school activities (Anderson & Minke 2007:311). Bronfenbrenner’s (1977, 1979) ecological theory confirms that the exosystem performs a role in the development of the child.

As discussed in sections 1.8, 2.6 and 6.2, Bronfenbrenner’s exosystem shows that the community also has an influence on the development of the child. The exosystem refers to the social environment beyond the learner’s experience which affects them, and which may occur in formal settings, such as a parent’s workplace, the community, welfare and health systems, or the activities of the local school board.
(Bronfenbrenner 1979). The microsystem (as explained in sections 2.6 and 3.9) refers to the relationships between the developing person and important figures, such as caregivers, parents, friends, classmates, and teachers, while the mesosystem is a system of microsystems which are formed whenever the developing individual moves into a new setting. This means that the influences across home and school, peer and family groups, work and recreational settings, are also considered (Watts et al. 2009:507; Bronfenbrenner 1979).

According to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model, the environment in which the child grows up has a direct and an indirect influence on his or her life, affecting his or her development. One ecological system is the mesosystem, which involves the interaction between the family, the school, and the peer group. It is imperative to note that a crucial factor that influences learner’s performance at school is his or her background which includes the community and environment. Springate and Stegelin (1999:76) support this view, adding that schools, families, and communities should have a general goal, namely to steer and educate children towards adulthood.

When parents become entrenched in their children’s schooling, the following features are noticeable (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila 2004:301):

- Parents’ insight into and knowledge of their children’s progress at school improves when they become involved in the school life of the child. Parents’ involvement demonstrates to their children that education is an important and valuable activity.
- Parents’ participation in decision making at school is important, because their contribution improves the educational experience of the child. Parents’ inputs are important when decisions are made, particularly regarding the appointment of teachers and fundraising events, because these decisions directly influence the quality of education that their children receive.
- Parents become more critical of information on education issues when they have sufficient understanding of activities at school. Parents should be critical about education issues, because these issues shape the type of individuals their children will become. As partners in education, parents can help control
and manage the quality of their children’s education as discussed in section 3.9, 4.7.4, 5.3.1.1, 6.2.4. Their critical inputs will ensure quality education for their children. Parental involvement is, at the least, a starting point for better parent-teacher relationships and greater involvement of parents in school activities.

Lemmer (2002:197) believes that educator-parent cooperation improves learners’ development at school, as well as their self-esteem, school attendance, and completion of homework. This suggests that parental involvement at home requires attention early in life, assistance with homework, and giving the child the space and time in which to study. This will contribute positively to the child’s achievement levels later in life (Singh et al. 2004:301). Increased involvement in the scholastic life of their children leads to improved academic performance. This will further result in parents becoming more confident in assisting their children, particularly if they have witnessed the positive results of their efforts.

Hornby (2002:1-2) and Lemmer (2002:197) support the aforementioned view, pointing out that parental involvement has a positive effect on children’s scholastic performance and holds significant benefits for the school. These benefits are discussed below.

*The benefits of parental involvement for the school:*

Parents that are involved in their children’s education will be able to motivate them to improve academically. As a result, their children will manifest positive attitudes and behaviour in school, which will improve their attitude towards and conduct during learning in the classroom, which will improve their study habits and academic performance.

*The benefits of parental involvement for the child:*

When parents are involved in their children’s education, their children will achieve better school-leaving results, which will empower them to further their studies and increase their employment potential.
The improved academic performance of learners will result in a greater enrolment in post-secondary education. Better school-leaving results will also benefit learners by empowering and encouraging them to increase their academic qualifications, with possible enrolments at higher education institutions, which will further increase their employment potential.

*The benefits of parental involvement for the teacher:*

If parents are involved, teachers will feel more supported, and their morale might improve, which will positively affect the entire ethos at the school.

*The benefits of parental involvement for the parent:*

The approach of parents towards teachers and the school will become more positive, which will improve the relationship between the parents and the teachers. As a result, communication with the teachers will also improve, which will create a conducive atmosphere for better collaboration between the two parties. This is a prerequisite for the establishment of a relationship of trust, based on mutual respect.

Oosthuizen (2003:20) suggests that South African parents lack interest in becoming involved in their children’s education and school activities. The foregoing discussion emphasises the importance and benefits of parental involvement. The historical background of parental involvement in school life in South Africa contributed to the status-quo and will be discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

### 3.4 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Before 1994 when apartheid still existed, there were significant differences in the standard of schools for black, Indian, Coloured and white learners (Ngidi & Qwabe 2006:529). Much more money was spent on white education, with the result that black learners did not have access to the same opportunities, equipment, and facilities as white learners. White schools generally had excellent equipment and facilities. The situation caused black parents to feel powerless, which resulted in
them adopting apathetic attitudes as a coping mechanism (Ngidi & Qwabe 2006:529). These attitudes were manifested in a lack of participation in their children’s school activities.

To complicate matters further, black parents did not stay near their places of work and near the schools which their children attended. Apartheid legislation prevented black adults from staying near their work, which was usually situated in or near “exclusively white areas”, and they therefore had to travel far. Often, they were forced to leave their children in the care of grandparents and move closer to the cities and their employers. Lack of effective transport and communication also contributed to low levels of parental involvement in school activities (Tsotetsi, Van Wyk & Lemmer 2008:385; Heystek 2002:114).

Under the apartheid regime, schools in South Africa operated in an ethos of authoritarianism (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004:261). This implies that minimal parental involvement was expected and parents were only expected to contribute financially and had little or no say in school governance (Heystek & Louw 1999:21). Parents were mainly expected to pay school fees, attend school events, and raise funds. Parents were excluded from the day-to-day governing of schools, which limited their involvement in their children’s future. In many black communities, parental involvement was virtually non-existent (Singh et al. 2004:301).

In addition to the aforementioned reasons for parental absence from school activities and school life, political turbulence, poor socio-economic conditions and despondent teachers lead to parents showing little or no interest in their children’s education (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004:2). As a result of this apathy, parents distanced themselves from the school system and left the teachers to do the work that the parents felt they were not adequately trained to do. This culminated in a situation where schools assumed full and exclusive responsibility for the teaching of children (Van Schalkwyk 1990:55). All the above-mentioned issues resulted in the alienation of parents from school activities and school life. Parents had no say or control over the curriculum, teacher selection, or the management and educational processes that affected their children’s learning and teaching. Kruger (1996:55) argues that formal education on its own cannot fully satisfy the demands of the 21st century, and
that for this reason, parents must assist and support formal education, in the interests of a more comprehensive and relevant education.

The generally low standard of apartheid education, together with the fact that disadvantaged schools were perceived as apartheid structures, also made parents in South Africa reluctant to participate in school activities (Heystek 2002:113). The South African Schools Act (SASA) (see section 2.4.3 and 5.3.2.1) requires parents to be involved in school activities, yet parents still show a reluctant attitude because schools and communities have remained two separated and isolated entities for far too long (Theron & Bothma 1990:26).

The lack of parental involvement in the education system resulted in parents being uninvolved in many important areas of their children’s education, such as:

- Decisions about which is the best education system to use, in which parents’ understanding of the cultural context would have been invaluable.
- Support for the system, including fundraising.
- Creation of the curriculum and the design of courses, in which parents’ knowledge of relevant information should have played a crucial role.
- The selection of teachers, who are responsible for the transmission of appropriate skills, information, and values during learners’ formative years (Theron & Botha 1990:26).

In addition to the reasons stated above, there are more recent causes for the apathetic behaviour of parents towards their children’s future. In the following section, the researcher examines recent causes of lack of parental involvement, which, while having their origins in previous administrations, nevertheless have relevance within a contemporary framework.

**3.5 POSSIBLE CAUSES OF LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

In this section, the focus is on the possible causes of lack of involvement of parents in the education of their children in a contemporary setting.
Davies (2002:2) identified the following likely causes why parents do not take actively part of school activities and school life:

- Single parents do not have sufficient time to attend to and participate in school activities. They sometimes have to take on a second job to supplement their salary, which leaves them no time to do anything else.
- Language constitutes a barrier to interaction with teachers. Most parents enrol their children in schools where the medium of instruction is English, while this is not usually the home language of the child. Many parents lack confidence to communicate with teachers in a language other than their own.

The researcher identified important factors from the literature that contribute to the lack of involvement of parents in school activities. These factors make parental involvement in school challenging, because of the effect that they have on the parents. They are as follows:

- Socio-economic factors (Swart & Phasa 2005:221);
- Low literacy levels (Green 2005:227; Strauss & Burger 2000:41);
- Cultural factors (Ngidi & Qwabe 2006:529);
- Challenges with regard to transport (Molepo 2000:83);
- Home-school communication (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004:183); and
- The education system and the changes in the curriculum (Stern 2003:11).

The researcher will now discuss these factors as well as other barriers to parental involvement.

### 3.5.1 Socio-economic factors

The socio-economic status (SES) of parents and their level of education are particularly relevant within the South African context (Swart & Phasa 2005:221). We live in a country with vast inequalities, and the SES of parents should be considered when requiring families and communities to become involved in the education of their children. Parents of a low SES are generally less involved in the education of their children, due to their disadvantaged circumstances. They usually do not
possess the necessary resources to invest in their children’s education. Disadvantaged communities have traditionally displayed the highest levels of lack of parental involvement (Maynard & Howley 2004:39). There is a stereotypical link between parents of a low SES and lack of involvement in school. It is claimed that these parents show little or no interest in the education of their children (Bridgemohan, Van Wyk & Van Staden 2005:11).

Epstein (2002) argues that, regardless of parents’ SES, all parents want their children to accomplish something in life. Some high-achieving children come from impoverished homes. The researcher agrees with Christenson and Sheridan (2001:53), who conclude that background knowledge about SES is important, because it can be used to assist children who are at risk of failure, but that such knowledge cannot be used to argue that children from an impoverished home environment cannot succeed at school, or that their parents are not interested in their education.

According to the South African Constitution, every child has the right to an education (SASA, Act 84 of 1996, as discussed in section 2.4.3, 5.3.2.1). Because of this constitutional right, learners cannot be turned away or refused admission to a school because they cannot afford to pay school fees (Legotlo 1994:109). School principals working in disadvantaged areas often struggle with finances, in spite of parental involvement, because such involvement does not necessarily include financial support (Maynard & Howley 2004:37). The parents of learners in disadvantaged schools often cannot afford to buy stationery for their children. Maynard & Howley (2004:40) further asserts that due to class delimitations, parents feel inferior to the comparatively educated, knowledgeable and affluent educators and therefore are not involved.

Many parents with low SES has low literacy levels and receives little or inadequate information with regard to school activities from the schools. This may result in a reluctance to attend school meetings out of fear of being embarrassed or humiliated (Teffo 2008:68; McGrath & Kuriloff 1999:604; Wagstaff & Gallagher 1990:105). Involving parents from disadvantaged communities can be challenging, especially when their income is very low because it places these parents at a disadvantage as
they cannot pay school fees and therefore feel that they have no say in the education of their children, because they cannot contribute financially (McGrath & Kurilhoff 1999:604). Affluent parents can afford to support their children’s schools financially and are literate enough to help their children with their schoolwork, whereas lower-class parents can hardly afford to feed their families, and so cannot support their children’s schools financially.

Lower-class parents have to attend to basic needs such as food and clothing before they can pay their school fees. According to Maslow’s (2008:5) hierarchy of needs, an individual has needs that must be satisfied, and lower-level needs must be satisfied before higher-level needs can be satisfied. Maslow (2008:5) believes that aims and drives always move to the next level of needs on the hierarchy, and that thwarting these needs usually causes stress.

The five levels of Maslow’s (2008:5) hierarchy of needs, in ascending order of ranking, are:

- Biological and physical needs, such as the need for air, food, drink, warmth, and sleep.
- Safety needs, such as the need for protection from the elements, security, law and order, limits and stability.
- Belonging and love needs, such as the need for work, group affiliation, family, affection, and relationships.
- Esteem needs, such as the need for self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, and managerial responsibility.
- Self-actualisation needs, namely the need to realise personal potential and self-fulfilment and to seek personal growth and peak experiences.

According to the levels in Maslow’s (2008:5) hierarchy of needs, education falls under the fifth level, namely cognitive needs. Although parents receive a social grant, they first need to see to their basic needs such as food and clothing, before paying school fees. This is in line with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Maslow’s (2008:5) is of
the opinion that the physical and biological needs to be met before the next level of needs can be satisfied.

In South Africa, poverty manifests in negative factors, such as ill health, undernourishment, educational backlog, unsupportive environments, communication and language deficiencies, and a negative, pessimistic and hopeless view of the future (Prinsloo 2005:28; Prinsloo in Van Wyk & Lemmer 2002:65) and undesirable standards of education. Most households in South Africa live in dire poverty or in continuing vulnerability to being poor, which suggests that it is unlikely that they will progress to a situation which is more conducive to good levels of education. As such, many children still have an unsatisfactory access to education (May 1998:1). The limited financial resources available to many caregivers and parents prevent them from providing for even the most basic needs of the children in their care.

Because of poverty, most parents in these disadvantaged communities find themselves occupied with a quest for daily survival, looking for the next meal of the day or the following term’s school fees, consequently failing to address the basic education needs of their children. Their children often go to bed hungry or sick. In circumstances such as these, many children find it difficult to learn (Angela & Bratton 2010:176; Rudolph 2009:1).

Poverty remains a huge problem in South Africa, with the result that the previously disadvantaged schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth still struggle, with many children dropping out of the education system altogether (Letseka & Breier 2008:83; Prinsloo 2005:28). The government has changed underprivileged schools into no fee paying schools (Department of Education 1996). Concerted efforts therefore need to be made to identify and involve institutions, businesses, and individuals in the community that can support these disadvantaged schools financially.

As long as poverty is a problem in our society, schools in South Africa will continue to deteriorate, resulting in a negative academic self-concept among learners. This will contribute to academic failure and premature retirement from the education system by learners, all of which will serve to erode literacy levels at home and in the
community (Le Roux 1994:35-36). Therefore parents need to support their children in their teaching and learning in order to enhance parental involvement at primary schools.

The low literacy levels of parents are also a reason why parents are not involved in their children’s education. This is discussed below.

3.5.2 Low literacy levels

Literacy is seen as a tool and a process of empowerment, therefore it is important that parents empower and organise themselves to change for the better and to improve the conditions in which they live (Molepo 2000:75). Low levels of parental literacy at home are one of the main factors limiting parental involvement, because when parents struggle to read and write, they find it difficult to assist their children with homework. For example, disadvantaged parents with low levels of education may be less involved in their child’s school activities because they feel less confident in communicating with school staff (Strauss & Burger 2000:41), and due to a lack of knowledge of the school system and set-up. Their communication skills may be poor, and they may feel daunted when required to complete forms (O’Connor & Geiger 2009:260; Lee & Bowen 2006:198; Mpeta 2000:9). Many are reluctant to voice their opinions during parent meetings, and therefore often leave the meeting with unanswered questions.

Parents’ limited education may lead to fear and mistrust. Many parents are supportive and wish for a good quality education for their children, but feel intimidated by the teachers and the principal. A minority of parents feel uncomfortable about approaching school personnel, particularly if they have had negative contact with the school (Pena 2000:4). These parents feel out of place among teachers and typically have no recourse but to distance themselves from school activities. Stern (2003:84) holds that even illiterate parents know their children better than the teachers and are also likely to teach them more. Their teaching, however, has little to do with academic knowledge, and much to do with life itself, but they do not necessarily provide their children with educationally enhancing lessons (Smit & Liebenberg 2003:1-5).
From the above, it is clear that low levels of literacy at home impact negatively on the child’s learning, therefore parents need to become involved in the scholastic development of their children to have a positive influence on their teaching and learning.

Parental participation may also be influenced by cultural differences which could further increase the lack of parental involvement in schools.

3.5.3 Cultural and social factors

One of the major challenges that teachers are faced with is the diversity of children and parents in schools (Ngidi & Qwabe 2006:529). This has become even more challenging, as parents now present a greater diversity of cultures. This diversity in the cultural backgrounds of families adds to the complexity of the parent-teacher relationship (LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling 2011:117). The central goal is to have an excellent parent-teacher relationship, which will result in a positive learner outcome. Although diversity is an asset in an inclusive community, cultural differences can create communication problems. Articulate and well-formulated means of communication is imperative when the child’s traditions and social background vary from those of the educator (Treit 2009:297; Bridgemohan, Van Wyk & Van Staden 2005:8). Most parents sometimes find it hard to communicate in English, making it difficult to assist with their children’s schoolwork and leave them feeling discouraged to engage with the school system (Pena 2000:22). A lack of effective communication can hamper parental involvement, as parents are often reluctant to contact the school, particularly if the teacher is not familiar with their language or culture. This could cause parents to feel out of place and unwelcome at the school (Christenson & Sheridan 2001:86). Such differences often lead to distrust and distance between families and school (Hiatt-Michael 2001:43).

Since teachers can influence parents’ willingness to participate in school activities, cultural factors such as religion, race, and language could influence parents’ involvement. Parents from a different religion, race, or language may be less involved with school activities as they feel less confident about communicating with a particular staff member because of a lack of knowledge of the religion of that staff
member (Lee & Bowen 2006:198). Cultural barriers can mean that parental involvement in school affairs might not come naturally or easily. This creates an imbalanced situation at school, because those with, for example, a high level of English proficiency will be more willing to become involved than those who are less proficient in English (Kruger & Steinman 2003:19).

In schools in which the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is English but the parents and the learners are only able to communicate comfortably in their vernacular, the imbalance could lead to feelings of resentment, anger, shame, and low self-esteem in parents and caregivers. This promotes a lack of involvement by parents and caregivers and compounds the problem of their inability to assist their children with schoolwork. The sad result is that parents and their children then often develop in different directions, with little common ground in terms of culture, language, and life experiences (Prinsloo 2005:37).

Another cause for parents' lack of involvement is a lack of transport, which also has a negative impact on the child's schooling.

### 3.5.4 Challenges with regard to transport

Personal issues, such as challenges with regard to transport and a shortage of resources, also influence parental involvement. The availability of transport and childcare in close proximity has a major impact on whether or not parents participate in school affairs and events. A lack of transport and vast distances between places of residence and the school may prevent parents from attending activities and school meetings, particularly at night, as many parents of learners live in townships, usually situated quite a distance from the school (Molepo 2000:83).

In urban areas, parents often work long hours that they seldom have the time to get involved in the running of their children’s school or even to assist or encourage their children in their scholastic pursuits (Prinsloo 2005:460). According to Springate and Stegelin (1999:24), teachers must be mindful of parents’ work schedules and the challenges that families face with regard to transportation when implementing plans to involve parents in the education of their children.
The Department of Basic Education sometimes provides transport to convey learners to school and back home. However, because of a lack of funds, the Department no longer pays for bus services, which then requires learners to walk long distances to school, particularly learners that reside in townships (Williams 2011:5). Due to the lack of reliable transport, parents every day have to make alternative transport arrangements to get their children to school and back safely. The lack of reliable transport has a negative impact on learners, as they often do not get to school on time. The transport problem also leads to a high rate of absenteeism (Williams 2011:5).

It is advisable for schools to have an open-door policy, which will enable them to communicate freely with parents concerning the problem of absenteeism and to find possible solutions (Stern 2003:11).

3.5.5 Home-school communication

Communication that occurs between a learner's home and the school is of vital importance and should include topics such as the progress of the learner and the activities occurring at school. According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:183) and Stein and Thorkildsen (1999:40), the extent to which a school communicates with parents will generally be an indicator of parents' involvement in school activities. To encourage effective and efficient communication with families, schools should implement a range of annual school-to-home and home-to-school communication strategies about school programmes and activities (Hanhan 1998:107). Barnard (1995:405) and Delgado-Gaitan (1991:21) argue that there is a link between a lack of communication between schools and lack of parental involvement in school education programmes. It may therefore be inferred that some parents might not participate in school activities because they are oblivious of school programmes and operations. Communication between parents and the school is essential for a good relationship between the two parties.

Furthermore, home-school communication should be part of a co-equal relationship. Teachers often regard themselves as somewhat superior to parents, based on their professional expertise, while parents, on the other hand, often feel less adequate
than teachers, because of their low levels of literacy. Although all schools usually invest considerable time and energy in communicating with parents, most communication between home and school tends to be one-way, that is, from the school to the home (Murawski & Spencer 2011:50). Some parents are illiterate, and therefore cannot read or write and therefore cannot easily communicate with teachers (Lee & Brown 2006:198; Brown & Brown 2006:12-13; Green 2005:227). One-way communication dominates in written circulars and at general parent meetings. Individual parent-teacher interviews allow for more two-way communication, but are often no more than brief exchanges so as to accommodate large numbers of parents at a time. If parents and teachers are not adequately prepared for these exchanges and provided with relevant information about the child, strategies to improve opportunities for further feedback, these meetings tend to be unsuccessful (Berger 2000:219; Molepo 2000:76). According to Hanhan (1998:107) little effort is made or few channels are created by school staff to listen to the vitally important information parents have about their children, their ideals for their children, their home culture, and their views on education If schools truly want parents to become involved in the education of their children, they must provide parents with ample opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns, and views in a co-equal relationship with teachers (Hanhan 1998:107).

The school principal is the main communicator in the school and has the important task of encouraging parents to enter into a partnership with the school and to ensure reciprocal communication between the school and the home (Hosiin 2007:2; Barnard 1995:430). Regular and effective two-way communication between the school and the home is needed in order to integrate the various components of this partnership into a closely knit unit, and also for the exchange of information regarding the child. In this regard, the researcher agrees with Barnard and Hosiin, respectively, who argue that successful communication will ensure that the partnership between the parents and the school enhances the education of the child.

Over the past 19 years, the education system in South Africa has been through various changes, which have had an impact on teachers and learners and the involvement of parents in the education of their children. This is discussed below.
3.5.6 The education system and changes in the curriculum

During the past 19 years, there have been several changes in South Africa’s education system. Curriculum 2005 was replaced by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), which was followed by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). With the implementation of the NCS and RNCS in South Africa, the focus shifted from teacher-centred learning to more cooperative learning (CAPS 2010). The NCS and RNCS approach focused on knowledge, skills, and values worth learning, which would ensure that learners acquired and applied knowledge and skills in ways that were meaningful to their own lives, that is, a more learner-centred learning style.

Therefore, it was required of learners to do more work in their own time and to accomplish this approach effectively. Resources such as books, pictures, and journals would assist learners, but more important was the assistance, help, and support that they could obtain from their parents. These approaches were good in theory, but the challenge that learners from lower socio-economic areas faced was that of insufficient resources to benefit from the new curriculum (Calitz, Fuglestad & Lillejord 2002:112). Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:112) maintain that the NCS approach can widen the gap between school and the community in poorer areas of South Africa.

The NCS and RNCS approaches were followed by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), the new curriculum that all South African schools are currently using. The changes in the education system required of parents that they play a significant role in the education of their children (Department of Education 1997b:27).

The above changes may very well have contributed to the apathy shown by parents in their children’s education. While a change from the bureaucratic structures of the past was necessary, the subsequent constant changes in the curriculum have made people feel confused and intimidated (Janson 1996:95). Most parents are of the opinion that the education system is difficult to get to and intimidating, because of their low level of education (Monareng 1996; Viljoen 1994; Delgado-Gaitan 1991).
Due to the changes in the curriculum, parents prefer to stay away from schools and the educated people who teach at them, because they feel intimidated by them (Stern 2003:11). Schools also have formal legal structures, policies and other formal rules in place that may deter parents. If these could be simplified for parents, they would understand them better and cooperate more with the schools (Stern 2003:11).

Parental involvement generally declines as children progress from primary school to secondary school (Halsey 2005:57). This may be due to the level of difficulty that increases as the child progresses from one phase to the next. Teachers fail to comprehend this, and parents have fewer opportunities for involvement as their children get older (Halsey 2005:57).

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which is the current curriculum in South Africa, requires parents to use the knowledge that they have gained over their lives to build and develop their community and their country (Department of Basic Education 2013:1). After the implementation of this new curriculum (CAPS), it was difficult for teachers, parents, and learners to adapt.

In addition to the above factors affecting parental involvement, many other factors play an essential role in the relationship between parents and the school. In the following section, the researcher will examine some of these factors.

### 3.6 THE STATUS OF THE PARENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The South African Schools Act (SASA), Act No. 84 of 1996 (as mentioned in section 2.4.3, 5.3.2.1), defines a parent as any primary caregiver. This may refer to the biological parent or the legal guardian, the person legally entitled to the custody of a learner, or any person who assumes responsibility for the learner's schooling. This broad definition of a parent provides a legal basis for schools in South Africa to formally recognise different types of families and implies that schools have an obligation to develop an inclusive range of parental involvement. Among others, this implies that a parent may be single, married, a relative (a cousin, an aunt, an uncle, or a grandparent), a legal guardian, an older sibling, a surrogate parent, or a foster
parent. For children, their family consists of those persons closest to them and who care for them daily. These are the people that we as adults remember so vividly when recalling major influences in our childhood (Dowling 2010:187).

During the last two decades, the structure of families in South Africa has undergone compelling changes (Salend 2011:124). Economic pressures that have necessitated that parents work, teenage pregnancies, and welfare reform have brought about a change in the family structure and functioning. This means that children from all race groups are likely to experience significant changes in family structure and to live in a variety of family configurations during their childhood and adolescent years (Salend 2011:124; Amoateng, Richter, Makiwane & Rama 2004:64).

Regardless of a family’s composition and the unique challenges most parents face, every parent want their children to succeed in school (Salend 2011:124). Where families however are dysfunctional due to a myriad of situations, such as death, divorce, or abandonment, teachers must respond to the needs of the child affected by such family dysfunction by providing the required love, care, and support (Amoateng et al. 2004:64).

The following types of parents are found in the South African context:

- Divorced parents;
- Single parents;
- Teenagers becoming parents;
- Grandparents;
- Unemployed parents; and

These different types of parents and their impact on schooling are discussed below.

**3.6.1 Divorced parents**

Divorce is the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the
marriage partners (Wygant 2011:1; Wiechers 2003:1; Springate & Stegelin 1993:163). Akpan (2007:1) looks at the negative impact that divorce can have on children and the stability of families. He gives descriptions of children that have been made vulnerable by separated couples, forgotten commitments, resentment, hostility, bitterness, and economic hardships, all of which are very common in today’s world.

Children who experience the separation or divorce of their parents are therefore at risk of developing emotional and behavioural problems (Wiechers 2003:1). The most commonly observed problems in the children of divorced parents are a decline in academic success, restless conduct, attentiveness problems, increased daydreaming and violent behaviour, anxiety, depression, interpersonal problems, peer relationship difficulties, and a negative self-concept (Hornby 2000:135). The adjustment of children of divorced parents to the separation of their parents may be very traumatic, involving deep-seated feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and divided loyalties.

From the above discussion, it is clear that divorce affects every member of the family. All over the world, the divorce rate increased steadily in the second half of the 20th century. South Africa was no exception, recording one of the highest divorce rates in the world (Gerdes 1998:190). Divorce affects the two adult marriage partners involved, their children, and also the extended family. Regardless of which parent receives custody of the children, when parents divorce, the children feel the pain and disappointment that accompanies the break-up in the marriage union. As parents often experience stress during the period of the divorce proceedings, they may not be capable of providing the support and guidance that their children need. This could lead to a lack of parental involvement in the child’s schoolwork, which could result in poor academic performance by the child (Akpan 2007:18-19). In instances of divorce, it may also be difficult for teachers to know which parent to communicate with regarding their scholastic development.

It is therefore clear that teachers should equip themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to help the children of divorced parents and to successfully implement parental involvement strategies. Teachers’ success in this regard will
depend largely on their ability to communicate with parents and families on a regular basis (Strous 2007:223). However, teachers need training in dealing with divorced parents. Children from divorced families are, on average more disadvantaged than children who live better functional families. These children generally present more learning difficulties in school, behavioural problems, negative self-concept, problems with peers and have difficulty getting along with their parents (Hughes 2009:1; Amato 2001:335-370).

Kelly and Emery (2003:352-362) and Amato (1993:23-38) indicate that several factors affect children and parental involvement in divorced families, which may contribute to children’s difficulties. These are:

- Parental loss;
- Economic loss;
- Life stress; and
- Conflict between parents.

Each of the above factors will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

- *Parental loss.* Mothers and fathers are an integral and essential resource for children (Kelly & Emery 2003:352-362; Amato 1993:23-38). They provide emotional support and practical assistance and serve as good role models for their children. Kelly and Emery (2003:357) report that, on average, non-residential fathers see their children only once a quarter subsequent to a divorce and that two to three years after that, about 20% of children have no contact whatsoever with their father. In contrast, non-residential mothers have more frequent visits and are less likely to sever ties with the child. However, the lack of contact between the non-residential father and his children is not the determining factor, but it is the quality of the relationship that matters. There is increasing proof attesting to the negative effect of non-residential fathers on their children while on the other hand when there is frequent contact and minimum conflict, children fare far better at school. However, when there is conflict, frequent visits have been correlated with poor adjustment by children.
Amato and Gilbreth (1999) established that when fathers assist with homework, set appropriate limits and expectations, and demonstrate affection, children fare better at school. Good parenting by non-custodial parents is therefore crucial to a child’s educational future.

Another problem that children have to endure during the divorce of their parents is the financial challenges that the divorced parents are faced with.

- **Economic loss.** As a result of limited financial resources, children in single-parent families may experience more difficulties and challenges than children in two-parent families. After a divorce, custodial parents (mostly mothers) have less economic resources, less help in the provision of childcare and behavior monitoring, and lower levels of support than married parents (Amateng et al. 2004:64; McLanchan & Sandefur 1994). There is a common belief that many of the difficulties experienced by children are the result of the economic difficulties in these families. One way in which a low income home may impact on children is the disruption that may result from there being fewer resources available. As the result of divorce many families have to change residence which may result in changes in schools, childcare, friends, and other supportive relationships (Amato 1993:30). In short, less economic means often adds to more disruption in the scholastic future of a child, as a result parents cannot meet the financial needs of the child with regards to their education which leads to a lack of parental involvement.

Children experience tremendous stress when their parents go through a divorce

- **Life stress.** During a divorce, children experience stress, because they fear being separated from those who are their source of love, security, and protection (Gerdes 1998:191). The buildup of multiple stressors and changes in their lives creates difficulties for children. The relationship between parents and children may fluctuate, and children are often moved from one household to
another (Wallerstein & Kelly 1983:268). The more often children in single-parent families lives are disrupted by moving, the more likely children are to drop out of school or become pregnant during their teen years (Crowder & Teachman 2004). In general, the more stressful and painful a child’s experience is during a divorce, the more difficulties they and their parents will experience which could lead to a lack of parental involvement in the children’s education.

During a divorce, parents are often in conflict with one another as discussed below.

- **Conflict between parents.** Conflict between parents throughout the divorce proceedings negatively affects the well-being of the child. It has been found that children in high-conflict families (intact or divorced) fare worse academically than children in low-conflict families (Gerdes 1998:58). Contrary to Gerdes’ (1998:58) findings, some studies have found that children in non-conflict single-parent families fare better academically than children in conflictual two-parent families. There is also evidence that children generally begin to have difficulties prior to divorce and that some of these difficulties are associated with prevailing conflict prior to the divorce (Kelly & Emery 2003:357; Gerdes 1998:58).

It is important to note that divorce does affect children at school, and also their parents’ involvement in their education. According to Kelly and Emery (2003:359), divorce has a negative impact on children. In many cases, children are the ones that suffer the most. Divorced parents are likely to have less time for their children than they had before the divorce, and the child’s sense of loss can be real. Due to the high rate of divorce in modern society, most children are reared by single parents.

Single parenthood can also negatively impact on the scholastic performance of children and can lead to a lack of parental involvement in the academic life of their children. The next type of parent that will be discussed is the single parent.
3.6.2 Single parents

Single parents are parents who have one child or more children living without partners (Lee, Kushner & Cho 2007:152). Single parents can be mothers or father figures who carry out their duties as parents and support their children’s education, regardless of the child’s gender, race, and class (Reay 1995:338; Griffith, Allison & Smith 1990:4; Enders-Dragasser 1987:211). It is the perception of teachers that mothers are generally more involved in their children’s education than fathers are (Reay 1995:338; Manicom 1984:80). The relationship that children form with their parents, particularly with the mother, forms the blueprint for all their subsequent relationships (De Witt & Booysen 1995:8). With single-parenting, the children usually stay with the mother, who takes care of them (Saracho & Spodek 2008:82). As a result, the mother plays a more prominent role in the child’s education than the father. The mother figure usually takes the leading role, attending school meetings and caring for the nutritional needs of her children (Griffith, Allison & Smith 1990:4).

In most cases, fathers are not involved in their children’s growth and happiness. Many fathers have little experience of dealing with children and lack understanding of good parenting (Saracho & Spodek 2008:82; Fagan & Iglesias 1999:246). The father is therefore seen as being too distracted elsewhere to be part of his children’s learning. Fathers often merely meet their children’s financial needs. Fathers, who experience economic challenges, encounter many barriers that make it difficult to become involved in their children education. As a result, these children may experience high rates of unemployment, early childbearing outside of marriage, negative life events, and an absence of positive male role models (Furstenberg 1995:119). A respected role model is perceived to be helping boys who are seeking to create and understand their place in the world. A role model also helps girls formulate the terms of respectful and happy relationships with the opposite sex. It is important for fathers to be involved in their children’s wellbeing and security in order to guide them towards taking their rightful place in society (Wenk, Hardesty, Morgan & Blair 1994:230). It is also important to note that research on daughters who live with highly involved single fathers has established that such girls perform better academically as other girls whose fathers are not involved (Tan & Goldberg 2009:2; Hallman, Dienhart & Beaton 2007:4; Lee, Kushner & Cho 2007:149). Society
considers men to be good fathers when they provide for their family financially, but is silent on the interaction between fathers and their children (Saracho & Spodek 2008:823; Fletcher & Silberberg 2006:29). A father therefore, plays a crucial role in their children’s education whether contributing financially or spending quality time with their children.

According to Comer and Haynes (1991:273), single parents are always busy after work, and they most likely cannot cope with the demands placed on them to see to the needs of their children. As a result, they simply do not have enough time to attend to their children’s needs, let alone attend school activities (Comer and Haynes (1991:273). This implies that single parents are more likely to seek help from relatives to help raise their children (Amoateng et al. 2004:74). Most children that are raised in this way become uncontrollable, and problems such as a high rate of dropping out and teenage pregnancy become the norm (Rankin & Kern 1994:497).

In the following section, the phenomenon of teenage parents will be discussed.

### 3.6.3 Teenagers becoming parents

Schools in South Africa are faced with high rates of teenage pregnancy, which is one of the biggest problems facing teenagers (Amato & Keith 1991:544). The impact of teenage pregnancy on educational success and economic progress later in life remains negative. Early childbearing requires strong familial support. Lack of parental and peer support both contribute to a high school dropout rate (Klepinger, Lundberg & Plotnick 1994). Teenage mothers tend to have fewer years of schooling than women who have had their first child after 20 years of age (Berglas, Brindis & Cohen 2003; Fergusson, Woodward & Horwood 2000). Fergusson, Woodward and Horwood (2000) further hold that the impact of teenage pregnancy on educational achievement is determined by the timing of the pregnancy and the manner the young woman and her family respond to the pregnancy.

Children have now become sexually active from a very early age in life. Consequently, families have to tend to unplanned babies conceived by their teenage daughters (Cairney & Munsie 1995:395). Due to the immaturity of teenage girls, they
cannot assume full responsibility for their own children. They still require parental
guidance, care, and participation in their school activities when they return to school.
In the majority of cases, they are shy to be seen walking around with an infant child.
Generally, teenage parents are not mature enough to participate in the education of
their child.

Teenage pregnancy has a negative impact on parental involvement (Olausson,
Haglund, Weitloft & Cnattingius 2001). The parents of teenage mothers often have to
raise their grandchildren, and it often also becomes the responsibility of other family
members to help raise these children. As a result, tension arises, which affects the
whole family (Donald et al. 2010:38). Teenage pregnancy can have a profound
impact on young girls, placing barriers on their educational paths and subjecting
them to economic instability and predisposing them to single parenthood and marital
insecurity in the future (Ashcraft & Lang 2006; National Campaign to Prevent Teen
Pregnancy 2002; Olausson, Haglund, Weitloft & Cnattingius 2001). Adolescent
pregnancy has increased (UNFPA 2007), and teenagers become mothers without
the necessary knowledge, skills, resources, and support network to cope with the
demands of parenthood. As a result, these teenage mothers show reluctance
towards their children’s education due to the high demands of parenthood.

Often grandparents have to fulfil the role of parents. The phenomenon of
grandparents acting as parents is discussed below.

3.6.4 Grandparents

The number of children living with grandparents’ has increased significantly over the
past decade (Lemmer 2009:96). As a result, many learners are being raised by their
grandparents. The reasons include a family crisis or disaster. The biological mother
may be either a single parent, divorced, or deceased. This has resulted in the
situation in families where grandparents become substitute parents (Amoateng et al.
2004:74). As grandchildren have become more reliant on grandparents for the
security of a home, grandparents responsibility for raising children have increased
often in tough economic circumstances (Glover 2010:1).
Other challenges that such grandparents face are a housing and foreclosure crisis (Prinsloo 2005:460). Particularly in disadvantaged communities, many grandparents are raising their grandchildren while the parents are at work. This situation prevails in families where grandparents then become substitute parents, as a result of the children being left in their care (Weeto 1997:5). The grandparent’s government pension often has to provide for the entire family and meet their everyday needs. Most of these grandparents and caregivers derive great joy from their role, as bonds are strengthened with these children, who become their children, instead of their grandchildren. However, the responsibility of caring for these children leads to financial, health, housing, education and work challenges, which often foil the grandparents’ retirement plans (Glover 2010:1).

It is alarming to note how many parents just drop off their children early in the morning at the grandparents’ home and then pick them up at the end of their working day (Van Wyk & Van Staden 2005:18). Many parents have to work away from home to make a living to provide for their families, and they only return home at the end of the month. Furthermore, many parents have to work in urban areas to earn money for the household, leaving the task of parenting to the grandparents or members of the extended family. Because many parents have to work far from home, they often have little time or energy left to involve themselves in their children’s learning at home or at school. Teachers should take note of the challenges that some families face in becoming involved in their children’s learning. It is required of grandparents who raise children to see that the children do their schoolwork. They now have the added responsibility of having to become involved in school affairs. Due to their age or ill health, the grandparents are often unable or reluctant to attend school meetings or activities (Weeto 1997:51).

Grandparents often do not have the energy to fulfil the role of parents as far as education is concerned. Most grandparents suffer from ill health and can provide only food and a roof over their grandchildren’s heads. Grandparents often find that they are too old to socialise. Many feel guilty or embarrassed that they have to take over their adult children’s parental roles, and they worry about the pressures facing their children (Lemmer 2009:97; Stanley 1997:2).
A further consequence is that parents show very little or no interest in the school careers of their children, as was discussed above. Another contributing factor to the lack of parental participation in children’s education is the HIV/AIDS endemic in South Africa. This will be discussed in the following paragraph.

3.6.5 HIV/AIDS in South Africa and its influence on parental involvement

Hall (2003:34) asserts that in the past decade, South Africa has experienced exponential growth in the prevalence of HIV infections. The scale of the HIV epidemic is enormous, and the effects of HIV/AIDS-related deaths are felt by families, communities, and institutions. However, recognition of the unfolding tragedy has been slow to gain momentum, partly due to the stigma attached to HIV infection, denial at personal and community level, and the confused approach of government towards the pandemic. Although the exact number of South Africans infected with HIV is contested by various groups and government, this seems hardly relevant when one considers that it was estimated that only 40,000 HIV-positive South Africans were receiving antiretroviral treatment and that the vast majority of them would develop and succumb to AIDS in a number of years (Quinlan & Willan 2005:241).

AIDS has crippled Africa, the most affected continent in the world, with Eastern and Southern Africa being the most severely affected. South Africa is the country with the highest rate of new infections per day, namely 1,600 new cases per day, with an estimated total of 4 million cases in 2000, of whom 258,000 were school leavers (Van Rooyen & Hartell 2002:145). AIDS is not only a medical disease, but also a social disease. According to UNAIDS (2011) approximately 5.6 million of South Africans are HIV-positive. As a result of the rapid increase of infections in the mid-1990s and the concomitant increase in HIV/AIDS-related deaths, it is estimated that 13% of children in South Africa have lost one or both parents to AIDS (Van Wyk & Lemmer 2007:301).

Mothers who are HIV-positive tend to “silence” their own needs and first attend to the needs of their children and others (Potterton, Stewart & Cooper 2007:210). This includes their physical and health needs, as well as their psychological needs. This
practice of “silencing self” ultimately places an increased burden on the mothers and means that they do not readily seek the help they need, even when it is available. Mothers who experience difficulty in caring for their children due to ill health experience high levels of chronic sorrow.

The impact of AIDS on families and households can be disastrous. AIDS primarily affects adults of working age who have dependants and also confronts the already vulnerable young with the demands of caring for the seriously ill and with the trauma of death. In most societies, parents prepare their children for school, guiding and teaching them and creating a pedagogical climate that is conducive to children’s learning and good conduct at school (Van Wyk & Lemmer 2007:301; Epstein & Sanders 2000:286). However, when parents are ill or diseased, this function is lost to families, as the parents become uninvolved in the education of their children due to their poor health.

The effect of the pandemic on millions of children in South Africa has been disastrous. Many parents, grandparents, and caregivers in the extended family have died as a result of the illness. Children as young as 3 years sometimes live on the streets, because they have no one to take care of them (Prinsloo 2005:31). Often grandmothers or remaining family members take over the full-time care of young grandchildren. This is also the grim reality in Port Elizabeth, evident from the alarming escalation in the number of HIV infections treated at the Clinic alone. More than 1,000 adults and more than 100 children receive antiretroviral treatment at this clinic (Williams 2011:1). Friend and Cook (2003:218) express concern that HIV/AIDS can have a detrimental impact on learning, because extended family members often have little time or energy to be involved in the schooling of their children at home or at school. As a result, children are left with no support and care for their education from family members.

Society, caught in the grip of this disaster, must look to its schools to curb the spread of the HIV virus and take up the struggle for survival against this insidious, inaudible, and invisible enemy (Van Rooyen & Hartell 2002:146). Schools must produce potential people who will be able to prove themselves as dependable adults who can meet the challenge of a rapidly changing world. It is therefore important to ensure
that schools equip the community to curb the spread of this disease, so that parents can take up the responsible role of educating their children. In order to be better equipped to face the additional responsibilities brought on by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, teachers need to understand how the pandemic affects the teaching service, classrooms, teachers, learners and the quality of education, and school governing bodies (SGBs) and management. In the light of the aforementioned, schools have a responsibility to give guidance to the affected family members, so that they can become more involved in the schooling of their children.

Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:146-147) suggest that principals and teachers need to:

- accept that, due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, some parents have already died and that parental guidance, sexual education, and the provision of support to these families to play a role in the schooling of their children are the responsibilities of the school;
- acknowledge that learners, irrespective of their age, are at risk and that they often lack the knowledge, life skills, values, and norms based on established moral principles. It is also important to note that teachers must teach life skills education to learners, because it forms an important part of health promotion and prevention. Life skills education equips learners with necessary skills and knowledge;
- understand that, in the absence of parental assistance, sexuality education is part of the duty of the school to better equip learners with knowledge concerning sexual activities and the consequences thereof;
- take note that 258,000 learners were infected with HIV in 2000, some with full-blown AIDS, due to a lack of information regarding the illness. If learners are not informed about this illness, more and more learners will become infected by this dreadful disease;
- accept that the highest infection rate occur in the 15-25 year age group, females in particular. This implies that more young people are infected, which will have a disastrous impact on our rainbow nation.
One of the most momentous consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South African society is child-headed households.

3.6.6 Child-headed households

Child-headed households are created by the adult fatalities suffered due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and other diseases such as tuberculosis (Kitave 1995:247). The children of such households are forced to take on grown-up responsibilities (Donald et al. 2010:179). The eldest of the siblings normally feels responsible for the younger ones and often opts not to participate in school activities to take over responsibility for his or her charges. These young siblings have another responsibility, namely to go home to prepare supper for their siblings (Kitave 1995:247).

A news reporter identified that child-headed families are prevalent in South Africa and are increasing on a daily basis (The Herald, 5 July 2011). In Port Elizabeth, social workers had a meeting to discuss this problem with the Eastern Cape Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Social Development, Pemmy Majodina, who confirmed that in these households, older children have to see to their own needs and also those of their siblings; therefore they become responsible children. The Department of Social Development in Nelson Mandela Bay (it is the metropolitan municipality consisting of Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Despatch) in the Eastern Cape is in the process of increasing child grant funding to help these families, as figures have since 2001 increased to 122,000 child-headed families.

This implies that the school and the community need to play a stronger role in the socialisation of children. The emergence of extremely large extended families has resulted in an increase in single-parent families and child-headed families (Ebersohn & Elof 2002:78). In South Africa, current data indicates that 13% of children aged 2-14 years have lost either a mother or a father or both to HIV/AIDS (Townsend & Dawes 2004:69). This suggests that a great number of children in South Africa are becoming orphans and will be raised up without the benefits and protection of an intact family life.
An orphan is defined by UNAIDS as a child less than 15 years of age who has lost either their mother (a maternal orphan) or both parents (Skinner, Tsheko, Mtero Munyati, Segwabe, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Chandiwana, Nkomo, Tlou & Chitiyo 2005:2). During the period 1995 to 2002, the number of orphans in South Africa had not yet significantly increased; this suggests that South Africa will still experience the full impact of AIDS on orphan hood (Brookes, Shisana & Richter 2004:22). Improving the role that schools, caregivers or parents, and communities play in supporting the education of children is a strategy that could address some of the challenges.

Adults in disadvantaged communities generally do not participate in school activities (Christenson & Sheridan 2001:84). Therefore, the expectation that young children who are heading homes should participate and act as adults is understandably unreasonable. These children have no one to look up to. As a result, they cannot cope with their own educational needs, let alone those of the siblings in their care. Based on the above discussion, it is quite clear that lack of parental involvement will continue to be a problem in our schools. Therefore, it is essential that teachers should take cognisance of the challenges that some families face, especially those headed by children.

A lack of parental involvement has a negative effect on learners’ behaviour. This is discussed in the section below.

3.7 LEARNERS’ BEHAVIOUR IN RELATION TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

With disruptions such as poor discipline, high absenteeism, and a lack of interest in schoolwork becoming challenging in the family and at school, it is logical to that in most cases these disruptions will lead to violence in everyday life (Najman, Bor, Anderson, O’Callaghan & Williams 2000:439). Since changing social conditions have an impact on schools, one of the major problems facing teachers in the new education dispensation in South Africa is the challenging behaviour of learners in the classroom (Prinsloo 2005:445) and parents’ lack of involvement in their children’s education.
Mwamwenda (2004:275) maintains that children who are deprived of sufficient love and care from their parents are prone to have no respect for them and transfer this attitude to adults and any other authority figures in their lives, including their teachers and the school itself. Some learners are troubled by domestic problems, such as strife between their parents, which makes them unable to concentrate at school. Mwamwenda (2004:275) further maintains that the behaviour of children may also be affected by their parents’ lack of involvement in their education.

Parents themselves may foster misbehaviour in their children by interfering in what teachers are doing and refuse to allow their children to be disciplined, irrespective of the severity of the child’s misdemeanour. At some schools, parents criticise teachers in front of their children, which may cause the child to lose respect for the teacher concerned. According to Engelbrecht and Green (2001:223), such behaviour of parents exacerbates their children’s lack of discipline at school. Engelbrecht and Green (2001:223) further suggest that if learners are aggressive towards their peers and educators, they are experiencing similar behaviour at home. Learners who are unhappy at home will be unhappy at school, and this will have a negative impact on their academic progress, while at the same time exacerbating their poor behaviour in the classroom (Engelbrecht & Green 2001:225).

In South Africa, particularly in previously disadvantaged areas, the socio-economic ill effects of poverty and unemployment have a negative consequence on education and all aspects of social growth in the majority of the population (Prinsloo 2005:449). Barriers to learning and the lack of parental involvement in education have a negative effect on the learning of learners, which manifests in poor behaviour by learners (Prinsloo 2005:449). Children who experience these barriers and stressors find it difficult to focus on their homework. Even if the above-mentioned difficulties with parents can be overcome, it is still essential for parents to assist their children with their homework, so that the children can perform well academically.

The importance of parental involvement in children’s homework will now be discussed.
3.8 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN’S HOMEWORK

Homework forms an integral part of a learner’s scholastic achievement. It is therefore important that parents assist their children with their homework (Patall, Cooper & Robinson 2008:1039). Bailey (2006:155) shares the view that increased parental interaction in home learning activities positively influences the outcomes of learners who are at risk of failing academically. It is common practice in schools to issue learners with a school diary in which the homework for the week is set out. The parent is required to sign this homework schedule on a daily basis. However, personal experience as an educator has shown that some learners never do their homework, and weeks may pass without their parents signing the diary. This points out to a lack of homework supervision by parents.

Since most parents in South Africa can barely read or write, they are literally unable to help their children academically, even if they wanted to. For a lot of underprivileged parents, a serious handicap in supporting their children’s education is their limited education achievement and their lack of proficiency in English (Delores 2000:5). The community plays an important role when it comes to parental involvement in homework. In this regard, the community should support these children in cases where parents are illiterate and cannot help them with their homework.

Mwamwenda (2004:261) states that learners’ home background may become enriching if children are provided with learning materials in the form of books and newspapers, toys, and learning resources. However, some parents do not even have the basics available, due to socio-economic reasons. In some homes, parents and siblings assist younger children with their homework. However, many parents fail to do so, either because they are not interested, or because they are working. Sometimes the child’s level of education has advanced beyond that of the parents.

Encouraging parental involvement in homework is a tactic generally practised by schools and teachers in an effort to make academic achievement possible (Patall et al. 2008:1039). Patall et al. (2008:1039) state that parental involvement in education takes many forms, such as reading to the child, checking whether the homework has
been done, or signing newsletters or homework diaries. Learners who do homework benefit in school by showing improved achievement.

Parental involvement in homework could potentially have both positive and negative effects (Patall et al. 2008:1040). A positive effect could be that the child will be able to master the schoolwork and achieve academically. A negative effect may be that children will expect their parents to do their homework for them, which will result in the child underperforming in his or her schoolwork.

Parental involvement in homework generally has a positive effect on learners. Setting a place and time for homework is an effective way in which parents can enhance learner achievement. However, the involvement of parents in homework can have a positive effect on achievement, as stated above. Zins, Weissberg, Wang and Walberg (2004:3) suggest that schools will be more successful in their education mission if they integrate methods to promote learners’ academic, social and emotional learning. This means that learners will learn in collaboration with their teachers, peers, and families.

Teachers are urged to involve parents in supporting their children with their homework. Often learners come to school with no homework having been done, or incomplete homework. Parents need to understand the purpose of homework to enable them to help their children to complete their homework. Macbeth (1989:59) outlines the purposes of homework as follows:

- Preparing for class work.
- Introducing tasks and assignments that extend beyond work already completed in class.
- Assisting academically slower children to catch up with more advanced children.
- Testing learners’ understanding and competence of work taught.
- Using resources that are not available in class.
- Strengthening the education corporation between parents and teachers.
• Providing an avenue where teachers can support parents to become more dynamically involved in their children’s formal education.

• Providing a platform where parents can see the work their children are doing in school, and measure the progress.

Patall et al. (2008:1039-1101) and Bailey (2006:155) suggests the following guidelines on how parents can become involved in their children’s homework:

• Parents are advised to reward progress by praising their children and displaying their good work prominently in the home, all of which will encourage and motivate learners to sustain their level of scholastic achievement.

• Parents must find out how much and what type of homework has been assigned, how children are expected to prepare it, and what children can do when they do not understand something. Children must be helped to manage their workload by dividing it into smaller chunks. This will allow parents to maintain important contact with the teachers and the school, assisting in all communication between the school system and the family.

• Parents could help their children to develop a homework schedule that they can stick to, allowing the children to develop at a steady pace that can be sustained through sustained academic progress.

• Parents could discuss homework assignments with their children each day, going over work, checking to see whether it has been completed, and asking questions about it. However, they must not do their children’s homework, but should rather take an interest in the homework, not taking over responsibility for it. Parents should maintain supervision, while enabling the learner to overcome difficulties and gain from the learning process.

• A suitable place for study should be made available, preferably a quiet place away from the distractions of television, telephones, or loud music.

• Homework must not be made a punishment, as this will generate negative feelings towards the doing of homework. Parents who are illiterate can assist their children with homework by making sure that homework is done in their books or by listening to the child while he or she reads out loud from his or her reader.
When parents assist their children with homework, they need to set a place and time for homework and provide direct aid (Patall et al. 2008:1041), making it effective, so as to enhance academic achievement.

The following section of this study focuses on the partnership between the school, the parent, and the community in the education of the child. It is essential to note that the roles of parents and the community, as well as the continuity between school and home, provide the basis for a shared relationship with a mutual vested interest, namely the learning and development of the child (Montgomery 1999:5). This shared relationship regarding the education of children forms what Christenson (in Christenson & Sheridan 2001:7) and Montgomery (1999:5) refers to as a “supportive safety net” of adults that will never let children drop beyond reach. The creation of such a safety net facilitates and supports learning as the product of education. Therefore, if we want to facilitate the best possible learning and development for a child, it makes good sense to ensure that the family, the school, and the community form a partnership (Montgomery 1999:11).

3.9 SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Macbeth (1989:2) asserts that education happens in three main areas, namely school, home, and community. According to Epstein (2002:7) the manner in which schools care for their learners is reflected in their care for the families of learners. This challenges teachers to critically reflect on their personal views and standards with regard to children’s learning and progress and, more specifically, the partnership that families and communities form to improve the education of children.

A partnership is generally based on some or other form of agreement or legislation, or a legal contract as part of the agreement (Heystek 2002:115). In the context of schools in South Africa, the South African Schools Act (SASA) constitutes the legal framework for the partnership between parents and schools. Parents are very important partners for schools, to enhance parental involvement. The partnership between parents and schools has been formalised by the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996), as also discussed in section 2.4.3, 5.3.2.1. The SASA (Section 18) identifies parents as the official partners in the governance of
their children’s school. In terms of this Act, parents should constitute the majority of members in the governing body of a school. Parents on school governing bodies (SGBs) are primarily responsible for fundraising and organising school activities and events or serving on school committees (Lemmer 2009:87; Botha, Mentz, Roos, Van der Westhuizen & Van Kerken 2003:209).

The South African Council of Educators (SACE) (2002:2) recommends that parents as partners in education should encourage a working relationship with teachers. The SACE further argues that it is not the sole responsibility of the teacher to educate the child, but that it is a collective task between two parties to support the child to obtain excellent academic results (Khan 1996:60). For any partnership to be successful it is crucial to have mutual respect, share information, a sense of purpose, responsibility and accountability (Wolfendale 1992:14). Therefore, it is crucial that parental involvement starts at a very early stage, while the child is mouldable (Catron & Allen 1993:51).

It is important to note that parents should have enough opportunities to participate in decision making that will have an effect on their children and family. According to Epstein (1995:705) decision making is a process of a partnership to share their views, opinions and common goals to enhance parental involvement (see section 4.3, 4.8.4). Regarding the recent changes and developments in the curriculum, parental involvement is seen as the answer to many problems in the education system to assist their children with their teaching and learning.

The relationship between the school, the community, and the parents must change from a client type of relationship to a partnership type of relationship. Parents have, until recently, only been involved in school on occasions when principals allowed them to take part in certain activities (Griffith 2001:162). This involvement or relationship was known as a client type of relationship. In the new partnership that is envisaged, parents and teachers must become equal partners. Parents must be invited to come to school on a regular basis whenever their children experience problems. Parents should be encouraged by principals to take the initiative and act as leaders in school matters (Griffith 2001:162).
School administrators and teachers should educate parents on how to be actively involved in the education of their children. The teachers and administrators should invite parents to the school and if parents do not attend, it is important that teachers should find out the reason for their absence. Parents may have valid reasons for not accepting the invitation. This exercise can be an avenue to open up communication between teachers and parents (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004:183 as discussed in 4.5.2.)

Mills and Gale (2004:274) suggest that schools need to do things differently by teaching parents how to become actively involved without feeling inferior. Parents need to feel comfortable practising what they have been taught. These authors go on to say that it is essential for schools to listen attentively to parents and to treat and accept parents as equal partners in their children’s education. Schools provide parents with opportunities to make decisions and to share their knowledge with the teachers (Mills & Gale 2004:274).

There are many methods that principals can employ to assist teachers at school, for example inviting parents to volunteer to help the teachers to discipline their children (as discussed in section 4.2). In this regard, learners can be given work by parents to write down, and parents can therefore emphasise their responsibility towards their children’s education (Rogers 2003:71).

In the following section, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory will be discussed as it forms the theoretical framework upon which this study is based.

### 3.10 BRONFENBRENNER’S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

The most important influences in any child’s life are the family, the school and the community. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory present a conceptual framework of how families and schools are embedded in the community (Wall 2003:25; Christenson & Sheridan 2001:32,38; Seligman 2000:60-62; Bronfenbrenner & Morris 1998). This theory emphasises that schools influence families, and families influence schools, and both are affected by the communities in which they are located (Swart & Phasa 2005:215; Christenson & Sheridan 2001:39). The family,
school and community contexts are also influenced by larger social, political and economic realities (Seligman 2000:62).

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory explains five types of systems that encompass the roles, norms and rules that shape the development of the child and the important role that parents play in the education of their children. This theory is linked between the different systems and their physical or social environment (Watts et al. 2009:505; Donald, et al. 2002:238), as explained in sections 1.8.1, 2.6, and 6.2. The systemic theory takes into account the microsystemic, mesosystemic, exosystemic, macrosystemic and chronosystemic subsystems (Bronfenbrenner 1979:6-8).

Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of the interconnectedness of the systems in relation to a child’s education

**FIGURE 3.1: Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory of development**

*Adapted from Bronfenbrenner 1979*
Figure 3.1 will now be discussed below.

The ecological systems theory as depicted above can be summarised as follows in relation to this study: the **microsystem (blue)** consists of the parents, family, school and peer group in which a child operates. The yellow circle in the middle represents the child. The **mesosystem (orange)** is the interaction of two microsystems, such between a child’s home and their school, such as school, family, neighbour and teacher. The **exosystem (green)** is the environment in which the child is indirectly involved, and their experience affects them anyway, for example the parent’s workplace, community organization, education system, health services and media. The **macrosystem (purple)** is the larger cultural system, consists of the attitudes, belief and values of the child. The **chronosystem (pink)** refers to the timeframes that cross through the interactions between the systems that influences the child's development.

The ecological systems theory looks at the child’s environment (the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, in the case of this study) in terms of its quality and context and is described below.

- **The microsystem**, the **(blue circle)** is the immediate context that directly affects the developing person (Bronfenbrenner 1979) such as the relationships with the school, family and the peer group, in which the child are closely involved. The connections in the microsystem between two or more people, is regarded as equal important, since these links has an indirect influence on the child. Examples of these links are the daily roles, activities and relationships, with each person which in turn, has an influence on the other system (Hook 2009:505; Donald, et al 2002:53).

- **The mesosystem**, the **(orange circle)** is a system of the microsystems, which shaped the developing child into a new setting (Bronfenbrenner 1979). It includes interactions within the peer group, the school, and the family. Accordingly, anything that occurs at home or in the peer group can influence the behaviour of the child at school. A child may encounter a lack of support at
home, but may experience care and kindness from a neighbour, a friend, or teacher. Children who do not get support at home may experience anxiety and insecurity, but supportive interactions with a peer, a teacher, or a neighbour over a sustained period of time may lower the child’s insecurity. This could also, in turn, transform the interactions of the child at home (Hook 2009:506; Donald et al. 2002:52).

- The **exosystem** the (green circle), refers to the social setting beyond the individual’s immediate experience that involves one or more systems, which will have an influence on the relationships of the child that directly influence the learner (Hook 2009:506). Examples include the parent’s workplace, a local community organisation, the education system, health services, and the media. Thus, a parent’s stressed relationship at the workplace does not involve the child directly, but could possibly pressurize the quality of the parent’s relationship with the child and other Microsystems, such as the peer group, learner’s schoolwork, etcetera (Donald et al. 2002:52-54).

- The **macrosystem** the (purple circle) includes the broader social structures, such as the values, attitudes and beliefs that may be influenced by all the other systems. This system is the same as the social system as a whole (Hook 2009:506; Donald et al. 2002:53) that can also be seen as a manifestation of the overarching patterns of beliefs and the organisational structure of the social institutions.

- The **chronosystem**, the (pink circle) refers to the developing of time that cut across the interactions between the above systems, and their influence on the child’s development. An example is when families with babies and toddlers come across different interactions and processes, compared to families with young people and children who depart from home. This will have an influence on the different stages of development of the child (Hook 2009:507; Brendtro 2006:162-165; Donald et al. 2002:53).
Bronfenbrenner (1977) and Donald et al. (2010:40) state that the interaction between these environments becomes more difficult whilst a child develops and their physical and cognitive structures grow and mature. Thus Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems model explains all these systems as the child’s knowledge and competencies through the support, guidance, and structure of the society develop in which they live.

These interactions between the several systems overlaps that has a significantly affect on the child’s development (Bronfenbrenner 1994:40). The peer group, family, classrooms, and neighbourhood constitute the exosystem, the primary unit surrounding a child, which influences his or her development directly. When two microsystems begin to work as one in educating the child the mesosystem is formed. The ecosystem therefore impacts on the child’s development by interacting and changing the child’s microsystem. Finally, the society and culture in which the child is raised are the underlying influences on all systems and constitute the macrosystem (Wall et al. 2007:505).

To understanding the interactions of these systems is crucial because it is important to know how a child develops and what factors that might lead to failure. The impact of the work environment on the family microsystem has an effect on the child’s development. With the use of technology increasing in the workplace, the working environment is moving away from a mechanized model towards a more practical model. However, work places continue to reproduce a factory work ethic (Wall et al. 2007:505).

Employer demands placed on woman in the workplace is the same as for men with long hours at work eventually leading to family life being neglected and the work becoming the primary goal. All this contribute to parents not being involvement in their children’s education, since they have to provide for their families (Wall et al. 2007:505). The instability of family life means that children have little or no interaction with their parents and other family members in their lives. Bronfenbrenner (1979) mentioned that this breakdown in a child’s development is a destructive force that gives the child (microsystem) no other tools to explore other parts of their environment.
Without suitable adult supervision, care or love, children might look for attention in wrong places as such behaviours give mount to problems, particularly associated with poor self-discipline, a lack of direction, and antisocial behaviour. Support from the government is needed to provide the best environment needed for the healthy development of children. The primary health care clinics in Port Elizabeth’s Northern Areas are in a dilapidated state and do not render proper services to the community. A lack of staff and resources and poor service are challenges that the community faces on a daily basis. There are also no decent play parks for learners (Williams 2011:1).

According to the “deficit” model, for struggling families to qualify to receive support from the government, they should be defined as incompetent in some way. As a result, families are labelled as poor, because the more deficient they become, the more help they receive. This support does not take families out of poverty, but rather encourages them to continue in the cycle of poverty (Bronfenbrenner 1979, 1977:515).

Government policies for the support of families must become a priority because a major problem is the conflict between work and family. Families should be supported and encouraged to stay together and raise their children. The ecological systems theory describes the growth of children considered by the environmental factors and external influences that promote positive outcomes (Watts et al 2009:504). Therefore, more resources funded by the government should be made available for parents who will ultimately enhance the children’s development (Rogers, Theule, Ryan, Adams & Keating 2009:38).

The ecological systems model aims to get parents more involved in their children’s education. The model focuses on the implementation of effective interventions to address the problem of lack of parental involvement. These interventions can change from the individual person to rebalancing the systems of people, places, and things that influence children. The ecological systems model incorporates all areas of influence on the progress of children to assess the causes of and the solutions to some of the growing behavioural and emotional problems observed today (Donald et al. 2010:40; Abrams, Theberge & Orv 2005:84-92; Warren 2005:847-863).
If teachers perceive children as persons with unique needs and individual social circumstances, they will be more likely to regard both the family and members of the community as partners with a shared interest in their children’s learning, welfare, and development (Swart & Phasa 2005:213). The active involvement of families and the broader community is fundamental for a successful, inclusive learning community (Wall 2003:50-52; Christenson & Sheridan 2001:9; Seligman 2000:1; Simon & Epstein 2001:1).

Swart and Phasa (2005:213) maintain that the meaning of the concept “involvement” has changed over time. Parents are now required to become equal partners in a mutual relationship, with one goal in mind, namely the enhancement of each child’s learning and development. Due to the changes in the curriculum in South Africa’s education system, there is now a much more pressing need for parents and communities to engage with schools as partners. It is the view of Sanders (2008:287) that when parents, the community and the school work collaboratively together higher learner achievement, improved learner behaviour and attendance will contribute to the scholastic development of the child.

Establishing a partnership between the three most important contexts in a child’s life, namely the school, the family, and the community, not only holds promise, but also creates new challenges for all parties involved. Parental and community involvement and partnership is a process in which parents and teachers are encouraged to cooperate and support the education of learners. Moore (2009:12) states that parental involvement is essential for the improving of academic progress of learners.

In South Africa, the significant role that parents and the community should play in the education of children has been given official acknowledgment through legislation and education policies, such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, the National Plan of Action for Children (1996) and the Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001 (as alluded to earlier in sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.7). The National Department of Education encourages and endorses the provision of quality education for all children in an education system that respects and responds effectively to the diverse learning needs of every child. As mentioned in section 2.4.7 the Education White Paper No. 6 of 2001, in particular, acknowledges that inclusive education has a
broader scope than formal schooling, and for that reason also incorporates the roles of the home and the community. The right of access to and participation of all parents in their children’s education and the collaborative role of communities are formally recognised (Swart & Phasa 2005:214).

Inclusive learning communities recognise that every child can learn and belongs in the mainstream of both school and community life. Swart and Phasa (2005:215) maintain that for every child to become a participating and contributing member of a community, it is essential to create an emotional sense of community, based on the fundamental principles of respect, belonging, diversity, trust, collaboration, and caring in inclusive learning communities. These authors further state that if any child needs support, the entire learning community should respond to meet the child’s needs. In these communities, children, their families, and community members participate with school personnel in making decisions and providing resources to support children’s learning and development.

Although parents and teachers often live in different worlds, generally distinguished by psychological barriers, parental and community involvement will positively affect the education process. Machen, Wilson and Notar (2009:13) share the same view as Moore (2009:12), adding that a partnership between parents and the school has taken on an importance and that society recognises the need to help parents in their difficult task of educating their children.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:34) describe schools and communities as a partnership between all stakeholders, who work as a team to identify barriers and needs, and discuss ways to address those barriers. All the members of a collaborative partnership, including parents, teachers, learners, the Education Department, and members of the community, are of equal importance and are expected to continually contribute their expertise in a collegial, trusting manner towards a shared goal. According to these authors, collaboration is a learning process, which is developed only by practice in collaborative groups.
The skills learned from working in groups that are necessary for bringing about change include effective communication, conflict resolution, creative problem solving, feedback, and decision-making.

A school that continually seeks to develop and refine its response to the challenges it faces is described by Senge (1990) as a learning organisation. When parents are taught various skills at school, such as flower arranging and beading, everyone is learning and receiving support to develop. Through learning, communities will be able to benefit, support, and empower all role players. Engelbrecht and Green (2001:35) advise that creating an inclusive learning community requires a positive school climate and culture, whole-school development, a shared vision, and a culture of collegiality and collaboration.

The next section of this study will focus on support to improve parental involvement at school.

3.11 SUPPORT TO IMPROVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

All over the world much has been done to improve parental involvement at schools, although only a few parents are actively involved in their children’s education and other parents not (Epstein 2001; Bastiani & Wolfendale 1996; Epstein 1995).

Parental involvement should help narrowing the gap between home and school, where effective communication takes place all the time and parents regularly pay visits to the school and assist in the education of their children (Colombo 2006:316).

3.11.1 The importance of parental empowerment

According to Heystek (2002:16) and Hess (1992:45), empowerment is gaining knowledge and being allowed to take part in decision making. In the case of parents, this implies that they must gain knowledge about how and why they must be effectively involved in school activities.

One of the central aspects of empowerment is participation in decision making, although shared decision making is not empowerment as such. Parents must be
acknowledged as equals of the school’s professional staff members and as persons with specific expertise and skills (Blasé & Blasé 1994:8). Empowerment provides parents with the opportunity to notice and express wants, needs, and rights, and to ensure that their voices are heard, in order to play a definite role in school planning and decision-making activities (Heystek 2002:117; Wolfendale 1992:3).

According to legislation schooling in South Africa has focused on the rights and responsibilities of empowered parents in their children’s education. Parents should therefore receive the necessary guidance and support from the school to prepare them for the required cooperation and participation (Department of Education 1996:14).

Molepo (2000:74) reasons that empowered parents will be able to motivate their children, particularly when they show an interest in their education. Thus, parents should benefit from their children’s increased confidence and self-esteem with regard to their learning.

Parental empowerment is crucial for educating children, particularly in cases where parents are illiterate in helping their children with their schoolwork. Therefore if illiterate parents are involved and show an interest in their children’s education, this may lead to an improvement in their relationship with their children or family (Lee & Bowen 2006:195; Pena 2000:42) See section 3.5.2, 5.3.3.5, 6.2.4.

3.11.2 Parents and teachers as role models

Treit (2009:290) holds that parents and teachers have different views on how to be a role model for children. It is the viewpoint of Lawson (2003:8) that parents as well as teachers have conflicting world views. For example, teachers have the ability to uphold their standards and epistemologies as legitimate, while parents lack the power to raise their opinion with regard to their children’s education. LaRocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011:115) support this view and add that parents and teachers have to fulfil their duties in the educational achievement, and that they should at all times be responsible role models to build on the success of the child. Nakagawa (2000:456) agrees and states that parents and teachers’ perspectives might be in
opposition because parents have to meet the expected demands of the school system to protect their child’s interest and to become involved in their children’s education. Parents and teachers should therefore model a good character, for the education of the child, by seeking help, provide learning opportunities, and should always be supportive to children in need (Treit 2009:290). This is discussed further in section 4.5.1.

LaRocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011:117) state that parents and teachers as role models should encourage good behaviour among children, should set examples, and should instil values in children, so that the child develops holistically. Keyes (2002:180) asserts that there is a clear difference in the roles modelled by parents and the roles modelled by teachers, and he advises that that these roles should be clearly outlined to both parties. Firstly, for parents to become involved in the education of their children, their primary role is to teach their children manners, responsibility, discipline, and respect. Teacher’s involvement on the other hand should be school-focused and their primary responsibility is to develop the child scholastically. Lastly, involvement that is focused on partnership is when all stakeholders work jointly as a team and collectively responsible for the upbringing of the child. In summary, parents and teachers should set an example for the younger generation.

3.11.3 Improving communication between parents and teachers

Communication is important since positive and mutually beneficial communication between the home and the school is necessary for parents to participate effectively in fulfilling learning objectives for the child (Treit 2009:297). There are different ways that a school can improve communication with parents. It can send out monthly newsletters or work side by side with parents, providing them with an opportunity to voice their feelings. Hopefully, the teachers and the school will be included in this important exchange (Aiger 2010:1; LaBahn 1995:3). (This is discussed further in sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.8.1.) Furthermore, parents who attend parent meetings are able to get to know their child’s teachers better.
Another way to improve communication between parents and teachers is to invite parents to volunteer (as also mentioned in section 4.3). By doing this, communication between the parents and the teachers will improve (Gelfer 1991:167) because parents and teachers would be on the same page regarding the child’s academic progress (LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling 2011:117). As a result, Treit (2009:297) maintains that communication concerning the child will improve when:

- Communication is adapted to the needs of the learners parents’;
- Parents are informed about how their child is coping, at school;
- It is a wonderful opportunity for parents to grant their wishes to the school concerning the child’s schoolwork;
- Parents are informed what they can do to support their child; and
- Through effective communication, the home and the school can find solutions to problems the child encounters and try to find common goals regarding the learner’s work and how these goals may be reached.

In closing, if all of the above could be done at school, communication would be much more effective, and all stakeholders (parents, teachers, and learners) would benefit.

3.11.4 Parents and time management

Parents seldom have the time to assist their children with homework or projects (LaBahn 1995:2; Wanat 1992:46). According to Fan, Williams and Wolters (2012:21), learners whose parents are supporting them with their schoolwork show increased participation in school, plenty of time spent on projects, lower dropout rates (Epstein & Sheldon 2002), and fewer placements in special classes. A recent line of thinking suggests that perceived parent support and family cohesion both have a significant impact on learner motivation at school.

For some families, there are challenging factors, such as employment issues, where the parents may have to work in shifts, thereby preventing them from participating to the degree and in the way that their counterparts that have salaried, more stable employment can participate (LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling 2011:115). LaRocque, Kleiman and Darling (2011:115) assert that such jobs limit parents’ ability to become
involved in school during normal school hours. With the result, their children become frustrated, because they are unable to participate in school meetings and activities, due to time constraints.

For these reasons, such parents are often viewed as uncooperative. Koonce and Harper (2005) believe that the insights of such parents were often dismissed, because these parents were not seen as being actively involved in their children’s education or well-informed of the day-to-day activities at school. In summary, it is important that parents need to set time and space aside in their daily schedule, to support their children in their academic endeavours (Springate & Stegelin 1999:249).

3.11.5 Involving parents in policy and curriculum design

Forming a partnership with parents by including them in important policy and curriculum decisions is vital. The more a parent becomes involved in the school curriculum of the school, the better the parent feels about the school (Loucks 1992:19). Parents will therefore have an increased sense of pride in the school and the community (LaBhan 1995:4). Parents should involve themselves in school policies and the curriculum. In this way parents will be able to learn about how the school functions, develop a greater understanding of the education process and decisions made to educate their child (Gelfer 1991:164).

As a result, the parents and the school become allies and are able to be of mutual benefit when it comes to dealing with difficult learners and problem behaviour. Furthermore, parents that are involved in this way also tend to support the school financially and provide support for the smooth running of the school (LaBhan 1995:4; Gelfer 1991:164). The best way to involve parents in decision making in the school is through an active school governing body (SGB), or through a parent-teacher association (PTA). In this way, the school will appoint parent representatives, who will communicate with other families in the school and will provide information about policies and changes to the curriculum. To effectively involve parents in decision making with regard to school policies or the curriculum (see section 4.3), schools should include parent leaders from various different racial, ethnic and socio-
economic backgrounds, so that they are representative of the school as a whole, and schools should provide training to these parent leaders.

Finally, to involve parents in the curriculum is not always easy, but it is important that parents familiarise themselves with the content of the curriculum, so that they can support their children in their education (Stern 2003:26).

3.12 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter outlined the phenomenon of parental involvement and its impact on education, the importance thereof, the historical background of parental involvement in school activities in South Africa, possible lack of parental involvement, the status of parents and its influences on the child’s education and learning, learners behaviour in relation to a parent uninvolvment in schools, family and community partnerships, Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory as well as support to improve parental involvement at primary schools.

In conclusion, parents, teachers and the school should work as a partnership to enhance parental involvement at schools. A successful partnership will depend on good communication skills between the family and the home in order for schools to be effective.

The following chapter will describe various models of parental involvement. These models of parental involvement provide strategies on how parents can be more involved in school and add value to their children’s education.
CHAPTER FOUR

MODELS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Although several models of parental involvement exist, the researcher will discuss those that have the potential to contribute to the purpose of this study. The models from literature provide strategies on how parents can be involved in school activities and programmes and add value to their children’s education. These models also offer descriptions of parent-learner-community partnerships that work towards the common goal of bringing about improved parental involvement. The educational roles that parents could play to become involved are evident in the models.

The models identified are:

- Epstein’s (1996) model for parental involvement;
- Shepard and Rose’s (1995) empowerment model;
- Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1995) model of parental involvement;
- Comer’s model (1996) of parental involvement; and
- Swap’s models (1992) of parental involvement.

Firstly, the terminology used will need to be clarified before the concepts can be analysed and discussed. Therefore, in the following section, the researcher will define what a model is.

4.2 WHAT IS A MODEL?

Gunter, Estes and Schwab (2003:175-179) define a model as something to serve as a pattern, or to be made, or a material representation or embodiment of an ideal, and it is sometimes in the form of a drawing or a plan. McKenna (1997:12) defines a model as a representation of the reality, in a simplified way. McKenna (1997:12) further holds that a model is a “mental or diagrammatic representation”, which is systematically constructed to assist people to organise their thinking about what they
do and to transfer their thinking into practice, for the benefit of their profession. The models that have been identified will assist the researcher to develop proposed strategies for parents to become involved in their children’s education.

The models are discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.3 EPSTEIN’S MODEL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Epstein (1996) is commonly cited when it comes to theories about parental involvement. In the 1980s, he developed a theoretical model to explain parental involvement (Epstein 1996:214). In Epstein’s opinion, schools and families share responsibility for the socialisation of the child. Epstein argues that the work of the most effectual families, communities, and schools overlaps because these institutions share the same goals and missions for children. Comer and Haynes (1991) agree and maintain that the family, the school, and the community is the three most three most important contexts in which children grow and develop. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological theory posits that the mesosystem, which includes the peers, the family, and the school, and the exosystem, which includes the community, have an influence on the development of the child. This is also discussed in sections 1.8, 2.6, 3.10, and 6.2. Parents therefore have a shared responsibility for educating the child. The concepts of “family-like school” and “school-like family” are used to emphasise the development of the child scholastically. The concept of “family-like school” refers to the need that the family recognises that the child is a learner, to whom the significance of school, homework, and learning in general need to be pointed out, while the concept of “school-like family” refers to the need that the school makes every child feel unique, accepted, and included, as within family (Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, Whetsel & Green 2004:i).

The child is the reason for the link between home and school. The key role of the child as learner in interactions between families and schools, parents and teachers, and the community is the focus point of this model (Epstein 1996:121). If children feel loved for and motivated to work hard, they are more likely to achieve academically in school (Epstein 1995:702; Christenson, Round & Franklin 1992:36).
Epstein (1996) proposed a model of parental involvement which includes six main types of involvement activities connecting families, schools, and communities that can encourage successful learning and development of children. These types of involvement activities are not hierarchical, but each type is equally important in establishing a strong partnership that will promote and support successful learning (Epstein 1996). The six types of activities are:

- Parenting;
- Communicating;
- Volunteering;
- Learning at home;
- Decision making; and
- Collaborating with the community.

The above mentioned six types of activities will be discussed in turn in the following paragraphs.

**Parenting:** The first type of parental involvement that Epstein (1996) identified is parenting. According to Epstein (1995:704), parenting involves supporting all families to create home environments that will assist children as learners at school. Schools should help parents to create positive conditions at home to enhance and reinforce the development of their learners. Schools should therefore provide family educational programmes that encourage collaboration between schools and parents (Epstein 1996:216, 1995:704). Collaboration means creating opportunities for parents, where parents are given a say in schooling issues concerning the family and the school. Effective and sincere communication will open doors and build trust between the parents and the school (Hosiin 2007:2). Parents are expected to prepare their children for school and to guide and raise them. Schools can assist parents with their child-rearing obligations to prepare their children and support their school, by keeping parents informed about expectations with regard to parental actions and assistance. To reinforce this, Epstein believes that regular meetings and workshops will help families to understand schools and will assist schools to value families (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:9). This is the ideal
objective and needs to be encouraged by class teachers. Collaboration can become a reality if the school takes the lead in promoting it. Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:9) caution that it is important to provide information to all families at school who want or need it, not just to those few who can attend workshops or meetings at school. Effective parenting programmes therefore empower all parents with information and strategies to support their children (Hamby 1992:65).

Home-school communication then becomes a prerequisite for effective parental involvement.

**Communication:** Another type of parental involvement activity that Epstein (1996) identified has to do with communication between the home and the school. Epstein recommends that schools inform parents about school programmes and the progress of their children’s school careers (Epstein 1995:704). Such information must be presented in such a way that is understandable to all parents, while teachers maintain close personal interaction with parents on a daily basis. To ensure effective two-way communication between parents and the school, the information must be accurate and clear (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:58). Channels that can be used are memoranda, notices, telephone calls, report cards, the parent meetings that most schools conduct, and other innovative communications with parents that some schools create (Dauber & Epstein 1991:290). Therefore, if the school organises parent-teacher interviews and social events, invitations should be extended to parents, grandparents, or caregivers and should be well planned to maximise attendance by all. Epstein advises that communication should be done in a manner that does not intimidate parents. This can be achieved by using language that is unambiguous and simple. The aim is for parents to comprehend the information that is conveyed. Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:9) emphasise that the clarity, readability, form, and frequency of all memoranda, notices, and other print and non-print communications should be reviewed to accommodate the above advice.

Communication often becomes the channel through which the next activity, namely volunteering, can be encouraged and promoted.
Volunteering: The concept of “volunteer” means a person who supports a school’s goals and children’s education or development in any way, at any place, and at any time (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:8). It also refers to parents who come to school to support learners’ performances, sport, or other events, or to attend workshops or other programmes for their own educational benefit (Epstein 1988:5). According to Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:8), this type of parental involvement activity involves recruiting and organising parental help and support during school activities, such as “reading mothers” (mothers who read to their children), fundraising activities, the organisation of celebrations, and social gatherings.

Epstein recommends the inclusion and training of parents, grandparents, or caregivers, particularly with regard to teacher aides, and their attendance of and assistance with excursions and school events. All contributions made by parents should be recognised, acknowledged, and celebrated. Special events, during which volunteers, including fathers, are utilised, should be arranged. Often, fathers and grandfathers are ignored, due to their perceived lack of interest. However, times have changed, and a concerted effort should be made to include them (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:10).

Teachers may often be aware of parents’ talents and interest in school activities and their children, and are therefore able to provide greater individual attention. Teachers should display a readiness to involve parents, including those who do not volunteer at school, in new ways (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:10). If parents make a major contribution to the school and the education of their children, this may have a positive influence on non-involved parents in motivating them to contribute to the needs of their children and the school.

Parents need to support their children’s learning at home, ensuring that they meet academic requirements.

Learning at home: Epstein (1996) identified a fourth type of parental involvement activity namely, learning at home. In this type of involvement activity, the school
provides information to families on how to help learners at home with schoolwork and other curriculum-related activities. According to Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:8), homework does not simply mean work done alone, but includes interactive activities shared with others at home and the community, thereby connecting schoolwork to real life.

Good parenting at home has been identified as the single most powerful influence on children’s achievement and adjustment. This is mainly realised in frequent, quality child-parent interactions (Desforges & Abouchaar 2003). Parents should be encouraged through family literacy programmes, home visits, modelling, and the provision of resources, such as story sacks and guidelines for vacation and weekend activities, to spend time with children. The aim of these activities is to support, help, and monitor the learning of school-going children, in order for parents to become involved and show interest in their children’s educational needs. Here teachers can play a pivotal role in guiding parents regarding choice of educational games and programmes. Epstein (1987:120) claims that parental encouragement at home and involvement in school and in the classroom, positively influence children’s achievement, attitudes, and aspirations, even after learner ability and family socio-economic status have been taken into account. Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:10) emphasise that when learners learn at home, these learners gain certain skills and abilities, their test scores linked to homework and classwork improve, and they may in the process develop a more positive attitude towards their schoolwork. In addition, learners may begin to view their parents as being similar to their educators and their home as being similar to their school (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:10).

Parents who are involved in their children’s learning at home will want to form a partnership with the school, particularly when important decisions need to be made to meet the educational needs of the child.

**Decision making:** The fifth type of parental involvement activities that Epstein identified is the decision-making process. Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:9) define decision making as a partnership process between the parents and the school to share views and actions towards shared goals. Epstein
(1996) recommends the involvement of parents in school policies and management. According to the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), all public schools in South Africa must have a school governing body (SGB) as discussed in 2.4.3, 5.3.2.1. The Department of Education has therefore made provision for parent organisations to make decisions through SGBs, as explained in section 1.1. The SGBs are held responsible for important decisions that need to be made in order for schools to run effectively. This formal structure of parent participation is essential for financial planning, fundraising, advocating for the school, and advising the school principal to develop plans for improvement. Schools should endeavour to recruit and train parent leaders who are less likely to be represented on formal bodies. Training should be ongoing, to ultimately benefit the school (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:9).

It is vital that schools include parent leaders in their activities and programmes, and that they offer guidance to enable leaders to serve as representatives of all families, with input from and return of information to respective parents (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:9). Epstein (1987:124) views parents who take part in decision making at their children’s schools as individuals who support their children in their educational needs.

When parents are involved in decision making, it promotes their identification with school processes, which heightens parental satisfaction and increases children’s successes in school (Catron & Allen 1993:51). As parents become more involved in school activities and decision making, they are more likely to communicate to their children the importance of education, to support programmes and policies, to offer financial assistance, and to rally community efforts to promote school programmes (Catron & Allen 1993:51).

It is equally important that parents and schools form partnerships to influence learning and development in the community.

**Collaborating with the community:** The sixth type of parental involvement activity that Epstein (1996) identified is collaboration with the community. Collaboration between the school and the community includes the identification and integration of
community resources and services with existing programmes, such as family childrearing practices and learners’ learning. Schools should therefore organize the work and resources of the community, businesses, colleges, universities, and communal groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and the development of the child (Epstein 1996). Schools could therefore help families to gain access to support services, such as health care, cultural events, tutoring services, and after-school childcare programmes (LeBlanc 1992:140; Dekker & Van Schalkwyk 1990:6). Schools could keep child service providers informed of their values and expectations by hosting information evenings and strategic planning meetings. Schools could facilitate the creation of good relationships with aftercare centres by occasionally sharing knowledge and expertise, and also facilities (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:8). In this way, a web of support can be created, from which the child will benefit.

When schools incorporate their educational programmes to include these six types of involvement activities, they create opportunities for important interaction between individuals in schools, families, and communities. Epstein, however, cautions that community partnerships are more difficult when schools and families fail to share the following: (a) a set of beliefs about the roles of schools, families, and teachers in the education and socialisation of children; (b) the same cultural or socio-economic background; (c) the same educational or individual experiences; or (d) a language in which to converse such issues (Epstein 1996).

If the diversity of learners is likely to become a problem, educators may need the support of learners, their families, and the communities to improve academic success (Sanders 2008:288).

There are many challenges facing schools, such as domestic problems, a lack of funds, and a shortage of staff for collaborative activities. Schools should therefore aim to inform all parents of community programmes for learners to ensure equal opportunities for learners and families to participate in such programmes. There is a need to match community contributions with school goals and to integrate child and family services with the school (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:9).
Bronfenbrenner’s theory supports Epstein’s theory and further elaborates on it (as discussed in sections 1.8.1 and 3.9). Epstein’s theory also emphasises the importance of the family-school relationship and families’ mutual responsibility for children’s learning and development (Swart & Phasa 2005:216; Simon & Epstein 2001:2; Turnbull & Turnbull 1997:17-20). Epstein emphasises that children are best supported when schools and families work together in a partnership to reach a shared educational goal.

The researcher will now discuss Shepard and Rose’s empowerment model of parental involvement.

### 4.4 SHEPARD AND ROSE’S EMPOWERMENT MODEL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In the beginning of the 1960s, policy-makers began to recognise the significance of early (pre-school) intervention as a means of improving the lives of underprivileged children (Shepard & Rose 1995:373). According to Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez and Bloom (1993), the development of home intervention programmes progressed from the deficit model approach of the 1960s, which was based on the assumption that families had failed to present the skills, resources, and stimulation needed to prepare their children for school. Shepard and Rose (1995:374) noted that the deficit model had encouraged a sense of helplessness and incompetence in parents.

Shepard and Rose (1995:373) designed an empowerment model of parental involvement in response to the increase in societal influence, which resulted in a corresponding decline in the role of parents. Parents gradually became more dependent on the school’s judgement and the school’s attempts to understand their children’s abilities, personalities, and academic potential (Mann & Blackwell 1992).

The shortcomings of the empowerment model include a failure to consider contextual (community) factors and an implicit belief that the morals endorsed by schools are greater to those of families receiving support (Shepard & Rose 1995:374).
However, empowerment and parental interventions can be utilised as important sources of information and have the ability to make meaningful contributions to the lives of children and communities. The purpose of empowerment is not simply to change people, but also to present them with the necessary tools that will allow them to manage their own lives in a better way (Shepard & Rose 1995:374).

Empowerment models view individuals as belonging to interconnected, concentric environments and as having the ability to (a) make effective use of resources, (b) be effective problem solvers, and (c) have productive interactions with others (Shepard & Rose 1995:375).

Shepard and Rose (1995:375) believe that teachers can empower parents to have a positive influence on their children, because teachers interact with the children at school on a daily basis.

To enhance parental involvement, Shepard and Rose (1995:375) recommend the following:

- Teachers need to recognise parents as the child’s principal educators and as valued partners within the parent-child relationship.
- The family’s strengths rather than their weaknesses should be emphasised in order for parents to be empowered to enhance parental involvement.
- Children should be viewed within the context of their current family, school, and community environment.
- Parents should be seen as the best experts about their child and as a valued source of information.

The empowerment model of Shepard and Rose (1995:373) provides an organisational structure for parental involvement programmes. The model views parents as important sources of information and as “funds of knowledge”, capable of contributing meaningful to the lives of their children and their communities.
The empowerment model proposed by Shepard and Rose (1995) consists of four ascending stages, namely:

- Basic communication;
- Home improvement;
- Volunteering; and
- Advocacy.

As one climb through the hierarchy, greater involvement is achieved as parents acquire the knowledge, skills, confidence, and trust in others that are necessary for empowered control over their lives. Once one stage has been successfully achieved, one can proceed to the next stage. The model is therefore progressive. The above-mentioned stages are explained below.

**Stage 1: Basic communication.** In this stage, parents establish an initial link with their child’s school or teacher. In this regard, Epstein (1996) asserts that communication is vital between all stakeholders to improve parental involvement. Parents have also accepted responsibility for assessing their children’s development and for reporting this information to the school. They may also have committed to accepting teacher-generated information about their child. For many parents, this is an important step in both establishing ties outside the home and taking greater interest in their child’s welfare. This step is a doable one, as it has no major financial implications. It can be administered by writing letters to the teachers, where possible (Shepard & Rose 1995:373).

When these activities have been achieved, the model proceeds to the next stage, namely home improvement.

**Stage 2: Home improvement.** Home improvement includes activities intended to enhance parenting skills in general and/or skills related to improving a child’s learning environment. Programmes aimed at disciplinary techniques, health care, schoolwork assistance, and reading at home typify this category. The assumption here is that parents will accomplish greater self-efficacy as they connect in activities
at this level (Shepard & Rose 1995:373). This stage requires that parents be more trusting of others and have enough confidence to want to learn from others. Qualities at this level consist of workshops (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:9) to empower parents, reciprocal commitment, and dedication from both parties.

Stages 3 and 4 are dependent on the successful implementation of the previous two stages (Shepard & Rose 1995:373).

**Stages 3 and 4: Volunteering and advocacy.** These are the two highest stages of empowerment, in which social connections outside the home become stronger and more varied. Epstein (1995) defines volunteering as the phenomenon where parents support the school to develop the learning of the child. Parental beliefs of self-efficacy (Bandura 1997:82) reach high levels when parents learn to assist and interact with learners and other parents at school (volunteering) (Epstein 1996), and/or work with local and national organisations (advocacy). Shepard and Rose (1995:375) note that true empowerment is achieved when parents are actively involved in groups or agencies that can influence and monitor changes at local, district or national levels. For this reason, the development of empowered capacity in parents is emphasised.

Worth noting is the fact that the highest level of involvement is achieved when parents are able to put the policies in place and influence the decision making of their schools, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Epstein & Daubers 1993:61). Parents are likely to be active at this stage, because they have acquired the knowledge, confidence, and sense of community that are necessary for effective involvement.

The likelihood that parents will participate at this level increases when they have acquired the knowledge, confidence, and sense of belonging required for effective involvement (Stern 2003:14). According to Stern (2003:14), school policies should inform parents about what is happening in the school, whether good or bad. These policies must emphasise that the school concerns the whole life of the child, and that teachers play a pivotal role in meeting the educational needs of the child.
Shepard and Rose’s empowerment model provides an organisational structure and direction for involving parents, centred on the principle of empowerment. Facilitating empowerment in this context requires more than simply communicating with parents or providing training in some skill (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:9). It requires an increasing sense of trust in self and others, an enhanced awareness of viable resources, and an ever-evolving sense of purpose and responsibility to the larger social milieu, as well as one’s own family. All the stages mentioned above provide a means for involving parents to naturally progress and develop in the education of their children (Shepard & Rose 1995:373).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model of parental involvement will now be discussed.

4.5 HOOVER-DEMPSEY AND SANDLER’S MODEL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997, 2005:89) proposed a model of parental involvement that included attention to parents’ motivations for involvement, parents’ choice of forms of involvement, the mechanisms that parents use during involvement, and learners’ school learning and achievement. In this model, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005:89) provide a strong theoretical framework from which to examine specific predictors of parental involvement. The predictors that Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler propose in their model are (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107, 113):

- **Parents’ motivational beliefs:** which include parental role construction and parental self-efficacy for helping the child succeed in school;
- **Parents’ perceptions of invitations:** general school invitations, specific teacher invitations and specific child invitations; and
- **Parents’ perceptions of the context of life:** This addresses skills and knowledge for involvement, time and energy for involvement, socio-economic status, and parents’ home-based and school-based involvement practices.
The above predictors of this parental involvement model are discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.5.1 Parents’ motivational beliefs

Three sources of motivation for parental involvement have been proposed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler. The first source is the parents’ motivational beliefs relating to involvement, including parental role construction and parental self-efficacy, for helping the child succeed in school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107).

*Parental role construction:* Parental role construction for involvement may best be defined as parental beliefs about what parents are supposed to do in relation to the child’s education, and includes the behaviours characteristically enacted in the service of these beliefs. Role construction functions as a motivator of parental involvement because it enables the parent to imagine, anticipate, plan, and behave in relation to a host of activities which are potentially relevant to the child’s educational success. This is important to learner educational outcomes, because it defines the range of activities that parents construe as important, necessary, and permissible for their own engagement in their children’s schooling (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2007:535; Hoover-Dempsey, Wilkins, Sandler & O’Conner 2004:3).

Role activity for involvement incorporates parents’ beliefs about what they should do in relation to their children’s education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:89). Parental role construction also grows from parents’ experiences with individuals and social groups related to schooling, and are subject to social influence over time (Hoover-Dempsey, Wilkins, Sandler & O’Conner 2004:3; Chavkin & Williams 1993:75; Ritter, Mont-Reynaud & Dornbusch 1993:115). These social groups include families, schools, workplaces, religious organisations, and community groups. They are usually centred on the schools, and their members generally include the school’s teachers, administrators, staff members, the learners who attend the school, the parents and families of these children, and various members of the community, as also mentioned in Bronfenbrenner (1979:7).
Studies on primary school learners provide empirical support for the power of role construction to influence and shape parental involvement (Ferrara & Ferrara 2005:77; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:89; Hoover-Dempsey, Wilkins, Sandler & O’Conner 2004:4). This model has proved that parents who engage in active role construction are more involved in their children’s education than parents who hold less active role beliefs (Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2007:532-544; Deslandes & Bertrand 2005:164-165; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green & Wilkins 2005:107; Sheldon 2002:304). In other words, parents are more likely to become involved if they view their participation as a requirement of parenting (Deslandes & Bertrand 2005:165).

As mentioned earlier, parents’ motivational beliefs not only include parental role construction, but also parental self-efficacy.

*Parental self-efficacy for helping the child to succeed in school:* Self-efficacy is defined as “a person’s capability to act in ways that will produce the desired outcomes. It is a significant factor shaping the goals that an individual chooses to pursue, and his or her levels of persistence in working towards those goals” (Bandura 1997:82; Bandura 1986:391). Applied to parental involvement, the self-efficacy theory suggests that parents make involvement decisions based in part on their thinking about the outcomes that are likely to follow from their involvement activities (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler & Hoover-Dempsey 2005:93; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997). This suggests that parents become involved in their children’s education if they believe that their actions will improve learning and academic performance (Deslandes & Bertrand 2005:165). Like role construction, self-efficacy is socially constructed, and it is influenced by personal experiences of success in parental involvement, vicarious experience of similar others’ successful involvement experiences, and verbal persuasion (Bandura 1997:82). Positive personal beliefs about self-efficacy for helping children succeed in school are associated with increased parental involvement among primary school learners (Shumow & Lomax 2002; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie 1992:287-294). Furthermore, positive self-efficacy enables more active conceptualisation of parental contribution to a child’s learning (Deslandes & Bertrand 2005:165).
A healthy relationship between the school and the parents should be in place. It is therefore imperative for both parties to communicate and be in contact in order to support the child academically. In the following section, parents’ perceptions of the different kinds of invitations will be discussed.

4.5.2 Parents’ perceptions of invitations

*General school invitations:* Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005:111) identified three kinds of invitations, namely general school invitations, specific teacher invitations, and specific child invitations. They argue that teachers' invitations are especially powerful, because many parents have expressed their desire to know more about how to support their children’s learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107; Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004:183; Epstein & Van Voorhis 2001:181-193). Several qualities of school environments (such as the structure of the school, the school climate, and management practices) are associated with enhanced parental involvement (Mentz 2002:146). Invitations are manifested, for example, in the creation of a welcoming and responsive school atmosphere and school practices that convey respect for and responsiveness to parental questions and suggestions. Invitations therefore contribute to the development of trust in the parent-teacher relationship (Mentz 2002:148). Several research findings underscore the importance of positive school invitations and a welcoming, trustworthy school climate in supporting parental involvement (Davies 2002:111; Simon & Epstein 2001:4; Stein & Thorkildsen 1999:40; Comer & Hayes 1991). Parents tend to be more involved if they perceive that both the teachers and the children want and expect their involvement (Deslandes & Bertrand 2005:165).

*Specific teacher and children invitations:* Learner invitations can be powerful in prompting parental involvement, in part because parents generally want their children to succeed and are motivated to respond to their children’s needs (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995). Implicit invitations to involvement may emerge as learners experience difficulties in school or with aspects of their schoolwork (Xu & Corno 2006:1; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107). Explicit requests or invitations from children also often result in increased parental involvement (Deslandes & Bertrand 2005:164). As is true of all types of invitations to involvement, invitations
from children may be increased by school actions to enhance family engagement in children’s schooling (Murawski & Spencer 2011:50; Epstein & Van Voorhis 2001:181-193).

Furthermore, for parents to become involved, it is essential that they share their skills and knowledge with the school.

4.5.3 Parents’ perceptions of the context of life

The skills and knowledge that parents need to become involved will be discussed for parents to make use of their services to become involved in their children’s education.

*Skills and knowledge for involvement:* Parents’ perceptions of personal skills and knowledge shape their ideas about the kinds of involvement activities they may undertake (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107). Skills and knowledge are combined in the discussion, because they form part of personal resources that theoretically impact in a similar manner on a parent’s decision regarding various involvement opportunities. For example, a parent who feels more knowledgeable in mathematics than in social studies may be more willing to assist with mathematics homework. Likewise, a parent who feels comfortable and effective in public speaking may be more likely to talk about his or her occupation in front of a class of learners than a parent who does not believe that he or she has such skills (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107).

Although skills and knowledge are related to self-efficacy for involvement, they constitute a theoretically and pragmatically distinct construct. Individuals with the same level of skills and knowledge may perform differently, given variations in personal efficacy beliefs about what one can do with that set of skills and knowledge (Bandura 1997:82; Bandura 1986:391). Inclusion of skills and knowledge in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model suggests that parents are motivated to engage in involvement activities if they believe that they have skills and knowledge that will be helpful in specific domains of involvement activity (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107).
The following section will focus on the effect that time and energy have on parents to become involved in their children’s education.

Time and energy for involvement: Parents’ involvement is influenced by their perceptions of other demands on their time and energy, particularly in relation to other family responsibilities or constraints (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995). For example, parents whose employment is relatively demanding and inflexible and parents with multiple childcare or extended family responsibilities may be less involved, particularly in school-based activities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005; Weiss, Mayer, Kreider, Vaughan, Dearing, Hencke & Pinto 2003:882).

Socio-economic status has a direct influence on the involvement of parents in the education of their children. This concept, which is also mentioned in section 3.5.1, is discussed below.

Socio-economic status: Socio-economic status (SES) has often been a variable of interest in studies on parental involvement, and the results have been mixed (Fan & Chen 2001:3). On the one hand, some researchers have found SES and parental involvement to be positively correlated (Fan & Chen 2001:3). In fact, this perceived connection has often served as the rationale for many intervention programmes, which have assumed that positive parenting behaviours may serve as a protective factor against the negative impact that stressors associated with low socio-economic status often have on children’s scholastic achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:89).

As part of parental involvement in their children’s education, the role of the home and the school is essential. In the following section, the important role that parents can play at home and at school is discussed.

Parents’ home-based and school-based involvement practices. Parental involvement is a complex process that is often characterised by two types of involvement, namely home-based involvement and school-based involvement (Christenson & Sheridan 2001:7). Home-based involvement is defined in the literature as interactions that take
place between the child and the parent outside of school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:89). These parental behaviours generally focus on the individual child’s learning-related behaviours, attitude, or strategies, and include parental activities, such as helping the child with homework, or revising for a test, and generally monitoring the child’s progress. School-based involvement behaviour may also focus on broader school issues or school needs, such as attending a school open day and volunteering to accompany class educational excursions (Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2007:10; Epstein 1996, 1997, 2002:7).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model tends to be the most significant in parents’ decisions to become involved in their children’s education, their choice of specific involvement forms, and the influence of their involvement on children’s educational outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:89). This model emphasises that the three psychological constructs – parents’ motivational beliefs, parents’ perception of invitations, and parents’ perceived life context – are important in the role that parents play in their children’s education. Emanating from this model, parents’ involvement in their educational role is driven, firstly, by their belief of what is important, necessary, and permissible for them to do on behalf of their children, for their involvement to have a positive effect on their children’s education (parents’ motivational belief). Secondly, from the beginning of “basic communication”, parents establish an initial link with their children’s teacher (parents’ perception of invitation) and, finally, the process is driven by parents’ belief that their responsibility is to monitor their children’s progress and to keep abreast of activities and developments at school (parents’ role construction). Based on these beliefs, parents develop practices at home to ensure that their children progress in school (parents’ perceived life context) (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:89, 107).

This model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005:107, 2002:89) offers specific advantages over many other discussions of the role and function of parents in their children’s educational lives. Firstly, it identifies parental involvement as a process that occurs over time and is dynamic. Secondly, it suggests that parents’ involvement in school, in their children and in society together constitutes the involvement process. Efforts to improve the process and its outcomes are probably well served by cooperative efforts to adjust specific points of intersection and varied
contributions to the system. Finally, it suggests specific points of entry into the process of parental involvement and child outcomes for both research and practice for those who wish to understand more adequately the functioning of specific points in the process and for those who wish to improve levels of parental involvement, the effectiveness of parental involvement, or the contributions of schools to parents’ choice of level of involvement.

Comer’s model of parental involvement will now be discussed.

4.6 COMER’S MODEL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Comer’s model suggests that if parents and educators are empowered to work in partnership with schools, and if the developmental needs of the whole child are addressed in the process, then the learner will succeed in school (Comer, Hayes & Joyner 1996:10). The programme developed by Comer to improve schooling, particularly within disadvantaged communities, has been in place since the 1970s. Educators responded to post-Second World War conditions by raising the standard of their credentials and improving course content and teaching methods, but very little attention was paid to the quality of relationships between educators and learners, among school staff, and between staff and community, particularly parents (Comer 1998:13-14). Comer’s School Development Programme (SDP) promotes development and learning by building supportive relationships that simultaneously draw learners, parents, and the school together (Comer 1988:24). It consists of a systematic process that targets the entire school for change. Comer’s SDP includes nine basic components that contain three processes, namely mechanisms, operations, and guidelines. Each of the three processes further comprises three components, which all are discussed next:

- The three mechanisms include the school planning and management team, the parent team, and the learner and staff support team (Comer, Haynes & Joyner 1996:9; Comer & Haynes 1991:272).

- The three operations suggest planning, designing, and monitoring of the school activities (Haynes & Comer 1993:168)
• The three guidelines are communication, collaboration, and problem solving (Haynes, Ben-Avie, Squires, Howley, Negron & Corbin 1996:57; Haynes & Comer 1996:10).

Comer’s School Development Programme ensures that all school decisions are made in the best interests of the learners, so that they can maximise their academic potential (Borton, Preston & Bipper 1996:1; Comer & Haynes 1991:272).

Each of the above components is explained in the sections below.

4.6.1 The three mechanisms of the School Development Programme

An educational institution, such as a school, must have the basic components (School Planning Management Team (SPMT), Parent Team (PT), Learner and Staff Support Team (LSST) in place for the planning and implementation of policies, to ensure the smooth running of the school (Van der Westhuizen & Mentz 2002:69).

The central organising body in any school consists of the principal, the educators, the parents, and the support staff representative, who together are known as the school planning and management team (SPMT) (Comer, Haynes & Joyner 1996:11). It is expected of the SPMT to develop a comprehensive school plan, to organise staff development activities, and to monitor and modify the school plan in order to improve learner achievement (Borton, Preston & Bipper 1996:1; Comer 1988:15).

In addition to the SPMT is the parent team (PT). The core duty of the parent team (PT) is to involve parents in every facet of school life, including active daily participation in school activities, policy and management issues, and general school support (Haynes & Comer 1993:168). However, parent collaborators contribute mainly in the area of school climate, helping to eliminate harmful stereotypes that staff members may harbour about the community served by the school (Perry & Tannenbaum 1992:107). Another function of the PT is to bridge the gap between the school and the home, among other things by being actively involved in developing workshops for parents and the learners (Flaxman & Inger 1991:27). Comer and Haynes (1991:275) postulate that the need for parental involvement programmes is
greatest in low-income and minority communities or where parents experience a sense of exclusion, low self-esteem, and hopelessness (Comer 1988:15).

In addition to the SPMT and the PT, Comer also introduced the Learner and Staff Support team (LSST). The LSST includes staff with knowledge and experience of children’s development and mental health, such as the school psychologist, guidance counsellor, school nurse, special education educator, attendance officer, learner personnel worker, and any other suitable staff member (Comer, Haynes & Joyner 1996:12). The LSST works mostly preventively and prescriptively and shares learner development and behaviour knowledge, skills, and sensitivity with parents, educators, and administrators (Comer 1998:15).

All three mechanisms discussed above are driven by three operations, which are discussed in the following section.

4.6.2 The three operations of the School Development Programme

Haynes and Comer (1993:168) set out three operations, namely:

- A comprehensive school plan that delineates the social and academic goals and activities of the school;
- Staff development activities designed to address the goals and activities of the school; and
- A monitoring and assessment plan that generates useful data on programme processes and outcomes and recycles information back to inform programme modification, where necessary, and establishes new goals and objectives. In order to maintain learning and a caring community in which all adults feel respected and all learners are valued and motivated to learn and achieve, the work of the team is driven by three guiding principles, namely consensus decision making, genuine collaboration, and a no-fault approach to problem solving (Borton, Preston & Bipper 1996:1), as discussed below.

4.6.3 The three guiding principles of the School Development Programme

The three guiding principles for a team to function effectively are the following:
- **Consensus**, which allows for brainstorming, in-depth discussion, cross-fertilisation of ideas, and a plan for trying different solutions in some sequence.
- **Collaboration**, which requires all concerned to respect the other person’s point of view and to demonstrate a willingness to work as part of a team (Comer, Haynes & Joyner 1996:10).
- **A no-fault approach**, which emphasises problem solving rather than fault-finding, ensuring that everyone accepts equal responsibility for change. The team accepts accountability, and time and energy are not wasted in attributing blame (Haynes, Ben-Avie, Squires, Howley, Negron & Corbin 1996:57).

Comer’s model should essentially be implemented at any school. A successful school should look and feel like a community centre, where parent volunteers are engaged in helping teachers make key decisions about running the school and providing support for the school community (Epstein 1996). With its emphasis on the need for a full-time social worker at school (Bronfenbrenner’s mesosystem), Comer’s model highlights the need for schools to link social services. Comer recommends that schools invest in staff development and undergo regular assessments to gauge progress. Smith (2005) is confident that this model is very effective in improving learner achievement when implemented conscientiously and consistently over a period of five years or more.

As mentioned above, this model, with all its nine components, recommends that parents be actively involved in the smooth running of the school. Parent volunteers are therefore welcomed, undertaking a variety of important functions and activities within the school. In every facet of school life, Comer’s model links academic success with healthy child development (Comer 1998:168). The holistic development of the child is important for learning, and therefore a caring and nurturing school environment, as mentioned in sections 4.3 and 4.4, with close links to parents, should be created. In looking after the emotional well-being of all learners, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, as discussed in section 3.5.1, at least one social worker must be in place at the school to assist the children with and help manage the implementation of Comer’s process in the school environment (Comer 1998:168).
Swap’s models of parental involvement will be discussed in the following section.

4.7 SWAP’S MODELS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

There are many advantages when parents partner with teachers and become active participants in the education of their children. Children spend more time at home than at school (Swap 1992:52). Their parents know them intimately, interact with them one on one, and are eager to help them succeed. Involvement in the educational process also holds benefits for parents. Swap (1987, 1990, 1993) established that involved parents report pleasure in getting to know teachers as people, express a new appreciation for the commitment and skill of teachers, and experience an improvement in their own parenting skills and confidence levels.

Swap (1992:52) identifies four models which she believes should be organised into a parental involvement programme, namely:

- The protective model;
- The school-to-home transmission model;
- The curriculum enrichment model; and
- The partnership model.

The models are outlined below:

4.7.1 The protective model

Swap (1992:28) refers to this model as the protective model, because it aims to protect the school from parental interference. It is the most dominant model in home-school relationships. Its ultimate goal is to reduce conflict between parents and educators, primarily through the separation of parents and educators’ functions. This model is driven by three assumptions (Swap 1992:28), namely:

- Parents delegate to the school the responsibility of educating their children;
- Parents hold school personnel responsible for the results of the academic performance of their children; and
- Educators accept these delegations of responsibility.
The education of children is carried out at school by the teachers. The role of parents includes ensuring that their children get to school on time, with the correct equipment. Many educators share the sentiment that parents should become actively involved with their children at home, while the task to educate the child rests with the teacher (Swap 1992:29). Parental involvement in schools is seen as an unnecessary and potentially damaging interference in the efficient education of children. Swap (1992:29) and Hornby (2000:18) claim that this approach is the most common model of parent-teacher relationships. The disadvantages of this model include the negation of the potential of home-school collaboration for improving learner achievement, and exacerbating many conflicts between home and school by not providing opportunities to solve problems (Swap 1992:29). It is therefore important that parents become involved in their children’s education, for example by supporting their children at home to improve the quality of their learning (Swap 1992:29).

4.7.2 The school-to-home transmission model

In terms of the school-to-home transmission model, educators believe that parents should support their children’s learning at home in order for them to achieve academically (Swap 1992:58). According to Swap (1992:58), educators envisage the participation of parents in two ways, namely the primary expectation of parents and secondary expectation of parents. Primary expectation is that parents will aid their children’s learning by endorsing the importance of schooling and making sure that the learner meets minimum academic requirements. In line with this expectation, educators expect parents to make sure that their children complete their homework (Patall, Cooper & Robinson 2008:1039; Bailey 2006:155), as also mentioned in section 3.8. If learners create disciplinary problems at school, teachers rely on the parents to work with them to reinforce good behaviour and create conditions at home that support a change of behaviour (Mwamwenda 2004:275; Engelbrecht & Green 2001:223, as indicated in section 3.7).

A secondary expectation is that parents will spend enough quality time with their children to transfer cultural capital to them. The latter comprises the way of being, knowing, writing, talking, and thinking that characterises those who are successful
within the dominant culture (Swap 1992:50). The schools believe that parents may in some way contribute to the cultural capital of the child. Parents can become involved in this area by, for example, reading and listening to their children reading to them (Patall, Cooper & Robinson 2008:1039). Parents may also contribute to their children’s cultural capital through such activities as helping their children with projects, visiting local museums, or paying a visit to the local library with their children.

Comer (1988:192) maintains that it is important that parents support the growth and development of their child’s social skills. Where parents feel that their child can and should be part of the social mainstream, the child has the best chance of acquiring the social skills that will lead to progress at school and success in life. In some instances, where the parents are uninvolved and do not form part of the social background of the child, the climate and the operation of a school must be reasonably good to constructively enhance the child’s social skills (Comer 1988:192).

Although schools rely on parents to support them, it is the school personnel who define goals and programmes (Swap 1992:30). Parent programmes based on school-to-home transmission often contain components that reflect an unwillingness to consider parents as equal partners who possess important strengths (Swap 1992:51).

The third of Swap’s models of parental involvement is the curriculum enrichment model, which is discussed below:

4.7.3 The curriculum enrichment model

The goal of the curriculum enrichment model is to extend the school curriculum by incorporating parents’ contributions (Swap 1992:38). It is based on the assumption that parents have important expertise to contribute and that the interaction between parents and teachers around the implementation of the curriculum material will enhance the educational objectives of the school. The focus of parental involvement in this model is mainly on the curriculum and instruction in the school. This model
suggests ways of involving parents in their children's learning that will increase the resources available to the school and will provide opportunities for parents and teachers to learn from each other. Swap (1992:62) asserts that the curriculum enrichment model requires schools to allow parents to have major input into what is taught and how it is taught, an approach that is experienced as threatening by many teachers.

In order for schools to be productive and create comfortable environments for learners, they will have to meaningfully incorporate and form a partnership with the school.

4.7.4 The partnership model

The partnership model refers to the relationship between parents and teachers (Hornby 2011:29; Swap 1992:29). In terms of this model, teachers are viewed as experts on educational issues, while parents are viewed as experts on raising their children. Parents and teachers can contribute different strengths to their relationship, thereby increasing the potency of the partnership. An example is that most parents have a strong emotional attachment to their children, and therefore make excellent advocates for them. However, emotional attachments also tend to make parents somewhat subjective when considering their children's abilities and needs, which is why the objectivity that educators bring to the partnership is so important (Hornby 2011:29). According to Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, Soodak & Shogren (2011), it is important to have effective partnerships between professionals such as psychologists or teachers (as explained by Bronfenbrenner's (1979:21) exosystem, and in sections 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10 and 6.2) and parents, as this will help the child develop academically.

In the partnership model, parental involvement is seen not merely as an addendum, but as an indispensable component of school reform (Swap 1992:50). The most important principles of this model will be described below.

Firstly, there is clarity and consensus about goals, which means that the school, the parents, and the community must have a shared sense of mission in creating
success for all learners (Levin 1987:20). As a result, a key ingredient is to develop a shared mission of success for all learners and agreement on the standards by which success will be measured. According to Cuban (1989:30), parents and children share common values regarding respect, intellectual achievement, and caring for one another. Thus, the responsible role of parents is to instil values in their children, which must start at home. Such commitment represents a significant change in how school failure is conceptualised. This can be viewed as a paradigm shift in which blaming families and children for failure are replaced by the expectation of success for all children (Seeley 1989:47).

Secondly, a revised curriculum is suggested (Swap 1992:36). This means that a remedial approach to educating at-risk learners is replaced by an accelerated approach (as indicated also in section 2.2). A comprehensive, intensive curriculum is frequently used to assess learners’ progress, providing individual support through peer or teacher instruction (Swap 1992:36). The implementation of successful educational programmes to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged learners requires the involvement of parents and the extensive participation of teachers. Such an approach will create learning activities characterised by high expectations and a learning environment characterised by high status for the participant (Levin 1987:20).

Thirdly, local autonomy and control are required (Swap 1992:36). This is deemed necessary so that educators and principals have the flexibility to respond to changing needs within the school. Control over major decisions regarding the budget, incentives, resources, curricula, schedules, and educators’ duties builds commitment, ownership, and professionalism among the staff (Swap 1992:36).

Fourthly, Swap (1992:36) maintains that a partnership between teachers, parents, and community members is essential to support children in their education. Schorr (1998:257) underscores this, stating that successful programmes see the learner in the context of the family and surroundings. Recognition of the necessity of collaboration between educators, parents, and community representatives in meeting the goal of success for all learners is an essential part of the paradigm shift, as asserted by Seeley (1989:47).
Swap’s models recommend parental involvement, with benefits such as improvement in learner achievement, a decrease in dropout rates, and improved behaviour, regardless of learners’ disadvantaged backgrounds or socio-economic challenges. Translating the rhetoric of increased parental involvement into action, however, has proved to be difficult. Consequently, it does not just happen that parental involvement boosts learner learning (Soloman 1991:360). Thorough, coordinated planning and systematic actions integrate parental involvement into school and classroom programmes. Such coordination starts with leadership at government level. In conclusion, it becomes evident that parents are available but have untapped resources that teachers could mobilise to help learners master and maintain skills needed for their school careers. This, however, requires leadership from the educators to evaluate and continually build parental involvement practices.

All the models discussed in this chapter have the potential to play a significant role in improving parental involvement in schools. The following section focus on a synthesis of the models, specifically how they can be combined to design a model of parental involvement that will be effective.

4.8 A SYNTHESIS OF THE MODELS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Synthesis in general refers to a combination of two or more similarities that together form something new (Oxford Dictionary of English 2013). The following similarities were identified in all the models namely communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Each similarity will in turn be discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.8.1 Communication

In all the models, there is consensus on the need for a two-way communication between the home and the school. Epstein (1995:704) claims that schools must inform parents about school programmes, as well as the progress of their children. To ensure effective two-way communication between the home and the school, the information must be accurate and clear (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon 1997:58).
Shepard and Rose's (1995) model also recommends communication between the home and the school, where the parents are held responsible for monitoring the progress of the child. This is a very important step, and parents are held responsible for making contact with class teachers to discuss the progress of their children. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1995:111) and Epstein’s (1996) view of two-way communication, namely is that this interactive engagement is the foundation for healthy relationships between parents and teachers. However, it has been noted that both parents and teachers should share the responsibility for creating such a relationship.

Invitations can be a powerful tool in promoting parental involvement, because parents want their children to be successful (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1995:111). Therefore, invitations are an instrument that opens up channels of communication between the home and the school, to invite parents to discuss their children’s progress or any other problems they encounter at school.

Comer, Hayes and Joyner (1996:10) model recommends that communication between parents and the school is very important to allow brainstorming, in-depth discussion, an exchange of ideas, and the finding of solutions to the problems they encounter. According to Comer, Hayes and Joyner (1996:10), it is important to respect the other person’s point of view and to demonstrate a willingness to work as a team.

Swap’s (1992:50) approach to parental involvement takes a different perspective from that of Epstein, in that she highlights communication differently but in a way that compliment Epstein's perspectives and which are crucial for the enhancement of parental involvement. Swap (1992:69) postulates that the key to good communication is an attitude that welcomes parents as adult peers, in a context of mutual respect. Swap (1992:36) further holds that effective communication is based on relationships between parents and educators in which each respects the other’s contribution and expertise, boundaries are clear, conflicts are dealt with openly and respectfully, and contact is rewarding. The reason that parents and the school should communicate is to nurture the growth and learning of individual children, and to share information, insights, and concerns. Parental communication should
therefore be viewed as essential, so that schools can become responsive community institutions. According to Swap (1992:45), differences of language, class, or background can become problematic when communicating. Swap (1992:45) therefore recommends that when schools host parent meetings, teachers should prepare thoroughly, inform parents timeously, use the session as an opportunity to gain information and jointly make decisions, and try to create an environment that resembles a setting for a friendly, formal adult interaction.

In summary it is clear that one of the guiding principals for the enhancement of parental involvement should be communication to ensure that a healthy relationship between the home and the school are created to discuss the progress of the child.

The next concept, which is equally important, is parents volunteering to play significant roles in their respective schools.

4.8.2 Volunteering

Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:8) define the concept “volunteer” as anyone who supports schools and the learning of children or development in any way, at any place, and at any time. Epstein (1988:5) explains that parents who volunteer at school to support their children in school activities such as sports, or other events or to attend workshops would be of benefit for both the school and the child.

Shepard and Rose (1995:375) also recommend that parents volunteer to become involved in their children’s education. This creates the opportunity for parents to meet other parents, thus forming parent groups to support one another.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 2005) claim that when parents volunteer, their personal skills and knowledge increases, in other words, parents who are more skilled in mathematics can volunteer to assist with mathematics homework. Parents are generally more motivated to involve themselves in activities if they believe that their skills and knowledge will be helpful in a specific domain (Bandura 1986:391).
In terms of Comer’s model, parents who work directly in the classroom plays a meaningful role in schools that are related to educational activities and the curriculum (Haynes & Ben-Avie 1996:53). Bredekamp (1992:75) notes that the members of each child’s family are encouraged to help in classroom activities, such as sharing a cultural event or telling a story, tutoring, or playing games. In doing so, parents will gain a better understanding of the educator’s job and will be able to carry over school activities to the home. Parents will feel welcomed and comfortable in school, and their self-confidence in their ability to work in the school and with children will be boosted (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2007:10; Epstein 2002, 1997, 1996; Epstein 1988:4).

Swap’s curriculum enrichment model focuses on the curriculum and instruction and is founded on mutual respect between parents and educators (Swap 1992:50). Similar to Epstein’s model, the volunteer programme comprises aspects such as training, monitoring, and matching volunteers’ interests and skills with the needs of teachers. Children, particularly those from minority cultures, learn more easily when they are helped by volunteers who look and speak as they do (Swap 1992:37).

To summarise this type of activity, it is clear that parents should support the school and the learning of the child through volunteering and therefore enhancing parental involvement.

Another important aspect with regard to parental involvement models is the parents’ role at home.

4.8.3 Learning at home

According to (Epstein 1996), learning at home occurs when schools provide information and ideas to families about how to help learners at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.

This aspect in Epstein’s model is supported by Swap’s school-to-home transmission model, which emphasises that parents should play a supporting role at home (Swap 1992:50). In this model, parents are involved in two ways. Firstly, parents are
expected to support their children’s learning by emphasising the importance of schooling and ensuring that their children meet minimum academic and behavioural requirements. Secondly, parents must spend time with their children, so that the cultural capital can be transferred to school. Cultural capital refers to ways of being, knowing, writing, talking, and thinking that characterise those who succeed in the culture. Swap’s (1992:50) model holds that parents should be involved in instilling values and behaviours that are essential to school success.

Shepard and Rose’s (1995) model includes activities that are designed to enhance parenting skills related to improving the child’s home learning environment, such as discipline, homework assistance, and health care.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (2005) model also focuses on the fact that parents play a pivotal role in supporting their children at home with their schoolwork. According to this model, parental involvement takes place between the child and the parent outside of school, with the focus on strategies that parents might implement in helping their children with homework, revising for tests, and monitoring their progress.

Comer’s model suggests that if parents and educators work as a partnership with the school, parents will be able to support their children at home in order for them to succeed at school (Comer, Haynes & Joyner 1996:10).

In summary it is important to note that parents should be involved in their children’s teaching and learning at home to enhance parental involvement.

**4.8.4 Decision making**

Decision making, according to Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:9), is a key purpose of a partnership between the home and the school, that is, to share views towards a shared goal to develop the child academically.

Decision making, as defined by Epstein’s model (as discussed in section 4.3), is also supported by Shepard and Rose’s model (as discussed in section 4.4). Decision
making occurs when parents form part of the decisions that are made by the school policies and of the school governing body. Whenever decisions need to be made, parents are likely to gain knowledge, as well as build confidence and a sense of belonging, which are all important to enhance parental involvement.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) believe that parents make decisions based on their thinking about the outcomes that are likely to follow from their involvement activities. Parents become involved in their children’s education if they believe that their actions will improve learning and academic performance (Deslandes & Bertrand 2005:165).

Comer’s School Development Programme (SDP) includes significant parental participation in decision making to enhance the educational process and improve the overall climate of schools (Comer & Haynes 1991:271-277). The SDP is a three-tier model which consists of (i) parental participation in the school planning and management team, (ii) helping in the classroom, or supporting school programmes, and (iii) general participation (Haynes & Ben-Avie 1996:53). In a nutshell, parents are required to be actively involved in decision making.

Swap (1992:29) and Hornby (2000:21) point out that teachers and parents need to be involved in joint problem solving and decision making at the levels of individual children, the classroom, and the school. The parents decide what actions need to be taken, while the teacher acts as a consultant. The parents therefore have control over the decision-making process, while the teacher’s role is to provide the parents with the relevant information (Hornby 2000:18).

To summarise this type of involvement activity, it is crucial that parents need to be part of decisions made at school to boost their confidence to have a sense of belonging which are all important to enhance parental involvement.

Involvement without the community cannot be seen as an effective exercise, as the community forms the foundation on which the policies of an institution are built. It is therefore essential to promote collaboration with this important stakeholder.
4.8.5 Collaborating with the community

Communities, including groups of parents working together, create school-like opportunities and events that recognise and reward the learning and progress of the child. Communities also create family-like resources, settings, and services to support families in their role of supporting their children (Digman & Soan 2008:82; Swart & Phasa 2005:217; Montgomery 1995:5).

Epstein (1996) confirms that schools should coordinate the work and resources of the community, business, educational institutions, and communal groups to strengthen school programmes, family practice, and the learning of children. Schools can help families gain access to the support services offered, such as health care, aftercare facilities, and childcare programmes. The community, according to Swap's partnership model, forms an integral part in the parental involvement process.

The parents are seen as assets, fundamental components of the child’s success. A very important principle of this model is that the school, the parent, and the community must have a shared vision of creating success for the child. Successful programmes may include resources within the community, and creating business, agency, and medical partnerships so that services can be offered to children and families in a non-bureaucratic way. The combined sources of the community are essential to discovering and implementing effective solutions to improving education (Swap 1992:35-36).

According to Comer’s School Development Programme (SDP), parent and community involvement must be encouraged. Comer, Haynes and Joyner (1996:24) suggest that the centrality of the family in the child’s developmental needs should be recognised, and that parents and guardians should be actively involved. The SDP views the child as being part of the family unit and the neighbourhood, as well as of the school community. This model provides a framework within which professionals, school personnel, parents, and members of the community can collaborate. This model focuses on the key role of the child in learner interactions between families and schools, parents and educators, and influential participants (Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap & Epstein 1995:499). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005, 1995) support
Comer’s SDP, as schools and the communities need to work as a partnership and offer a service to the school. The more the school and the community work collaboratively in support of the child, the higher learner achievement levels will be (Henderson 1987:61).

Shepard and Rose (1995:373) claim that the empowerment model can utilise parents as an important source of information that has the capacity to make meaningful contributions to the life of their child and the community. The ultimate goal of the empowerment model is not simply to change people, but to provide them with the tools to enable them to better manage their own lives (Shepard & Rose 1995:373).

Overall it is clear that the home, school and the community should work harmoniously together to form a partnership to enhance parental involvement.

All the above models have an important role to play in parents becoming more involved in the education of their children. Each of these models highlights the importance of parental involvement and how important it is for parents to communicate with the school, to volunteer, to support their children in their homework, to make wise decisions for the development and progress of their children, and to form a partnership with the community and the school. The researcher believes that if all these aspects are in place, parents will become more involved in their children’s education.

4.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter describes the models that can enhance parental involvement at primary school. These models were linked with Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical framework, as all the systems in Bronfenbrenner’s framework are important for development and learning in the child’s life. In this regard parental and community involvement is an important factor in improving the academic progress of learners. Consequently, the support that parents give to their child will improve the child academically.
The synthesis of these models of parental involvement were discussed and communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaboration with the community highlights the important role that parents play in the education of their children. This is an important fact to remember for the development of proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement.

In the following chapter the researcher will describe the execution of the research with regard to the interviews and the questionnaires and will present an analysis of the data.
CHAPTER FIVE

EMPIRICAL STUDY: EXECUTION AND RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher has already described the research methodology in section 1.4. This chapter will describe the execution of the research and the results of the empirical study.

5.2 METHODOLOGY

5.2.1 Qualitative research

For the purposes of this study, a qualitative research approach, in terms of an interpretive method of inquiry, was deemed necessary, since the main aim of the study is to propose strategies to enhance parental involvement in the education of their children, as stated in section 1.3. Qualitative research focuses on seeing, hearing, feeling, touching and experiencing in the participants' natural settings, such as schools, classrooms, and playgrounds (Stringer 2004:26, 35; Picciano 2004:32; Leedy & Ormrod 2001:147). Lichtman (2010:12) and Holliday (2002:4) express the same sentiments and add that the focus should be on the description of people’s feelings, beliefs, thoughts and attitudes about the phenomenon under investigation. A qualitative research methodology was therefore chosen for this study, since the researcher was interested in the participants’ feelings, thoughts and attitudes regarding the phenomenon of parental involvement.

According to Holliday (2002:8), qualitative research looks in depth at the quality of the phenomenon that is being studied. During this study, the researcher looked at teachers’ abilities and skills in enhancing parental involvement at the participating schools. She also investigated parents’ ideas and thoughts about the phenomenon of parental involvement.

Struwig and Stead (2001:12) assert that the qualitative researcher works on the assumption that human behaviour does not take place in a void and that during the
research process the emphasis should be on both the micro- and the macro-experiences of the individual participants. For the purposes of this study, the researcher’s focus was the phenomenon of parental involvement and participants’ views on the important roles that parents can play in the education of their children.

The method of enquiry used in this research, namely semi-structured interviews, will now be discussed.

5.2.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data-collection method, as already mentioned in section 1.4.2.2, because they assist the researcher to build a relationship of trust with the participants, thereby ensuring that reliable data are obtained. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews, efforts were made to understand the world from the participants’ point of view, in order to reveal the meaning of people’s prior experiences (Greeff 2005:287). Kvale (1996:38) explains that through semi-structured interviews, one gets to know people’s experiences, feelings, and hopes and their perceptions of the world they live in. During this study, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with parents and teacher participants, while the co-researcher took field notes to capture the richness of what she observed, such as non-verbal communication used by the participants (See Appendix F and G).

Niewenhuis (2008:87) defines a semi-structured interview as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data. In this study, the semi-structured interviews were built on specific predetermined questions. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to improvise follow-up questions, which enabled her to investigate meanings and areas of interest that emerged in the course of the discussions and to probe deeper, where necessary. Opportunities were provided to the participants to provide responses that were more on their own terms than would have been possible in more standardised interviews.

Personal interviews were conducted with both parents and teachers of the participating schools. Interviews with the teachers were held after school hours at the
participating schools, from Mondays to Thursdays. The teacher participants were not available on Fridays, as most schools close early on a Friday. Most of the interviews took place in either the staffroom or the library of the respective schools. The researcher also had a request from one teacher participant to conduct the interview at her home. The researcher invited the parents to the schools where the interviews took place. Prior appointments with the parents were made to conduct the interviews. See also section 5.3.

During the interviews, some of the participants appeared to be nervous, while some of them spoke with confidence. As mentioned in section 1.5, Meho (2006:1289) stated that the privacy and anonymity of participants must be maintained throughout a study. The researcher assured participants of the anonymity of their participation and also assured them that whatever information they shared during the interview would be kept private and confidential. See also section 1.6.

The co-researcher accompanied the researcher to the interviews. The co-researcher’s role was to observe and write down (as field notes) the proceedings of the interview and to compare her observations and field notes with those of the researcher after each interview to ensure that all the data were fully and correctly observed and recorded. The co-researcher specifically observed the participants’ non-verbal communication, as conveyed by their facial expressions. This was discussed in section 1.7. According to Mertler (2006:119) and Sarantakos (2000:208), observations made during interviews should be noted.

The interviews were taped on a voice recorder, and the researcher and the co-researcher record it as it is given during the interview sessions (see Appendices H and I). Before interviews are conducted, it is very important to check the recording equipment (Lankshera & Knobel 2004:210). As part of the preparations before the interviews took place, the researcher checked the tape recorder to see that the equipment was in working order, to record and capture the exact words of the interviewees and then transcribed by the researcher and the co-researcher (see Appendices H and I).
The interviews followed the guidelines suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2010:149) and Greeff (2002:293-297), as explained in section 1.4.2.2. During the interviews, the researcher posed questions to the interviewees and allowed the participants to do most of the talking. Where necessary, probing was done after each question was asked, to gain better insight into what was meant by the responses.

The interviews generated data that provided an understanding of the interviewees' (both parents and teachers) perceptions and experiences regarding the level of parental involvement needed in order for the school to function in a more effective manner.

All interview questions that were asked were clear and brief, and the words used could be easily understood. The interview questions were posed in the mother tongue of the interviewees making the questions easy to understand and respond to, as they felt comfortable with the language. The questions were posed one at a time to prevent confusion and to maintain the interviewees' composure. The researcher avoided asking leading questions, to prevent the interviewees from being influenced. The researcher sometimes had to repeat questions when the interviewees became distracted (see Appendix F and G for parent and teacher interview questions).

After conducting 23 interviews with the parents and with the teachers the data became saturated, that is, the interviewees were giving similar answers to the same questions. This is the point in the study where the researcher began to hear the same information being given repeatedly and ceased to learn anything new. According to Greeff (2002:300), saturation of information is reached, when the information is repeatedly heard.

The following observation schedule was given to the co-researcher to use during the interview sessions.

5.2.2.2 Observation schedule for co-researcher to use during interview sessions

Please observe the following during the interview sessions:
• The behaviour of the participants;
• How the participants reacted non-verbally to certain questions that were asked;
• All the verbal and non-verbal communication of the participants, as well as their facial expressions; and
• Organise all field notes according to the dates on which the data was collected.

5.2.2 Sample Group

As mentioned in section 1.4.3, sampling in a qualitative study is used to gain access to relevant evidence on the phenomenon being studied. Struwig and Stead (2001:110) report that the two key concepts of sampling are access, which reflects practical availability issues, and relevance, which reflects validity issues. In this study, the researcher made use of a combination of purposive, or judgement, sampling and convenience sampling. (The terms “judgement sampling” and “purposive sampling” will be used interchangeably in this chapter.)

Babbie (1999:97) defines purposive sampling as a sample that is selected based on the researcher’s knowledge of the population. Takona (2002:311) adds that participants are chosen because it is deemed that they are knowledgeable and informed about the phenomenon. The researcher selected participants to obtain reliable information, in order to gain insights from the interviewees with regard to parental involvement. All the participants selected for the sample group for personal interviews were parents and teachers of the participating schools in the disadvantaged area of Gelvandale in Port Elizabeth. Ten participating schools were selected. These 10 schools were selected on the basis of their accessibility and convenience to the researcher, who teaches in the area. Twenty-three participants were selected. Ten of these participants were parents, and 13 were teachers.

Struwig and Stead (2001:122) emphasise that judgement sampling serves as a useful method because of the information-rich participants. Hence, all the participants were selected based on their accessibility and close proximity to the researcher, as well as their knowledge regarding parental involvement. The criterion for the selection of teacher participants was that they should be teachers at primary schools in the Northern Areas of the Port Elizabeth. Another criterion for selection
was that they had to be teachers at the participating schools. Parent participants had to be parents of children at the participating schools that were to be included in the sample. Both teacher and parent participants were easily accessible after school, and the travel expenses of the researcher were kept low.

5.2.3 Ethical Measures

As mentioned in section 1.6, ethical measures were taken into consideration before the researcher embarked on this study. Firstly, the researcher applied to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University for ethical clearance, and permission was granted to conduct this study. The Human Ethics clearance reference number for this study is H11-Edu-ERE-003. (See Appendix J) Secondly, the researcher sent a letter to the District Director of the Department of Education (see Appendix A) to obtain permission to conduct the research at the various schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. Consent was granted to conduct this study.

After permission was granted by the Education Department to conduct research at the participating schools, the researcher personally made appointments with the principals to inform them about the study. Some principals were very accommodating and assured the researcher of their support. The researcher then gave consent forms to the principals of the 10 participating schools and returned after a week to collect the signed consent forms (see Appendix C). Prior to commencement of the study, permission was sought from the participants, who completed informed consent forms, giving their consent to be part of this study (see Appendix D). The researcher then assured the participants that all information would be treated confidentially and guaranteed them anonymity and that ethical principles would be followed throughout the study. Before each interview, the participants signed informed consent forms (see Appendix E). These ethical measures taken by the researcher made the teachers and the parents more willing to take part in the research. The participants showed a keen interest in the topic and seemed thankful to be given the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences with regard to parental involvement in education.

In the following section, the analysis of the data is discussed.
5.2.4 Data Analysis

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2004), data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing, emerging, and iterative, or non-linear, process. To analyse means to take apart words, sentences, and paragraphs. This is an essential process in the research project, so as to make sense of what participants have said. Bogan and Knopp-Biklen (2003) explain that data analysis is the process of systematically seeking and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that researchers accumulate to enable them to come up with findings.

The audiotapes of the semi-structured interviews with parent and teachers were transcribed, after which the information was analysed by means of descriptive analyses, as recommended by Tesch (1990:154-156). Madison, Huberman and Miles (2009:148) proposed important steps for coding data into meaningful segments and assigning names for the segments, combining the codes into categories, or themes, and making comparisons. The eight steps that Tesch proposed are discussed in section 1.5.1. They were used to analyse the data for emerging themes and sub-themes. The researcher had a meeting with the co-researcher, during which they reached consensus about the identified themes and sub-themes (De Vos 1998:345).

Colour codes were used to identify themes. Transcripts were clearly marked with an appropriate code identifying a certain theme. The researcher reassessed each transcript to ensure that the transcribed information was correctly coded (see Appendix K). The researcher confirmed with the participants to establish whether her transcriptions were a true (objective, and authentic) reflection of the participants’ perceptions, meanings, and feelings, and also to establish whether the researcher had understood the participants correctly.

5.2.5 Triangulation

Miles and Huberman (1994:267) and Struwig and Stead (2001:18-19) identify four different types of triangulation, namely triangulation by data source (which includes persons, times, and places), by method (such as observations and interviews), by researcher (such as investigators A and B), and by theory (Bronfenbrenner’s eco-
systemic theory). With regard to researcher triangulation, Duffy (1993:143) explains that this means that different researchers are triangulated with each other. As indicated in section 1.7, data source triangulation and researcher triangulation are relevant to this study. A co-researcher was employed in this investigation to take notes of the non-verbal communication of the participants, to record personal impressions during the interviews, and to assist in the identification of themes and sub-themes, as mentioned previously. The researcher and the co-researcher had a consensus meeting after the data analysis to established consensus among themselves regarding the identified themes and sub-themes.

The following section describes the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The main themes and sub-themes that were identified from the data were:

- PARTICIPANTS FELT THAT COLLABORATION BETWEEN PARENTS, THE SCHOOL, AND THE COMMUNITY ARE ESSENTIAL.
  - Teacher and parent participants felt that collaboration between the home, the school, and the community is essential.
  - Parents should be regarded as partners in education

- PARTICIPANTS WERE OF THE OPINION THAT PARENTS AND TEACHERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT.
  - Parents and teachers should be informed about the provisions of the South African Schools Act and the importance and implications of the Act.

- PARTICIPANTS FELT THAT IT IS CRUCIAL THAT PARENTS BE EMPOWERED TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN’S EDUCATION.
  - Parents need to be empowered to be accountable and to assume their responsibilities as parents.
Meetings and communication with parents should take place on a regular basis.

- Parental involvement can enhance learning.
- Socio-economic barriers can affect parental involvement.
- Illiterate parents need to be empowered.

The above-mentioned themes and their sub-themes will now be discussed.

5.3.1 PARTICIPANTS FELT THAT COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PARENTS, THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY IS ESSENTIAL.

Most participants felt that it is important for the parents, the school, and the community to work collaboratively to enhance the teaching and learning of children. In this regard Macbeth (1989:2) asserts that education takes place in three main areas, namely the school, the home, and the community, and that these three areas are vital for the education of children. In this regard, it is important to note that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystemic approach provides a conceptual framework for understanding how families and schools are embedded in the community and how they influence each another, as explained in sections 1.8, 2.6, 3.10 and 6.2.

5.3.1.1 Teacher and parent participants felt that collaboration between the home, the school, and the community is essential

The majority of the teacher participants felt that the home, the school, and the community must work hand in hand so that children can take their rightful place in society, to prepare them to become responsible citizens, and for the well-being of our country. Teacher participant 11 responded as follows:

"Die skool, gemeenskap en ouers is verantwoordelik vir die toekoms van ons land. 'n Gesonde gemeenskap sal 'n gesonde land meebring. As leerders opgevoed is, sal hulle produktief wees. [The school, community and parents are responsible for the future of our country. A healthy community will bring about a healthy country. If learners are educated, they will be productive.]"
Teacher participant 20 suggested that the community can help children with their schoolwork if parents cannot assist:

_Ek sien dit as baie belangrik, want die gemeenskap kan selfs help met die skoolwerk as die ouers nie daar is nie._[I see it as very important, because the community can help with the schoolwork if the parents are not there.]

Springate and Stegelin (1999:76) express the same sentiments, adding that the duty of the school, the family, and the community is to have a common goal, namely to guide and educate children towards adulthood. By bringing the community, the school and the family together to form one collaborative unit, learners will receive quality education, and these learners will be able to reach their full potential in their scholastic achievement (Watkins 1997; Epstein 1995).

Parent participants also indicated that collaboration between the school, the home, and the community is important, to ensure that learners are provided with effective teaching and learning (as explained in section 3.2). The teacher participants felt that the school cannot work successfully in isolation from the child, the family, and the community and these parents can play an important role in the development of the school and the education of the child. In this regard, teacher participant 22 said:

_Die skool, gemeenskap en die ouers moet hand aan hand saamwerk om 'n suksesvolle kind na vore te bring. Die een hand was die ander._ [The school, community and the parents must work hand in hand to raise a successful child. The one hand washes the other.]

The critical role that parents, the school, and the community should play in the education and development of the child has been given official recognition through legislation in the form of the Education White Paper No. 6 (Department of Education 2001) and the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996), as explained in sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.7. The Education White Paper No.6 (2001) states that parents should be consulted regarding the education of their children, and that the school has to collaborate with parents and the education professionals in a disadvantaged community regarding the education of the learners. The South African Schools Act
(Act 84 of 1996) indicates that parents are required to be involved in activities engaged in by the school, including high-level responsibilities, and those members of the community need to engage in capacity-building programmes to develop learners scholastically.

A teacher participant suggested that schools could invite members of the community to help learners with their schoolwork, and also offer a service to the community by, for instance, making school premises available for the use of outside agencies for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) classes, or for extramural activities, such as sewing classes and computer courses (as explained in section 2.4.8.4). This was also suggested by teacher participant 12, who had taught ABET classes to adults at her school in order to help those parents who were illiterate. This was a service that she offered to the community once a week.

From the discussion above, it is clear that the participants felt that there should be a close partnership between parents, teachers, and the community. This is in line with the theoretical framework of this study, which is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystemic theory. This theory indicates how the family, the school, and the community influence each other and how reactions in one system have an impact on child development in all of the systems. This means that what happens in the microsystem (the family, or the school) will have an effect on the mesosystem, where the participants of the microsystem interact with each other. The interactions in these two systems have an impact on the exosystem (the community), and vice versa. This was also indicated in sections 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10 and 6.2. Schools should therefore collaborate with professionals from the community, for example invite traffic inspectors to present lectures on road safety, nurses to give presentations about health issues, members of the police to educate learners about crime and crime prevention, and health professionals such as social workers to speak to parents and learners about topics such as HIV and AIDS, drugs, and other related issues. The people invited to speak could be the parents of some of the learners. Bronfenbrenner's (1979:6-8) ecological systems highlight the fact that families and schools are embedded in the community, since schools influence families, families influence schools, and both are affected by the communities in which they are

In this regard, teacher participant 18 said the following:

_Die skool maak die gemeenskap uit en moet die gemeenskap dien, en omgekeerd. As ons drie (die skool, die onderwysers en die ouers) saamwerk, sal ons 'n suksesvolle gemeenskap hê. Dit is uiterst belangrik dat elkeen van ons ons deel moet doen vir die opvoeding van ons kinders._ [The school forms part of the community and must serve the community, and vice versa. If the three of us (the school, the teachers and the parents) work together, we will have a successful community. It is extremely important that each one of us must do our bit for the education of our children.]

The above response is consistent with Epstein’s (1995:702) assertion that schools should realise that a community must be defined in such a way that it includes all groups affected by the quality of education, not just the people living in close proximity to the school. This was also indicated in sections 3.9 and 4.3. De Villiers (2005:3) contends that if the community, the school, and the parents form a partnership, it will be beneficial for the child, because their involvement will enhance the scholastic development of the child, as well as the child’s self-esteem. Epstein (1996) further suggests that schools should co-ordinate the work and resources of the community, businesses, educational institutions, and communal groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and the learning of children. This was discussed in section 4.8. The community, according to Swap’s partnership model (discussed in section 4.7.4), forms an integral part in the parental involvement process. It is therefore important that members of the community form effective partnerships with the school. These partnerships could be between the school and professionals, such as psychologists, social workers, and the parents’ employers. It is important to note how these systems interact with each other, as explained in Bronfenbrenner’s (1979:21) mesosystem. This was discussed in sections 1.8.1, 2.3.4.2, 3.9 and 6.3. It was also indicated how these systems interact with the exosystem, as explained in sections 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10 and 6.2.3.
The implications of what has been mentioned so far is that collaboration between parents, teachers, and the community is essential for the education of the child and a harmonious relationship between teachers, parents, and professionals in the community. Such a relationship is crucial, since these parties have a direct influence on each other. The researcher discovered during the interviews that parents and teachers were not all aware of the policies that stipulate the partnership and collaboration between the school, parents, and the community. It is important that parents and teachers be aware of the policies describing the role of parents and teachers in the education of the child (as explained in the South African Schools Act of 1996, discussed in section 2.4.3). Lack of knowledge regarding these policies will have a detrimental effect on the education of our children, since these policies outline the smooth running of the schools.

To summarise, the participants in the study indicated that the school, the community, and parents must work in collaboration to secure the future of our children, to build a better society and to optimally support the learning and development of all children.

5.3.1.2 Parents should be regarded as partners in education

Some teacher participants felt the need for the school, the parents, and the teachers to form a partnership in assisting the child to develop into a responsible adult and citizen. This is illustrated by what teacher participant 17 said:

\[
\text{As ons drie [skool, ouers, gemeenskap] saamwerk, sal ons 'n suksesvolle gemeenskap hê. [If the three of us [school, parents, community] work together, we will have a successful community.]}
\]

Teacher participant 13 stated:

\[
\text{I always stress the importance of the involvement of parents in their child's education, to what extent they need to be involved, and also how they can be of assistance throughout the year.}
\]
Teacher participant 12 stated that if parents form a partnership with their child’s school, the children will become responsible and will ultimately become successful citizens. She responded as follows:

_Dit is belangrik dat die skool, gemeenskap en die ouers moet saam werk om die belange van die kind ter harte te neem om sodoende 'n verantwoordelike burger op te voed. [It is important that the school, community and the parents work together in the interests of the child to raise a responsible citizen ]_

Literature confirms what the study participants suggested. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005, 1995) support Comer’s School Development Programme, which asserts that the school and the community need to work as partners, and that professionals in the community can offer their services to the school (see section 4.5 and 4.6). Henderson (1987:61) maintains that the more the school and the community work collaboratively in supporting the child, the higher the learner achievement levels will be.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:301) and Epstein and Sanders (2000:286) support Henderson’s view and emphasise the importance of establishing a home-school-community partnership. These authors recommend that communities play a more active role in the socialisation of children, particularly where families, due to illness or death related to AIDS, are unable to provide the necessary socialisation and educational support required for learners’ academic development. This was discussed in sections 2.5.2.4 and 3.6.5. Heystek (2002:115) maintains that an ideal relationship between parents and the school is a partnership in which both groups perform their duties and functions according to their respective expertise and knowledge. Parents and teachers should develop this partnership for the overall benefit of the child, the school, and the community.

For parent-school partnerships to be established, it is important that both parties communicate their expectations of each other and also what they are willing to give. Only when this is clarified will schools be able to develop into effective institutions (Heystek 2002:115; Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap & Epstein 1995:499).
The majority of the participating teachers felt that the parents should support them more in the education of their children in the interests of a partnership between parents and the school.

The researcher found that a lack of communication between the school and the parents at most of the schools in the sample could have a negative impact on the establishment of such a teacher-parent partnership. This is illustrated by teacher participant 15, who responded to the question “How do you promote home-school relations?” as follows:

\[ \text{No, I cannot answer on that one. [Although the researcher probed this response, it was clear that the teacher participant could not answer the question that had been posed to her.]} \]

It is clear that the above teacher participant did not consider the possibility that she could do something to improve her relationship with learners’ parents. This is worrying, as the SASA of 1996 and the White Paper No. 6 recommend that strong relationships be formed between the school and the parents. It seems therefore that teachers can do more to increase parental involvement. Lazarus (2006:541) points out that although South Africa’s education policies (as outlined in Chapter 2) point to the importance of establishing strong community partnerships for effective educational support, parents and schools still have a long way to go before this goal is achieved. South Africa’s education policies were discussed and explained in sections 2.4 and 2.5.

From the above discussion, it is clear that parents need to form a partnership with the school and become involved in school activities. Parents who serve on school governing bodies (SGBs) could also engage with non-involved parents and encourage them to participate more in their children’s education. Education is the responsibility of both the school and the parents. Therefore it is essential that the joint efforts of teachers, learners, parents, and the local community be valued and encouraged by all stakeholders.
5.3.2 PARTICIPANTS WERE OF THE OPINION THAT PARENTS AND
TEACHERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE SOUTH
AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT

Most of the participants felt that both teachers and parents should be aware of the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act No. 84 of 1996, since it forms the foundation for parental involvement in education and inclusive education. Their feelings in this regard proved to be relevant in the light of the discussion in section 2 where it is explained that the SASA of 1996, Section 2.4.3, states that parents, educators, and learners should accept co-responsibility for the governance, funding, and organisation of schools (Republic of South Africa 1996). The SASA clearly states that the school governing body (SGB) should play an important role in the development of the school's potential to provide quality education to all its learners. Parental involvement is thus essential to support the SGB in this regard.

Fleisch (2002:83) observes that the SGB stands in a position of trust towards the school and that it is responsible to govern the school. It is therefore important that parents know and understand the policies that refer to them. Stern (2003:20) adds that all policies that include parents should be discussed with the parents, and a decision should be taken to implement these policies, taking into consideration all the stakeholders, namely the parents and the teachers.

5.3.2.1 Parents and teachers should be informed about the provisions of the South African Schools Act and the importance and implications of the Act

It is apparent from the responses of the teachers and the parents that although the roles of parents are clearly stated in the SASA of 1996, a major challenge that most schools face is the fact that parents are not aware of what their roles and responsibilities are. They are also not aware of the stipulations of the SASA (Republic of South Africa 1996), with the result that there is no collaboration between teachers and parents. In this regard, teacher participant 10 mentioned that

*Die Skolawet vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees by hulle kinders se opvoeding, maar baie ouers is óf baie min betrokke of glad nie betrokke nie.*
[The Schools Act requires that parents be involved in their children’s education, but many parents are either very little or not at all involved.]

Teacher participant 17 responded as follows:

Ouers moet hulle kinders help in hulle opvoeding. Dit is wat ons as leerkragte verwag van die ouers. [Parents must help their children with their education. That is what we as teachers expect from the parents.]

In the light of the above, the question arises as to whether parents are aware of what teachers expect of them. The responses of the parent participants suggest that parents are not aware of SASA of the expectations of the teachers. It would appear that parents are not informed about SASA (Republic of South Africa 1996) and their roles, responsibilities, and rights in this regard. In SASA (Republic of South Africa 1996:14), the rights of parents to become involved in the governance of the school and the role that parents need to play in the education of their children are clearly stated. These were responses from the parent participants:

Parent participant 5 indicated:
“No, I never heard of it before”

Parent participant 6 said:
“Nee, ek weet nie van dit nie” [No, I don’t know of that.]

Parent participant 7 indicated:
“Nee, nog nie van dit gehoor nie”. [No, I have not heard of that.]

Participant 8 responded as follows:
“Oeeeee, juffrou, nee juffrou, ek ken nie van dit nie”. [Oh no teacher, I don’t know that.]

Van der Westhuizen and Mentz (2003:69) add that for any educational institution to run smoothly, the basic components such as the planning and implementation of
policies must be in place, and parents must be involved in the education of their children. This has already been discussed in section 4.6.1.

During the interview with the parents, it was found that a few parents knew about SASA, but were unaware of its provisions. Parent participant 10 said the following: 
*Ja, maar eks nie seker van daai wet nie.* [Yes, but I am not sure of that law.]

Teacher participants were unhappy about the fact that parents do not realise the importance of SASA. In fact, a few teacher participants indicated that although some parents are aware of the Schools Act, parents should also be made aware of the importance of the Act, the need for them to be actively involved in their children’s education, and their roles and responsibilities in this regard.

Teacher participant 19 responded as follows:

*Die ouers steur hulle nie aan die Skolewet nie.* [The parents don’t pay any attention to the Schools Act.]

Comments made by teacher participant 16 illustrate that she feels that parents are uninformed about their responsibilities:

*Parents are quick to come to the school to inform you of problems. Knowledge is power [...] if we can get our parents to get more knowledge and understanding of what is going on in the school, we will be empowering them as well.*

Teacher participant 15 was very clear that all stakeholders should know the Schools Act. She commented as follows:

*It is important that they [the parents] should be aware of it, and us as educators.*

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005:89) and Haynes and Comer (1993:168) state that the core duty of parents who serve on School Governing Board (SGB)
committees is to include parents in school activities, management issues and school support programmes. This was explained in section 4.6. It is important to note that according to SASA, School Governing Bodies are seen as a significant feature of democracy and represent a major move towards empowering parents in schools. SASA (Republic of South Africa 1996:14). It is therefore not just the responsibility of teachers but also of the SGB, to empower parents to serve as representatives of families and to support programmes and policies to develop the community.

Although SASA (1996) came into effect in January 1997, most teacher participants indicated that they were not familiar with the stipulations of the Act, although they were aware of its existence. Some of the teacher participants responded that they never knew that SASA (1996) existed. They were also unaware that SASA (1996) is stipulated in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) file, which they all have in their possession. The ELRC file is a file that all educators receive from the Department of Basic Education. These files outline all the legislation that pertains to educators, and in most cases teachers are not familiar with the contents of the file.

The findings stated above are illustrated by the following comment made by teacher participant 17:

*I wasn’t aware of that, but it’s nice to know that there’s something like it.*

A similar comment, made by teacher participant 12, was

*No, unaware.*

The ignorance of both teachers and parents regarding policies and the SASA has implications for parental involvement. If teachers are unaware of parents’ rights they will not be able to offer parental guidance and support. On the other hand, if parents are not aware of SASA they will not know how to support the school, and they will not know their rights as parents. If both teachers and parents don’t know what is expected of them, they might blame the other.
A considerable volume of literature has been published regarding teachers’ roles and their responsibilities in the School Governing Body’s code of conduct, the South African Council of Educators’ (SACE) Code of Professional Ethics, and the Employment of Educators Act, Act No. 76 of 1998. The SACE is the watchdog of educator performance and behaviour. It is therefore up to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body to take responsibility and implement existing ethical codes and legislation to ensure quality governance of the school.

The South African Schools Act of 1996 states that educators are important members in school governing bodies and that the nature of their presence and contributions in such bodies can lead to either success or deadlocks (Act No. 84 of 1996; Duma 2010:119). For this reason, educators need to be handled with greater discretion by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The DBE published a key document, titled *Norms and Standards for Educators*, in which seven roles are set out for educators (Department of Education 2000:12-25). The “community, citizenship and pastoral role” states that “the educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organisations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental issues” (Department of Education 2000:14).

From the above it is clear that teachers and parents need to familiarise themselves with the contents of the South African Schools Act. They must know their roles and responsibilities and what is expected of them and teachers must assist parents by giving them guidance to increase their involvement and to empower them with the content of the school policies. From the afore-mentioned it is clear that teachers need to be empowered to do parental guidance and to show parents how to be involved. In the light of Bronfenbrenner’s mesosystem, the importance of the quality interactions between parents and teachers becomes apparent since this will have a direct influence on the quality of the education provided by both parents and teachers. Therefore, SGBs at school need to empower parents to be actively involved in the governance of schools.
5.3.3 PARTICIPANTS FELT THAT IT WAS CRUCIAL THAT PARENTS BE EMPOWERED TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

Parents play an important role in the education and upbringing of their children. This is explained in section 2.9. Most parents, particularly those who are not involved in their children’s education, find involvement challenging and in most cases rely on the teachers to educate their children. It is thus not surprising that the majority of teacher participants in the study felt that parents need to be empowered to become involved in their children’s education. The sub-themes of this theme will now be discussed.

5.3.3.1 Parents need to be empowered to be accountable and to assume their responsibilities as parents

Most of the teacher participants felt that parents need to be empowered to assume their responsibilities and to become involved in their children’s education. From the responses of the teacher participants, it is clear that most of the teachers believe that parents simply send their children to school expecting the school to assume full responsibility for providing their children with a good education, without acknowledging their own responsibility in the education of their children. Reasons for the lack of parental involvement in school activities are political turbulence, poor socio-economic conditions, disadvantaged communities, and teacher reluctance attributed to the apathy experienced by parents (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2004:2). As a result of this apathy, parents distance themselves from the school system and leave the teachers to do the work that they (the parents) feel they have not been adequately trained to do. This is explained in section 3.4.

This problem is reflected in the following comment made by teacher participant 16:

*The problem at this stage is parents don’t care about their children [...] they must know what the child’s programme is like.*

Parents should gain insight and show an interest in their children’s personal lives (Bailey 2006:165). Ferrara and Ferrara (2005:77) claim that if parents show an interest in what their children learn at school, it is a form of participation in education, and that such children are usually encouraged to achieve academically. Dearing,
Kreider and Weiss (2008:228) add that the extent to which parents are empowered to become involved in various aspects of their child’s formal education will have an impact on the level of the child’s academic achievement.

What transpired from the interviews was that teacher participants felt that in order for parents to be empowered, they need guidance from the teachers to support their children. Disadvantaged communities have traditionally displayed the highest level of lack of parental involvement (Maynard & Howley 2004:40). It is therefore the responsibility of teachers to empower parents to become involved in the education of their children.

Teacher participant 16 commented as follows:

_“Knowledge is power [...] if we can get our parents to get more knowledge and understanding of what is going on in the school, we will be empowering them as well.”_

Heystek (2002:16) and Hess (1992:45) define empowerment as the gaining of knowledge and being allowed to take part in decision making, as well as being granted an opportunity to notice and express people’s wants, needs, and rights. Shepard and Rose’s (1995:374) empowerment model of parental involvement, as discussed in section 4.4, asserts that if parents are empowered, they will have the capacity to make meaningful contributions to their lives and the lives of their children. Therefore, if parents are empowered to support their children at the level of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) microsystem, it will enhance the microsystem holistically (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2010:40-41).

If teachers encourage parents to be involved and show them how to complement the learning that the child receives in the classroom, the child’s academic performance will be stimulated, and the foundation will be created for a harmonious parent-teacher relationship. It appears that parent participants are in agreement with the last statement from the following parent participant’s statements. The following responses were the responses of the parent participants:
Parent participant 4 stated:
“….sodat hy kan goed doen in die skool”. […so that he can progress well in school.]

Parent participant 5 responded:

“Sometimes you need to encourage your child, to do good in their schoolwork and like to become something in life”.

Parent participant 6 said:

“Want as jy as ouer betrokke is by jou kind, dan kom jou bo uit met n baie goeie gemiddelde punt-A simbool, dus baie belangrik. [If you as a parent are involved, then your child will come out top with an A symbol, is very important.]

From the above-mentioned it is clear that if parents can be supported to create a home environment that is conducive to learning and development, children might be encouraged and motivated to perform well academically. This depends on the teachers’ abilities and willingness to persevere with their efforts to get parents more involved. This will also improve the interpersonal relationships of all stakeholders at the meso level, as was explained in section 2.4.8.

In this regard, teacher participant 15 responded as follows:

The challenges I experience with regard to parental involvement are the fact that parents don’t realise the important role that they play in the education of their children until you sit them down and you show them and you tell them the ABCD, “this is what’s happening”, “this is how things have to be done”, “this is where you come in”[…] they themselves admit that they didn’t know that they played such an important role in their child’s education.

Teacher participant 12 commented as follows:

Some parents have the mentality that a child learns at school, and if that child is underachieving, then it is the teacher’s fault.
In this regard, it is important to note that Swap’s parental involvement model, as discussed in section 4.8.2, emphasises that parents should play a supporting role at home (Swap 1992:58). According to Swap (1992:58), parents should support their child’s learning by emphasising the importance of education and ensuring that their child meets the minimum academic requirements.

Children are in the care and under the supervision of teachers for about five hours a day. It is important that teachers and parents develop a good parent-teacher relationship, so that parents can support their children with their schoolwork to enhance their learning. These relationships involve much more than simply showing parents how to help their children at home to prepare them for school or to do homework. Strieb (2010:2) argues that parental involvement may involve more than meeting with parents at twice-yearly report card conferences. Parents need to be actively involved by volunteering, assisting with school activities or supporting children with their educational needs (as discussed in section 4.2). This may include day-to-day conversations about homework, behaviour, and small matters. From some of the parent’s responses, it is clear that some of the parents are willing to support the school as indicated in the following parent responses. Parent participant 1 said the following:

“Ek gee my volle ondersteuning. Ons het n feeding scheme begin waar ek elke oggend die brood gaan koop, dan verwag ek dat die skool vir my niks moet gee nie want ek volunteer om iets vrywilliglik vir die skool te doen”. [I give my full support. We started a feeding scheme at school, where every morning I buy the bread and I expect nothing from the school, as I volunteer to do something for the school.]

Another parent, participant 5, commented the following:

“Yes, I volunteer. Whenever, there’s not a teacher available, they will call on my number and I’ll be there for them”.

The researcher found that some of the parent participants did not know their children’s teachers. Parent participant 7 stated the following:
“Nee. Ek sien haar nie. Die moeder sien haar”. [No, I don't see her. The mother sees her.]

This is worrying, as it is important that parents should have a healthy relationship with teachers, to help their children to achieve academically and socially, as has already been pointed out. Hayden (2009:205) supports this view and argues that families are the major socialising agent in society to assist their children as they move from childhood to adolescence.

From the above discussion, it is evident that schools should enhance parental involvement to realise benefits for all the parties functioning in the micro- and mesosystems, and also to address the problems of parental involvement in disadvantaged communities. Teachers have to find innovative ways to get parents more involved, as is mentioned in sections 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10 and 6.1. Enhancement of parental involvement is also essential in the light of the racial inequalities in South Africa’s education system and political problems of the past. This was discussed in sections 2.3.1 and 3.4.

Some of the ways in which teachers can get parents more involved are discussed in the following subsection.

5.3.3.2 Meetings and communication with parents should take place on a regular basis

Teacher participants felt that in order for schools to run smoothly and effectively, it is vital that teachers communicate with parents on a regular basis to stress the importance that parents attend meetings at school. During these meetings, parents should be offered the opportunity to ask the teachers questions regarding the progress of their children. These meetings will also provide teachers with the opportunity to hear from the parents how they experience their children’s strengths and weaknesses. They will furthermore provide an opportunity for teachers to offer parents guidance on how they can support their children. These meetings should be held once a term, on a one-on-one basis. In the light of the last mentioned, it is
worrying that most of the teacher participants responded that the parents they would like to see more of are the parents that never or seldom attend these meetings.

In this regard, teacher participant 16 responded as follows:

*The parents you really want to see are never around […] so obviously there’s no involvement or discipline around, so the child’s marks won’t be of a high standard.*

Another teacher participant, teacher participant 22 mentioned that

*As jy die ouers by die skool wil hê, dan kry jy die verkeerde ouers […] want die ouers wat hulle kinders by die huis help, help ons. [If you want the parents to come to school, then the wrong parents pitch up […] because those parents that help their children at home, help us.]*

As explained in section 3.3, parental involvement is important. It is therefore clear that teachers and schools should find innovative ways to get uninvolved parents involved, particularly those parents that the teacher needs to see. Comer’s (1998:10) model of parental involvement, as discussed in section 4.8, emphasises the importance of communication between parents and the school. Comer asserts that communication between parents and teachers provides an opportunity to brainstorm problem areas, have in-depth discussions about the progress of the child, exchange ideas, and find solutions to problems. It is at such meetings that teachers provide parental guidance and support to enable parents to support their children at home with their schoolwork and their education. It should be stressed that a parent-teacher meeting should not end up being a moaning session where teachers or parents just complain, but should be an empowering meeting where real communication and a search for solutions to problems takes place, so that all stakeholders can feel that they have gained something.

Some teacher participants felt that parents were free to contact the school if they had a problem, but that it seemed that some parents were reluctant to do so and only did
so when they had a problem with the school. Some teachers indicated that they made an effort to communicate with the parents, by communicating with them telephonically, by means of written communication or by SMS, to keep them informed of the progress of their children. Teacher participant 11 remarked that

*I personally SMS my learners’ parents if there is something that needs urgent attention.*

Both Shepard and Rose’s (1995) and Epstein’s (1995:704) models of parental involvement, discussed in sections 4.3 and 4.4, state that communication between the home and the school is important, since communication is the foundation for healthy relationships between parents and teachers, in order to enhance parental involvement and to support parents in supporting their children with their schoolwork. Barnard (1995:405) contends that communication with parents is one of the most important tasks of the principal and the teacher. Constant communication and support between teachers and parents is vital. This was discussed in sections 2.3.3.1, 3.11.3, 4.3 and 4.4.

Taking into account the preceding discussion, it seems that most of the teachers understood the importance of communication with the parents. Some parent participants, however, felt that the school does not communicate and involve them enough, as important information does not reach them on time, so that they can attend school functions or parent meetings. They also felt that schools do not have meetings regularly enough. The implication is that if parents miss a meeting, there are no other opportunities to meet teachers before the next meeting is held. Parent participants expressed the view that schools should accommodate the need of parents to attend regular meetings and should make alternative arrangements with parents that have not been able to attend a meeting, for whatever reason.

As was mentioned above, some parent participants felt that their child’s school did not hold parent meetings regularly enough. Confirming this view, parent participant 9 stated that for the whole year no meetings were held with parents at the school where her child was a learner. She said:
Ons het nie vir die jaar vergadering gehad nie. Ons het laat verlede jaar vergadering gehet, en daai was in November. [We did not have any meetings this year. We had a meeting late last year, and that was in November.]

Parent participant 6 mentioned:

“Dit was nie laas maand nie. Maart, April, Februarie-dit was die end of April” [It was not last month. March, April, February-it was the end of April.]

Parent participant 8 also adds that meetings are not being held regularly at school. She said:

“Juffrou daar was nie nou n vergadering nie”. [Teacher there was no meetings held.]

Limited opportunities seem to be available for parents to communicate with the school, as some of the parent participants, and particularly single mothers, cited reasons that had prevented them from interacting with their child’s school as much as they would have liked. Some parent participants indicated that they were working shifts at their place of employment and that a lack of reliable transportation was one of the main reasons they could not attend school meetings.

Confirming the above findings, parent participant 10 gave the following response:

Wanneer ek kan, want ek werk ingewikkelde [moeilike] skoffe. [When I can, because I work difficult shifts.]

According to Barnard (1991:405) and Delgado-Gaiton (1991:21), a lack of communication between the schools and the parents is one of the main reasons for lack of parental involvement. This was explained in sections 2.5.2, 3.11.3, 4.3 and 4.4. Schools need to take parents into consideration and provide multiple opportunities for meetings and other means of communication between parents and teachers. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 2005:107) maintain that parents whose employment is relatively demanding and inflexible, and parents who have
multiple childcare or extended family responsibilities, may be less involved in school activities. It is the school's and the teacher's responsibility to cater for these barriers to involvement by implementing innovative ideas. (See also section 4.5.3.)

From the above, it is clear that effective communication between parents and teachers plays an important role in enhancing of parental involvement. If teachers and parents can find ways to meet each other and communicate regularly with each other, they will develop new techniques and strategies that will improve two-way communication between home and school (Heystek 2001:121; Van Wyk 2008:129).

Through open and honest communication, parents and teachers get to understand each other's opinions about learning and discipline. Such communication helps parents and educators to form a working relationship that facilitates the child's performance. This might also contribute to the formulation of school-wide policies concerning teaching, learning and behaviour that can benefit all learners in the school. Swap (1992:69) contends that the key to good communication is an attitude that welcomes parents as adults, and that effective communication is based on a relationship between parents and educators where each respects the other's contribution. It is important for schools to communicate with parents regularly and to become responsive community institutions, rather than distant outposts. This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystemic theory, where he shows the relational effects of all stakeholders on the child's development. Should there be a lack of communication between the parents and the school, these two parties could blame each other for not supporting the school and the child in his or her education.

The implications of the discussion above are that teachers should find new and innovative ways to enhance parental involvement, since it is clear that it is an important factor in children's academic development and achievement. Parents should also realise how important their involvement in their child's education is. Addressing these implications is crucial for the enhancement of parental involvement in disadvantaged communities.
5.3.3.3 Parental involvement can enhance learning

Most of the teacher participants stated that one of the major challenges they face every day is the fact that parents are not empowered to assist their children with their homework and learning. According to the teacher participants, homework forms the basis of a child’s schooling, and assigning homework enables the teacher to ascertain whether the learner has understood the work or not. In this regard, teacher participant 11 stated that:

*A daily challenge which I face in my classroom is homework. Some learners never do their homework, and their parents couldn’t be bothered.*

*It is imperative for parents to be involved as early as possible.*

Teachers should, however, realise that parents require certain skills to be involved. If parents do not possess certain skills, they need to be offered guidance and support to empower them with skills to become involved. It is the school’s task to equip parents with such skills. Schools can conduct workshops with parents on parenting skills as in the case of parent participant 2. She reported that:

*“Ons kom bymekaar by werkswinkels, waar die teacher ons leer oor ouerskap”. [We meet at workshops, where the teacher helps us with parenting skills.]*

Bailey (2006:162) reasons that when parents assist their children with homework, they need to be empowered with the necessary skills to support their children to achieve academically. All parents can support their children’s learning by providing appropriate study time and space, modelling desired behaviour such as reading for pleasure, monitoring the child’s homework, and actively tutoring the child at home (Feiler, Andrews, Greenhough, Hughes, Johnson, Scalan & Yee 2008:12-18).

Some teacher participants indicated that a major problem is phonics homework and reading homework. Learners are sent home with their readers in order to improve their reading skills, only to return to school the following day without having opened the reader at home. It seems that parents do not understand the importance of reading and writing. Teachers generally interpret this as a lack of interest on the part
of the parents. This may not, however, always be the case. There could be other reasons why parents are not involved, for instance their working conditions, or their literacy levels, among others. This is discussed in section 3.8. It is therefore important that the reason for the lack of involvement of a particular parent be established, so that suitable interventions can be applied to empower the parent to become involved. Teachers should also be able to provide parents with clear guidelines on how to assist learners to develop their reading skills and phonic skills. This assertion was confirmed by teacher participant 16, who said:

*There is a lack of reading skills. The child cannot read [...] the parent must be involved, so that they can know that they’ve got to send the child to library, and so forth.*

Teacher participant 17 said:

*Ouers kan kinders baie help met klanke, veral hier in die junior primêr. [Parents can help their children a lot with phonics, particularly in junior primary school.]*

In section 3.3 it was mentioned that all parents can be involved in the learning of their children. In section 3.5.2 it was explained how even illiterate parents can be involved, by encouraging their children to do their homework. The benefits of parental involvement are further illustrated by teacher participant responses that state that if parents are involved in the education and extracurricular activities of their child, the child usually excels at school. In this regard, teacher participant 14 made the following responses:

*I think it is important, because over the years now, in my own experience now, I gathered and seen that parents who are involved in their child’s education in all spheres, are children that normally perform better than those that I know who are not involved, so that is an important aspect that stood out for me in my years of teaching. He can see my parent is interested in what I’m doing, so I better now also bring that part to it.*
It seems that learners whose parents are involved in their education excel in their schoolwork. This is consistent with the views of Dearing, Kreider and Weiss (2008:228) and Hawes and Plourde (2005:50), who argue that the extent to which parents become involved in various aspects of their child’s formal education has an impact on the level of the child’s academic achievement. Patall, Cooper and Robinson (2008:1042) maintain that parental involvement in a child’s schoolwork enhances the achievement of the child in a positive way. Parental involvement is therefore vital, and its effect on a learner’s achievement is far-reaching. Van der Werf, Creemers and Guldemond (2001:448) reason that if parents experience positive results from their involvement, it may motivate them to become more involved in other school activities, thereby benefiting themselves, their children and the school.

Also interesting to note was that teacher participants indicated that if parents are involved in their children’s education and behaviour, teachers experience fewer discipline problems with these children. A large number of the participating teachers in all the schools perceived the poor discipline of learners, as manifested in their disruptive and unruly behaviour, to be a major barrier to learning and development in the classroom. Poor discipline was perceived as disruptive not only to the teacher, but to other learners in the class who would like to learn. The majority of the teacher participants agreed that effective teaching and learning cannot take place in the absence of proper discipline. The challenge posed by unacceptable, poor discipline and behavioural problems among learners was explained as follows by teacher participant 22:

*Kyk, as die ouers nie in die kind belangstel nie, het die kind, like, a [...] don’t-care attitude. Die kind gee nie om oor hoe hy in die klas optree nie, en hy gee ook nie om hoe hy sy werk doen of hoe dit lyk nie.* [Look, if the parents don’t show any interest in the child, the child adopts, like, a don’t-care attitude. The child does not care how he behaves in class, and he also doesn’t care how he does his work or how it looks.]

Another teacher participant, teacher participant 16, observed that

*The parents should be more involved in the discipline.*
Also important to note is that poor parenting and poor teaching can lead to a negative self-concept and emotional difficulties in the child, which can manifest in the form of behavioural problems in the classroom. This is consistent with Cooper’s view (2006:1) that emotional difficulties in learners manifest themselves in the form of disruptive behaviour by the learner, which interferes with teaching and learning in the classroom. He contends that behavioural and emotional problems can be attributed to factors such as poor parenting, poor teaching and discipline in schools, the negative influence of some television programmes and popular music, and what he refers to as the “inherent badness in some young people”. It is vital that parents discipline their children at home, as disruptive behaviour in class hinders the teaching and learning of the child, particularly of those learners that want to learn. Parents need guidance to be able to discipline their children, and teachers should be able to support parents in their disciplining endeavours.

The most interesting finding of this sub-theme is that if parents are involved in the education of their children, children will develop a positive self-concept, and will therefore excel academically, in sport and in extracurricular activities. These learners will be proud of their achievements, which will, in turn, make their parents proud, and the parents will become eager to assist the school in whatever way they can. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecosystemic theory shows the interrelatedness of all the stakeholders through all the systems that are involved in the education of the child. Bronfenbrenner’s theory is discussed throughout this study, in sections 1.8, 2.6, 3.10 and 6.2.

5.3.3.4 Socio-economic barriers can affect parental involvement

The majority of the teacher participants interviewed responded that poverty and its negative effects played a major role in the challenges that parents experienced in becoming involved in activities at their child’s school. Teacher participant 15 remarked that

The socio-economic background is very bad, and to get those parents involved can be very difficult.
Maynard and Howley (2004:37-43) observed that disadvantaged communities have traditionally displayed the highest level of lack of parental involvement. This is discussed in section 3.5.1. Most families in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, where this study was conducted, struggle to escape the cycle of poverty and unemployment. The general observation of participants was that the increasing poverty in many communities has a direct impact on the ability of families to secure a decent education for their children. Despite the poverty that parents and learners face, schools should encourage learners to be successful. In this regard, teacher participant 14 mentioned that the principal at her school always encourages learners to persevere in their schooling, by saying that

_Education breaks the cycle of poverty._

This is consistent with Christenson and Sheridan’s (2001:53) assertion (discussed in section 3.5.1) that background knowledge about socio-economic status is important, because it can be used to assist children who are at risk of failure. The above authors assert that it is important that children must learn that being poor should not prevent them from becoming successful, in other words that such learners are able to become successful in life, and that they should not use their socio-economic status as an excuse. Teacher participant 11 cited the problems of lack of parental involvement and education in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. This was discussed in section 3.5.1. Because of the learners’ socio-economic background, some learners often come to school while under the influence of drugs. In this regard, teacher participant 11 stated that the following problems were experienced:

’n Groot deel van die gemeenskap is werkloos, dus vier roekeloosheid hoogty. Kinders word groot in oorvol huise. Sommige van hulle se ouers is lede van bendes. Die faciliteerder moet baie geskille besleg. Baie ouers gebruik dwelms, en die kinders het dan vrye toegang tot hierdie middels. Hulle kom onder die invloed skool toe en maak dan onderrig baie moeilik. [A large proportion of the community are unemployed, and crime is therefore rampant. Children are raised in overcrowded homes. Some of the parents are members of gangs. The facilitator has to resolve many conflicts. Many of the parents]
use drugs, and the children then have free access to these substances. They come to school under the influence of drugs, which then makes teaching very difficult.]

Other teacher participants gave the same feedback and indicated that this is the case in many homes, and that some parents try to escape from their socio-economic difficulties by resorting to drug abuse and gangsterism, and their level of involvement in school then declines. Letseka and Breier (2008:83) state that such learners generally come from impoverished backgrounds, in which alcohol, drug and sexual abuse are rife. Parents need much guidance and support to empower them to establish a safe and secure home environment which is conducive to learning. Teachers should be trained to assist parents to create an environment that is conducive for their child’s development. This is consistent with Prinsloo’s (2005:459) assertion that children learn social behaviour at home, and that children who grow up in a home where there is understanding, love, trust, confidence, warmth, and acceptance are generally well-adjusted.

Both the teacher participants and the parent participants felt that the lack of resources were a barrier to teaching and learning in the community. For any school to function successfully, it is required of parents to buy the necessary stationery for their children, to facilitate the task of the teachers. It would seem though that, in general, unemployed parents find it difficult to buy the necessary stationery for their children, to pay their school fees, and even to provide food for their children. In this regard, teacher participant 12 mentioned that

*Stationery is another challenge. A child without the necessary stationery disrupts the rest of the class. Parents just simply can’t afford to buy stationery, and some just simply refuse to buy.*

McGrath and Kurilhoff (1999:604) contend that involving parents from disadvantaged communities can be challenging, particularly when the income of the parents is low, as it places parents at a disadvantage, because they cannot support their children financially, with the result that they have no say in the education of their children. On account of being unemployed, many parents find it a challenge to pay school fees
and those that do pay school fees are often in arrears. Parent participant 6 responded as follows:

\[
\text{Op die huidige oomblik is ek nie op datum nie. [At the moment, I am not up to date with school fee payments.]}\]

Another parent participant, parent participant 7, indicated that because of her financial difficulties, she was not up to date with her child’s school fee payments. She responded as follows:

\[
\text{Nee, ek is nie op datum nie. [No, I am not up to date.]}\]

Parent participant 4 also indicated that she is not up to date with her school fees payments. She said that:

\[
\text{“Ek het n stukkie betaal…ma… Uhm….ek sukkel n bietjie ma ek sal die agterstallige gee, wanneer ek reg is. [I still need to make a payment. I’m struggling a bit, but I will make a payment as soon as I’m ready.]}\]

This clearly shows the financial challenges that parents face. This means that many of the participating parents have limited financial resources and are not able to provide for the basic needs of the children in their care. Rudolph (2009:1) and Teffo (2008:68) contend that children who are hungry, sick, or afraid cannot learn. The implication of being hungry, sick, and unable to learn was discussed in section 3.5.1. Näsman (2003:55) argues that the unemployment rate and the economic hardships suffered compel some parents to borrow money from unscrupulous money lenders. A number of social grant and pension dependants find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt from which they cannot escape. It is clear that parents need guidance to avoid this trap. It is therefore the core duty of the social worker to guide parents to free themselves from the cycle of debt. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) exosystem refers to the social setting that affects the child, with the result that the community, welfare health systems, and social workers can assist families to support their children with their education needs, as explained in sections 1.8, 2.6 and 3.10.
Teacher participants expressed the view that if parents are unable to support the school financially, they can volunteer and assist the school with certain tasks. In this regard, parents can offer their services to the school to assist in things such as maintenance, invigilation, and so forth. It is already the case where some of the parents who do not have the finances, support the school by volunteering, for instance in the following. Parent participant 8 indicated:

“Ek like dit om te help by skool”. [I like to help at school.]

In this regard, teacher participant 22 said:

Ouers van ’n agtergeblewe agtergrond kan help om die skoolterrein skoon te hou. [Parents from an impoverished background can help the school by cleaning the school grounds.]

The above responses are consistent with Epstein’s (1995) model for parental involvement, which states that parents can be trained to assist the teachers at school, and that it is important that unemployed parents volunteer to help the teacher in the classroom with school activities, the covering of books, or educational excursions. Volunteering as a type of involvement in Epstein’s model is explained in section 4.3.

From the above, it is clear that parents’ socio-economic background militates against their becoming involved in the education of their children. It is also clear that teachers are one of major role players in providing advice and guidance to parents, and those teachers should be trained on how to get parents more involved. Parents can offer their services to the school to support the school and to assist the teachers, so that parental involvement is enhanced and children are supported in their education.

5.3.3.5 Illiterate parents need to be empowered

Some of the teacher participants felt that parental illiteracy seriously affects parents’ involvement in school activities, particularly with helping their children with their homework. Limited reading, writing and mathematical skills are major challenges
facing children in poorer communities. Parents and grandparents are willing to assist with schoolwork but, due to their limited knowledge, they find it difficult to help the learner. This is confirmed in the following response, made by parent participant 4:

Met daai klanke help hy vir my eintlik. [He is the one that actually helps me with phonics.]

Parent participant 8 indicated:

“Wanneer ek nie verstaan nie, dan nodig ek my kind in wat klaar is met skool is. Al die jare het ek mos vir min geld gewerk, ek kon mos nie daai jaar ever leer nie. [When I do not understand, I will ask my daughter who has finished school. All these years I earned little money. I could not study further at school.]

Some of the parent participants also indicated that due to their own lack of knowledge, homework has become a challenge in their houses, and that they need help in this regard. Strauss and Burger (2000:41) have observed that low levels of parental literacy at home are one of the main factors hindering parental involvement, because when parents themselves struggle to read and write, they find it difficult to assist their children with their homework. They are unable to help their children, due to their own limited education. In this regard, parent participant 9 mentioned that:

Dan help haar broer haar, hy’s nou in matriek, dan sal hy intree as ek nie kan nie, as ek nie verstaan nie. [Her brother who is in matric helps her if I don’t understand.]

It is therefore clear that guidance and support needs to be provided to these parents. Teachers are in the best position to offer this support. According to the Department of Education (1996:14), parents should receive the necessary information, guidance, and support from the school to prepare them for the required cooperation and participation. The environment plays an important role when it comes to parental involvement and the role that parents can play in their children’s education. The
study found that some participating parents who are illiterate assist their children with homework, and if they don’t know how to assist their children, they ask for help. Some of the parent participants who are illiterate indicated that they do encourage the learning of their children by creating learning opportunities for their children, and they motivate and encourage their children to learn. Parent participant 6 indicated that

*Dan sal ek na die teacher toe gaan, “Teacher, sê vir my hoe moet die ding gedoen word.”[Then I will go to the teacher, “Teacher, tell me how this must be done.”]*

Parent participant 10 made the following comment:

*Ek sal of haar pa vra, of ek wag tot die volgende dag waar ek die onderwyser kan sien sodat sy vir my kan verduidelik, sodat ek nou weer kan oordra aan die kind. [I will ask her father, or wait to see the teacher the next day to explain to me, in order to help her at home.]*

It is clear that even illiterate parents can be involved in their children’s education, if they are motivated and guided. The challenge for teachers, then, is to find innovative ways to get parents involved, and to provide the necessary guidance and support. In section 3.11.1, the importance of parents being empowered to gain knowledge of how and why they must be effectively involved in school activities is discussed. It is the responsibility of teachers to conduct workshops with parents on how they can become actively involved in their children’s education.

It is important to note that every parent can be actively involved by helping with their child’s homework or by seeing that homework is done, and where the low literacy levels of some parents may pose a problem, these parents can still encourage or assist their children. The interest shown by the parent will have a positive effect on the standard of their child’s work.
5.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter, the execution of the empirical research was discussed. The results of the research were discussed. Based on the results the researcher came to the conclusion that, firstly, the community, the school, the parents, and the teachers must forge a close partnership, so that they can build a better community and support the learning and development of the child. Secondly, teachers and parents need to familiarise themselves with the contents of the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, they need to know their roles and responsibilities, and teachers should assist and empower parents to increase their involvement in their children's education. Thirdly, regular school meetings should be held to inform parents of the progress of their children. Fourthly, it is important to note that although socio-economic background plays a role in the level of parents’ involvement, parents can volunteer to help with maintenance at school, if they are unable to contribute financially towards their children’s education. Lastly, illiterate parents can play an important role in their child’s education, because the interest that they show in their child’s education will have a positive effect on the standard of their child’s work.

In Chapter 6, the researcher will propose strategies to enhance parental involvement in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, to ensure that each learner realises their full scholastic potential, in accordance with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological and ecosystem theory, as well as the various different models of parental involvement.
CHAPTER SIX

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to propose strategies for schools, teachers and parents on how to enhance parental involvement in primary schools in the disadvantaged communities in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. A brief discussion of the Northern areas was outlined in section 1.1. From conducting the research and discussions of the literature review about inclusive education, parental involvement and the models of parental involvement presented in chapters 2, 3 and 4, as well as from the discussions and presentation of the findings of the research in chapter 5, the researcher gained the knowledge and evidence about parental involvement on which this chapter is based. Chapter 2 gives a brief overview of the policies of inclusive education and how important parental involvement is in the education of children. In chapter 3 the literature review shed light on the importance of parental involvement as well as the benefits thereof and chapter 4 discussed the different models of parental involvement.

The participating schools serve predominantly disadvantaged communities battling with serious socio-economic problems such as poverty, crime, alcoholism, women and child abuse. Legotlo (1994:109) adds that most parents, when faced with socio-economic challenges, find it difficult to pay school fees or buy stationery and other study materials for their children’s education. The lack of resources has made teaching and learning difficult for both the teachers and the learners. The perpetual poverty in the community has become a vicious cycle, leading to poor living and domestic conditions, such as undernourishment, overcrowded housing, and substance and alcohol abuse. This has resulted in many children in the Gelvandale community being neglected by their parents, which in turn has a negative effect on their schoolwork. This was highlighted in section 1.1. According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:311) poor living conditions and poverty have a detrimental effect on the learners’ education and learning.
These conditions have led to a lack of parental involvement as was found in the discussion of the results in Chapter 5. Harris and Goodall (2008:279) note that a lack of parental involvement in learners’ educational needs is part of the problem. This was also discussed in section 1.1. Therefore, the researcher deemed it necessary to propose strategies for parents and teachers to enhance parental involvement in education. According to Hornby (2002) strategies are instructions that can be used to make a decision or form an opinion.

After the themes and sub-themes had been identified and discussed in Chapter 5, the researcher read through the discussed themes and sub-themes. She then further deducted common themes from the discussions regarding parental involvement. These themes constitute the most apparent and uppermost issues regarding the enhancement of parental involvement in that area. These are:

- Parents do not possess the necessary skills to be involved in their children’s education; therefore parents should be empowered by teachers to be involved in the education of their children.
- Communication between parents and schools is ineffective and therefore parents and teachers do not communicate as they should.
- Teachers need support to enhance parental involvement since they do not always possess these skills themselves.
- Partnerships between parents and the school are essential to enhance parental involvement.

To address the above-mentioned problems as they emerged from the findings of the research, the researcher formulated the following strategies:

- Strategies to support parents to be involved in the education of their children.
- Strategies to enhance effective home-school communication.
- Strategies to support teachers to provide parental guidance.
- Strategies for the establishment of effective partnerships between parents, the school and the community.
The above strategies are based on the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems as indicated in section 1.8.1, 2.6 and 3.10 which is also the theoretical framework for this study. All the systems have multiple overlapping systems, and interaction between the systems account for children’s development. Learner achievement happens when interactions between the children, the schools (teachers, principals) family and the community take place to support them in their learning and teaching (as mentioned in section 3.10). Changes or conflict in any one layer ripples throughout other layers. Schools should therefore consider the multiple systems contributing to children’s educational growth when developing their teaching and learning activities.

Bronfenbrenner’s approach is helpful, because it is inclusive of all the systems in which families are enmeshed and because it reflects the dynamic nature of actual family relationships and the interactions between the different systems and subsystems. It is also based on the idea of empowering families through understanding their strengths and needs (Swick & Williams, 2006:371). These strategies are also based on the models of parental involvement as pointed out in Chapter 4. Shephard and Rose’s empowerment model, as discussed in section 3.11.1 and 4.4, holds that teachers can empower parents to have a positive influence on their children since teachers interact with the learners on a daily basis. Epstein’s model, as discussed in section 4.3, places emphasis on the different types of parental involvement, whereas Comer’s and Swap’s parental models, discussed in section 4.6 and 4.7, focus on the importance of parents and teachers forming a partnership with schools. Lastly, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s parental model examines the importance of communication between the parents, teachers and the school and suggests how parents can become involved in their children’s education, as described in section 4.5.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) effective quality educational support and empowerment is important because the focus should not only be on what is happening within one system (or subsystem), but also on the relations and influences between the different systems and subsystems in which the child develops. Successful parental support provided in one setting such as the home, is dependent on the quality of support provided in other settings such as the
classroom, the peer group, the school and the local and wider community. Therefore, within the context of the theoretical framework of the study which is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, parental involvement support within the education of the child is understood as the responsibility of everyone, at all levels of the system.

The following section discusses and elaborates on the proposed strategies for parents, schools and teachers to work collaboratively to enhance parental involvement in the education of the children.

6.2 PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

The proposed strategy to enhance parental involvement in the education of their children follows below.

6.2.1 Strategies to support parents’ involvement in the education of their children.

The results of the study indicated that parents need skills to be able to enhance their involvement in the education of their children. The researcher proposes strategies that could support parents to be involved in the education of their children. Firstly, findings will be presented, followed by literature to back the findings and then propose strategies to address the identified problems. Strategies to support parents’ involvement in the education of their children can be presented in table form as depicted in Table 6.1 below.
Table 6.1: Strategies to support parents to be involved in the education of their children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINDINGS</th>
<th>LITERATURE BACKING AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most parents want to be involved in the education of their children but they don’t know how, hence they need to be empowered on how to be involved by teachers and the community structures.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers empower parents by giving them support and guidance with their children’s homework.</td>
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<td>Teachers invite parents to meetings, and have a power point presentation showing parents various strategies on how they can involve themselves in the education of their children.</td>
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<td>At parent meetings, traffic officers can speak about road safety and the dangers of talking to strangers.</td>
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<td>A psychologist can be invited to address parents and give guidance on ADHD learners and how to guide parents to set boundaries and to make sure their children are well balanced and feel secure.</td>
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<td>Social workers can be invited to inform parents about the prevention of dropping out of school and drug abuse.</td>
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<td>General practitioner can speak to parents about chronic diseases and how that can influence learning negatively.</td>
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<td>Nurses could share information about HIV/AIDS, nutrition and diseases.</td>
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<td>The Department of Basic Education could capacitate parents on their role in their children’s education, to ensure that the education policies are implemented successfully.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents, literate and illiterate need guidance and support to help their children at home. Parents serving on the SGB need help to understand legislation and policies that have an impact on school governance.</td>
<td>Dept of Education (2005:20) – See section 2.4.8</td>
<td>Teachers should guide parents on how to support their children in homework activities during parent evenings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Van der Werf, Creemers and Guldemond (2001:448) – See section 3.2</td>
<td>Literate as well as illiterate parents can assist their children by walking their children to the library to read more often to develop their literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heystek (2002:117) – See section 3.11.1</td>
<td>All parents (literate and illiterate) can become involved by providing an environment conducive to learning to do their homework, eg no noise and quiet place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wolfendale (1992:3) – See section 4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shephard &amp; Rose (1995) – See section 3.11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patall, Cooper &amp; Robinson (2008:1039-1101) – See section 3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bailey (2006:155) – See section 3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microsystem- parents, teachers children, families, teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mesosystem- interaction between the members of the microsystem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exosystem- community members, doctors, nurses, motivational speakers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macrosystem- Dept of Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents can sit with their children while they do their homework. Illiterate parents can ask a sibling or neighbour to check if the homework has been done.

Opportunities should be created for parents to be part of decision making, especially the formulation of school policies. See section 5.3.3.2

- Loucks (1992:19) – See section 3.11.5
- Gelfer 1991:164 – See section 3.11.5
- Stern (2003:26) – See section 3.5.6
- Epstein (1996) – See section 3.2/ 4.3
- Beyer (1991: 33) – See section 3.11.5
- Gelfer 1991:164 – See section 3.11.5
- Van Zyl (1991:41-44) – See section 2.3.4
- De Villiers (1989:80, 82) – See section 2.3.4
- **Microsystem** - parents, teachers, school principal
- **Mesosystem** - interaction with the Microsystem and with each other.
- **Macrosystem** - DBE

- The school principal should arrange a time and platform for parents to express their views and opinions at parent meetings.
- Empower parents to be part of important decisions to be made regarding their role and the education of their children, eg, discipline their children, religious policy, school fund, etc.

In Table 6.1 above, Column A presents the findings of the research and Column B presents the literature that backed the findings, including Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystems theory, the theoretical framework of this study, while Column C presents the proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement. The researcher will first discuss the findings, (Column A), pertaining to this suggested strategy followed by the affirming literature (Column B) and lastly the strategies (Column C) pertaining to this strategy.

In the first row of Column A of Table 6.1, the findings indicated that most parents would like to be involved in the education of their children, but they do not know how. The findings indicated that parents assume that the schools are a threat to them and that their participation could be an embarrassment for themselves and their children. These parents want to support their children and volunteer at school functions but are not sure how to get involved. The study also found that some parents show little interest in their children’s education due to factors such as a lack of transport to and from school to attend parent meetings or school functions, work schedules of the parents working different shifts and their limited knowledge of how to assist their children at home. These factors were seen to hamper their involvement. In this regard, parents need to be empowered on how to become involved in supporting
their children in their education and how to be actively involved in school activities. According to Heystek (2002:117), as illustrated in section 3.11.1 and Wolfendale (1992:3) as discussed in section 3.4, empowerment implies that parents should gain knowledge and skills about how and why they must be effectively involved in the development and the education of their children. These authors hold that empowerment provides parents the opportunity to express their wants, needs, rights and to ensure that their voices are heard, in order for them to play a role in school planning and decision-making activities.

Some parents were not involved at all because they do not know what is expected of them regarding the support of their children. These parents hold the school responsible for their childrens’ education. Hence, these parents need the support from the school and the teachers to guide them in their involvement in their children’s education. The Department of Education (1996:14; 2005:20) as mentioned in section 2.4 and 2.4.8, states that parents should receive the necessary information, guidance, and support from the school to prepare them for the required co-operation and participation in their children’s education.

The findings also indicated that parents need guidance regarding their involvement at home. The study found that the parents have difficulty in assisting their children with homework in general but that the pronunciation of the phonic sounds in particular remains a huge challenge (See section 5.3.3.5). Most parents do not know how to sound the phonics and how to pronounce words because their children are not taught in their mother-tongue at school. Therefore these parents need guidance how to help their children with certain aspects of their homework. Molepo (2000:75) in section 3.5.2 stated that it is important that parents empower, organise and develop themselves to change for the better and to improve their involvement in their children’s education. Teachers need to support parents with these aspects of involvement.

The second row of Column A of Table 6.1 indicates that both literate and illiterate parents need support to assist their children with their reading and homework activities but that the illiterate parents can still provide support by making sure that the homework is done. Both literate and illiterate parents can supervise the child’s
homework or make space and time available for children to complete their homework. Illiterate parents can walk their children to the library, asks the librarian to play an educational video to assist their children with their homework or help them to take out library books to improve their reading skills. Lee & Bowen (2006:195) and Pena (2000:42) emphasize that if illiterate parents are involved and show an interest in their children’s education, this may lead to an improvement in their relationship with their children or family as indicated in section 3.5.2. It is therefore clear that parental empowerment is crucial to enhance parental involvement in cases where parents are illiterate to assist their children with their schoolwork. In cases where illiterate parents serve on SGB’s, the SASA (Act of 1996) provides parents with the legislation and policies that have an impact on school governance. This was outlined in section 2.4.3.

The third row of Column A indicates that parents were not afforded the opportunity to be part of the decision-making activities of the school to voice their opinions or have the opportunity to express their rights, needs and wants as indicated in Table 6.1. The findings indicated that the agenda is discussed during parent meetings at the beginning of each term but that parents seldom have an opportunity to raise their concerns. It is important that parents are included in developing important policies affecting them, because the role of the school principal is to allow parents at parent meetings to express their opinions and allow them to ask questions at the end of the meeting (Gelfer 1991:164; Van Zyl 1991:41-44 & De Villiers 1989:80,82) as illustrated in section 3.11.5 and section 2.3.4. Beyer (1991:33) states that policies should be structured in such a way that they build bridges between the home and the school by informing parents about matters pertaining to school governance, as mentioned in section 3.11.5. According to Loucks (1992:19) (as discussed in section 3.11.5), parents should involve themselves in school policies and the curriculum and in this way parents will learn about how the school functions, develop a greater understanding of the education process and the decisions made in the education of their child. Epstein (1995) and Blasé & Blasé (1994:8) (as mentioned in section 3.11.1) believe that one of the central aspects of empowerment is participation in decision making, therefore parents must be acknowledged as the equals of the school’s professional staff members and as persons with specific expertise and skills. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, (2005:89), Shephard and Rose (1995:373) and
Haynes & Comer (1998:168) believe that when parents are empowered they make a meaningful contribution to the lives of their children as well as to communities. This was discussed in section 4.4 and 4.5.

Based on the above findings and the literature, the researcher will now suggest proposed strategies to support parents to be involved in the education of their children as illustrated in Table 6.1. The researcher will discuss the proposed strategies as indicated in Column C of Table 6.1. These are:

- The teachers should empower parents by giving them support and guidance, by offering parental involvement workshops to assist their children with their schoolwork. The workshop should be implemented at the beginning of the school year to equip and empower the new parents with the necessary skills, such as volunteering at school when a teacher is absent, or assisting as a teaching aid in the classroom or help the teachers with school activities. Teachers could ask parents for assistance when they have fundraising activities such as a family day, sports day or cultural day. The workshops offered by the teachers should empower parents such that they share their experience with the other non-involved parents. These parents could take on leadership roles during the first term at school, participate in the decision-making process and encourage non-involved parents to become involved in order for schools to run effectively as was mentioned in section 3.8, 4.3 and 4.4.

- Teachers can invite parents to meetings, by having a power point presentation showing parents various strategies on how they can involve themselves in the education of their children. The teachers could highlight to the parents to motivate their children to strive to do their best and to stress the importance of education. The more parents are involved and communicate with their children about the importance of education, the higher marks they will obtain.

- The professionals in the community could offer their support to schools by educating the community about the important roles they can play to uplift the
community. Professionals such as traffic officers, a general practitioner and nurses working at the local clinics, members of the police force and social workers can assist the schools by educating the parents about the support they can offer in their professional fields. The teachers could invite traffic officers to the school to present road safety and the dangers of talking to strangers. The general practitioner could share information with the parents about the danger of chronic diseases and the influence they might have on teaching and learning of the child. The nurses on the other hand could offer presentations about health issues such as HIV/AIDS or about nutrition and preventable diseases, contagious diseases and when to leave a sick child at home. The psychologist could share valuable information with parents about ADHD, and what support parents could give the child to balance the child’s behaviour. The police could educate the parents and learners about crime and the consequences thereof, how to prevent crime and create an awareness about the dangers of involvement with gangsters. The teachers could also invite a social worker to speak to parents about children who drop out at school or children who become drug addicts.

- The Department of Basic Education could capacitate the role of parents in their children’s education to ensure that the education system is implemented successfully by introducing the importance of parental involvement in the curriculum.

- Teachers should guide parents on how to support their children in homework activities. The teachers could assist illiterate parents to help their children with their homework by allocating a time to do homework, monitoring to see if the homework has been done and limiting television viewing time. The parents could be empowered by the school to give clear instructions to their children and have a set time for their children to do their homework. After homework has been done, parents should monitor and check that homework has been completed and, if illiterate, can ask a sibling to sign the child’s homework diary. In cases where parents are illiterate they can sit with their children while they do homework.
• Literate as well as Illiterate parents can walk their children to the library to read more often to expand their vocabulary. The illiterate parents can for example provide a space for the child to do homework, such as, a table, chair etc.

• Parents, both literate and illiterate, can become involved by providing an environment conducive to learning to do their homework, a quiet environment etc. The teachers could guide the parents to model desired behaviour such as supporting the children in all their school and sport activities (Feiler, Andrews, Greenhough, Hughes, Johnson, Scalan & Yee 2008:12-18). Their children should have a balance between time spent on chores, homework activities and regular school attendance as was discussed in section 3.2.

• Inform parents about their roles and responsibilities such as serving on SGB’s. The principals could invite the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to conduct a workshop for parents on how to enhance parental involvement at school. The DBE could work closely with the school principals to ensure that teachers are supportive and empowering towards parents and the community by visiting the school at the end of each term to monitor the situation. The DBE could ask the principals to complete a questionnaire to determine whether parental involvement at the schools has improved or not. The SGB’s on the other hand need to be empowered by the DBE and the school principals to ensure that the SGB members are able to govern with the parents, arrange for the funding and organisation of the schools and thus affording every learner the opportunity to access quality basic and further education. It is therefore important that the DBE should provide training for the SGB’s, by conducting a workshop at the schools on their roles and responsibilities to govern the schools effectively. The SGBs could in turn train parents to become actively involved in their children’s education, as was discussed in section 2.4.3.

• The school principal should arrange a time and platform for parents to express their views and opinions at parent meetings. The school principals could offer their support by offering a leadership training workshop to the members of the SGBs to help them to develop the necessary skills to run an effective parental
involvement programme and to develop thoughtful and intentional plans and opportunities for all parents to participate in school leadership and decision-making processes.

- Empower parents to be part of important decision making regarding their role in the education of their children, eg, disciplining their children, religious policy, school fund, etc.

The last part of Column B of Table 6.1 represents both the application of the theoretical framework of the study as the guiding principle as well as the relevant literature applicable to the guiding strategy. The above strategies will now be put into perspective according to the Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystem theory, as indicated in Column B, row one. This strategy implies that all assets in the microsystem should be utilised in order to support parents to become involved for instance in strengths that can be built on to promote the schooling in the family. These strengths may be a family member who is knowledgeable and can support parents. Parents need to support their children’s scholastic development with the family. On the mesosystem level, all members of the microsystem interact with each other. Teachers should identify the assets and the strengths in the school and in families that can support parental involvement and co-ordinate the interaction between all members of the micro and mesosystems. Therefore if teachers know the strength of a family member, for example a remedial teacher who is able to train parents with the skills to support their children in their education. On the ecosystem level, teachers and parents can invite health professionals and other knowledgeable people to share their skills with them at workshops, parental evening’s etcetera, for example traffic officers, nurses, general practitioners. On the macrosystem level, the DBE should provide support to schools and parents to become involved according to White Paper 6 and SASA. On the chronosystem, the success of the implementation of the suggested strategies to get parents involved depends on the reciprocal interactions and interrelationships between all the systems in time.

The second group of strategies to be discussed are those aimed at enhancing effective home-school communication between children’s homes and the school.
6.2.2: Strategies to enhance effective home-school communication.

The results of the study indicated that communication between the home and the school was inadequate therefore the researcher proposes the following strategies that could enhance effective home-school communication. Firstly, the researcher will present the findings, followed by the literature to support the findings and then propose strategies to address the identified shortcomings. Strategies to enhance effective home-school communication between children’s homes and the school can be visually presented in table form as follows:

Table 6.2: Strategies to enhance effective home-school communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A FINDINGS</th>
<th>B LITERATURE BACKING AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>C STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Lack of communication between parents and the school is evident. See Section 5.3.3.1 | • Education White Paper No 6 of 2001 – See section 2.4.8  
• Heystek (2001:121) – See section 3.5.5  
• Van Wyk (2008:129) – See section 3.5.5  
• Lemmer & Van Wyk (2004:183) – See section 3.5.5  
• Stein & Thorkildsen, (1999:40) – See section 3.5.5  
• Hosin (2007:2) – See section 3.5.5  
• Barnard (1991:430) – See section 3.5.5  
• Shepard and Rose’s (1995) – See section 4.4  
• Comer (1996:10) – See section 4.8  
• Epstein (1995:704) – See section 4.3  
**Microsystem** - Parents, children, teachers, family members, guardians.  
**Mesosystem** - Interaction between the members of the Micro system  
**Exosystem** - Community members, Business in the community. | • Parent meetings should be held regularly on a quarterly basis at school.  
• Two-way communication between the home and the school should be effective.  
• The school principal and teachers should inform parents about school activities and the academic progress of their children continuously.  
• Businesses in the community can sponsor the school with stationary that would enable teachers to send invitations/letters for parents to attend parent meetings. |
School principals and teachers do not communicate with parents effectively enough for important information to reach parents on time.  

See Section 5.3.3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnard (1991:430)</td>
<td>See section 3.5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delgado-Gaitan (1991:21)</td>
<td>See section 3.5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronfenbrenner (1979)</td>
<td>See section 1.8, 2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hook (2009:505)</td>
<td>See section 3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald, Lazarus &amp; Lolwana (2002:53-54)</td>
<td>See section 3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education (2005:20-24)</td>
<td>See section 2.4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsystem - parents, family members, school principals, teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesosystem - interaction between the members of the microsystem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exosystem - churches, community members, role models, coaching clinics, community businesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macrosystem - Education Department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information regarding parent information should reach parents long before the schedule meeting in order for parents to make arrangements to attend these important parent meetings.

The secretaries of the schools should attach a reply slip on the letters for parents to indicate whether they will come to the information sessions or not.

The school principals should make parental gatherings interesting for parents to attend, for example an ice breaker, motivational quotes or a short video clip about the importance of home-school communication.

The school principals and teachers should ask churches in the community to announce important dates about parent gatherings at school or attach it in the church bulletin.

Teachers indicated that parents never or seldom attend school activities or extra-curricular at school.  

See Section 5.3.3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnard (1991:405)</td>
<td>See section 3.5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayden (2009:205)</td>
<td>See section 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watts, Cockcroft &amp; Duncan (2009:507)</td>
<td>See section 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berger (2000:219)</td>
<td>See section 3.5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molepo (2000:76)</td>
<td>See section 3.5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanhan (1998:107)</td>
<td>See section 3.5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swap’s (1992:69)</td>
<td>See section 4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davies (2001:111)</td>
<td>See section 4.5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon &amp; Epstein (2001:4)</td>
<td>See section 4.5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stein &amp; Thorkildsen (1999:40)</td>
<td>See section 4.5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comer &amp; Hayes (1991)</td>
<td>See section 4.5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warnock Report 1978:150-161</td>
<td>See section 2.3.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsystem - parents, family members, school principals, teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exosystem - community members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macrosystem - Dept of Education</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers and principals should create a welcoming atmosphere at school for parents and have an open door policy for them to feel welcome.

School principals should encourage staff members to respond warmly to phone calls and school visitors and to greet families with a smile and also provide frequent and positive opportunities for parents to come to school.

The teachers should encourage parents to attend school activities or extra-curricular of the children and notify them about the importance thereof.
Work schedule of parents hampers their abilities to attend parent evenings. 

See Section 5.3.3.2

- Prinsloo (2005:460) – See section 3.5.4
- Springate and Stegelin (1999:24) - See section 3.5.4
- Epstein (1996) – See section 4.8.1
- Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1995:111) – See section 4.8.1
- Microsystem - parents, teachers, school principals
- Mesosystem - Interaction between the members of the microsystem and with each other.
- Exosystem - community members, Parents workplace

- The teachers should schedule parent evenings, after consulting with parents about convenient times.
- The school principal should issue letters with a school letterhead to parents’ employers to enable them to attend parent evenings.

In Table 6.2 above, Column A presents the findings of the research, Column B presents the literature that backed the findings, including Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory, the theoretical framework for this study, while Column C presents the proposed strategies to enhance effective communication between the home and the school.

Column B of Table 6.2 has reference for the next discussion. According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:183) and Stein and Thorkildsen (1999:40) as mentioned in section 3.5.5, home-school communication is one of the most effective and successful ways of involving parents in their children’s education in order to enhance parental involvement. Shephard and Rose (1995) and Epstein (1995:704) agree with Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004:183) as well as Stein and Thorkildsen (1999:40) as explained in section 4.3 and 4.4 when they state that communication between the home and the school is important since communication is the foundation for a healthy relationship between parents and teachers. Comer’s Model (1996:10) as discussed in section 4.8, adds that communication between parents and the school provides an opportunity to brainstorm problem areas, have in-depth discussions about the progress of the child and also exchange ideas to find solutions to problems.

In the first row of Column A, the findings provide evidence that communication between the parents and the school is inadequate and that both parties blamed the other for not communicating on a regular basis. The parents felt that schools did not
communicate with them frequently because schools did not hold meetings with parents on a regular basis to discuss the children’s scholastic development or to share information regarding school matters. Important information does not reach the parents in time to attend school functions or parent meetings.

The implication is that if parents miss a parent meeting, there are no other opportunities to meet teachers before the next meeting is held. In some cases, teachers can only see parents at these meetings because they have to attend to other school meetings and workshops. They therefore work according to the term schedule to provide parent meetings.

Parents who are unable to attend school meetings have to wait for the next meeting or make an appointment to discuss school matters concerning the child. Therefore communication between parents and teachers is of the utmost importance and schools should encourage and create channels through which parents can easily and comfortably speak to teachers and the school community. According Hosiin (2007:2) and Barnard (1991:430) (as mentioned in section 3.5.5), regular and effective two-way communication between the school and the home is needed in order to exchange information regarding the child, which further emphasises the importance of effective communication between parents and teachers. Therefore teachers should find innovative ways of communicating with parents on a regular basis.

The second row of Column A indicates the finding that school principals and teachers do not communicate with parents effectively and that information does not reach parents on time to attend to school functions or parent gatherings. Parents felt that letters are sent out a day or two before the time, which makes it difficult for them to attend as they need to make arrangements to come to the parent gatherings. Therefore it is important that school principals should send letters to parents at least three weeks before parental gatherings followed by a reminder of the scheduled meeting at least two days prior to the meeting. This can foster fruitful co-operation with parents, family members or caregivers. Furthermore, it is important that parents feel valued and respected. Therefore, according to the Department of Education
(2005:20-24) there should be regular communication between schools and families through reports on successes and challenges as discussed in section 2.4.8.

Because of the communication gap between the school and the parents, teachers assume that parents are not interested in their children’s education. Teachers believe that the parents show little interest in their children’s education because they do not respond to letters sent to them. In this regard Barnard (1991:405) and Delgado-Gaitan (1991:21) believe, as mentioned in section 3.5.5, that there is a link between a lack of communication between schools and a lack of parental involvement in school education programmes, because some parents do not participate in school activities as they are unaware of school programmes and activities taking place at the school. The parents seldom attend fundraising activities or sport events taking place at school to support their children. Therefore teachers should investigate why parents do not react on their communications. In order to find a solution for the communication problem, Barnard (1991:405) and Hosii (2007:2) hold that communication between the home and the school is very important for parents to become successfully involved in their children’s education because it is through communication that opportunities are provided for parents to communicate with teachers regarding the progress of their children as mentioned in section 3.5.5.

The findings of the research (third row in Column A) indicate that teachers feel that parents never or seldom attend school and extra-curricular activities at school. Although parents are free to contact the school if they experience problems, it seemed as if some of them were reluctant to do so and only contact the school when problems arose by which time the problem has escalated. Teachers indicated that they made an effort to communicate with parents, by communicating with them telephonically, by means of written communication or by SMS, to keep them informed of the progress of their children. Sending a SMS to parents is an effective, adequate, quick and cost effective way of communicating with parents. To accommodate illiterate parents, the school should get in touch with them telephonically or send a verbal message home to come and see the teacher, if parents and teachers are not adequately prepared for the way that teacher-parent communications are done at the school. In this regard Berger (2000:219), Molepo (2000:76) and Hanhan (1998:107) (as discussed in section 3.5.5) hold that little effort
is made or few channels are created by teachers to listen to the vitally important information parents have about their children, their ideals for their children, their home culture, and their views on education. Swap’s (1992:69) model of parental involvement, (discussed in section 4.7) states that the key to good communication is an attitude that welcomes parents as adults, and that effective communication is based on a relationship between parents and educators where each respects the other’s contribution. It is therefore important that the school principals and teachers should invite parents to create a positive, welcoming and trustworthy school climate at school in supporting parental involvement (Davies 2001:111; Simon & Epstein 2001:4; Stein & Thorkildsen 1999:40; Comer & Hayes 1991, Warnock Report 1978:150-161) as indicated in section 2.3.3.1 and section 4.5.2).

The fourth row in Column A presents the finding that parents who work shifts cannot attend parent meetings due to their work schedules. Teachers noted that working parents experience problems to attend parent evenings due to their work schedules. These parents often work long hours and they therefore seldom have the time to become involved in the scholastic activities and homework of their children. This was also mentioned by Prinsloo (2005:460) (as discussed in section 3.5.4). According to Springate and Stegelin (1999:24), teachers should be mindful of parents’ work schedules and the challenges such as transport that parents face which prevents them from attending parent evenings (as discussed in section 3.5.4.). It is important that parents should therefore keep in contact with the school and communicate with teachers, and to make the necessary arrangements to attend school evenings. It is at such meetings that teachers provide parental guidance and support to enable parents to support their children at home with their schoolwork. It is therefore important to note that parent-teacher evenings should not end up being complaint sessions for teachers or parents, but should be empowering parent evenings where real communication and a search for solutions to problems take place, so that all stakeholders can feel that they belong together. Teachers and parents can find innovative ways to meet each other and communicate regularly with each other, by developing new techniques and strategies that will improve two-way communication between home and school. Epstein (1996) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1995:111) agree with the above as discussed in section 4.8.1.
Based on the above findings and literature discussions, the researcher proposed strategies to enhance communication between the home and the school as illustrated in Table 6.2, Column C. The researcher will now discuss all the strategies as indicated in Column C of Table 6.2.

- Parent meetings should be held regularly on a quarterly basis at school. The teachers should inform parents about such meetings in writing or via sms’s long before the scheduled meeting in order for parents to make arrangements to attend these important parent meetings. The teachers should inform the illiterate parents telephonically or verbally about meetings and should accommodate the needs of parents or make alternative arrangements especially for parents who are unable to attend parent meetings.

- Two-way communication between the home and the school by sending letters, or sms’s to parents should be effective. Teachers and the school principal should communicate with parents to inform them regularly about their children’s challenges and successes at school.

- The school principal and teachers should inform parents about school activities and the progress of their children continuously by having parent meetings, communicating by sending letters, etcetera.

- Communication between the parents and schools should be done in such a way that parents feel welcome to discuss any matter of mutual interest, particularly with regard to matters pertaining to the progress of their children.

- Principals can communicate with businesses in the community to sponsor stationary when there is a lack of stationary at such schools as this hampers the teacher’s ability to communicate with parents. The school principal or teachers can also contact businesses in the community to sponsor the school with an electronic bulletin board for those parents who do not visit the school to view important dates and events taking place at school.
• Teachers should see to it that information regarding parent sessions must reach the parents long before the scheduled meeting in order for parents to make arrangements to attend these important parent sessions.

• The secretaries of the schools should attach a reply slip on the letters for parents to indicate whether they will come to the sessions or not.

• The school principals should make parental gatherings interesting for parents to attend, for example an ice breaker, motivational quotes or a short video clip about the importance of home-school communication.

• The school principals and teachers should ask churches and other religious organisations in the community to announce important dates regarding parent gatherings or to place an attachment in the church’s or the organisation’s bulletin sheet. The churches as a community structure can announce events happening at school. The pastors of these churches could be invited to conduct assemblies at schools. The communication within the community is very important because schools should inform community members about the positive things that happen in school. In this regard, families and learners should be informed about the programmes and services offered in the community and the community should therefore ensure equal opportunities for learners and families to obtain services or to participate in community programmes with information sessions such as HIV/Aids workshops.

• Teachers and principals should create a welcoming atmosphere at school for the parents and have an open door policy for them to feel that they can discuss all of their concerns. Therefore school principals should encourage staff members to respond warmly to phone calls and school visitors thus providing frequent and positive opportunities for parents to come to the school.

• Teachers should encourage parents to attend school and extra-curricular activities and notify them about the importance thereof.
• Teachers should schedule parent evenings after consulting with parents about convenient times. These letters should reach parents long before the time in order for them to ensure their attendance.

• The school principals should issue letters on a school letterhead to parents’ work places enabling parents to ask for permission from their workplaces to attend parent meetings.

• To enable working parents to attend parent evenings, these evenings should be held in the evenings, to enable them to attend and to become involved in school activities.

The last part of Column B of Table 6.2 represents both the application of the theoretical framework of the study to the guiding principle as well as the relevant literature applicable to the guiding principle. The researcher will now indicate the implications of this guiding principle to different systems of Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory. The quality of these relationships and interactions between parents, learners and teachers are of utmost importance on the micro and the mesosystem levels. The quality of these relationships will have an influence on the communication between parents and teachers regarding the scholastic progress of children. Therefore teachers need to build effective communication relations with parents in order to enhance parental involvement at school and to provide frequent and positive opportunities for parents to come to the school. On the exosystem level, effective communication between the community, parents and the school is important for enhancing parental involvement. A healthy relationship between schools and the community is vital so the community should be informed about programmes and services the schools offer and vice versa. When businesses in the community agree to assist the school by making donations or helping in other ways, schools should acknowledge such contributions and communicate this also to parents. On the macrosystem level, the DBE should send circulars regarding parental involvement and workshops they present that will be of interest to parents, to reach the schools in time for effective planning to take place. Communication from the DBE is crucial for the smooth running of the schools. Circulars need to reach the schools in time for the school to communicate these initiatives to parents. The success of the
implementation of any suggested strategy to enhance parental involvement through effective communication depends on the reciprocal interaction and interrelationships between all the involved systems. This may take some time to reach full implementation.

The third strategy, the support given to teachers to guide parents to enhance their involvement, will be discussed in section 6.2.3.

6.2.3 Strategies to support teachers to provide parental guidance.

The results of the study indicated that teachers need the necessary guidance to support parents to become involved in their children’s education. Therefore the researcher recommends the following strategies that could assist teachers to support parental involvement in their children’s education. Firstly the researcher will present these strategies visually in Table 6.2.3. The findings applicable to the proposed strategies, followed by literature to support these findings and then strategies will be proposed to address the identified problems. Thereafter the researcher will apply the proposed strategies to the theoretical framework of the study.

Table 6.3 Strategies to support teachers to provide parental guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A FINDINGS</th>
<th>B LITERATURE BACKING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>C STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teachers need guidance on parental support to enable them to guide parents to become involved. See section 5.3.1.2 | - Griffith (2000:162) – See section 3.3  
- Shepard and Rose (1995) – See section 4.4  
- Bronfenbrenner (1979) – See section 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10, 6.2  
- Henderson and Berla (1994:10) – See section 3.3  
- Hornby (2002:1-2) – See section 3.3  
- Lemmer (2002:197) – See section 3.3  
- Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan (2009:507) – See section 3.2  
- **Microsystem** - teachers, parents, school principals, family members.  
- **Mesosystem** – Interaction between the members of the microsystem.  
- **Macrosystem** - Officials of the DBE.  
- **Exosystem** - Teachers unions (Naptoasa, Sadtu, Saou). | - Officials from the Teachers Unions can conduct workshops to empower teachers to provide parental guidance.  
- The officials from the DBE should offer leadership courses on parental involvement to support the teachers.  
- Officials from the District-based support team can train SGBs and SMTs to conduct workshops for teachers on how to enhance parental involvement.  
- The school principals can have a teacher of the month award for those teachers who motivated parents the most to attend parental meetings more regularly.  
- Teachers should share their expectations with parents and set realistic goals for themselves to...
Both parents and teachers are unaware of the provisions of SASA.
See Section 5.3.2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enhance parental involvement in their children’s education. They should reflect change on their strategies used to involve parents. If they were not successful, they need to try something new.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School principals should inform parents about their roles and responsibilities as explained in SASA on how to be involved in the education of their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school principal can invite the EDO or any official from the DBE to address teachers and parents about their rights as teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school principals can present a power point presentation about teacher support and empowerment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School principals should also inform teachers about the provisions of the SASA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- South African Schools Act of 1996 – See section 2.4.2 and section 3.4
- Stern (2003:11) – See section 3.5.6
- SACE (2002:2) – See section 2.4.3 and section 3.6.
- Department of Education (2008:24) – See section 3.3
- Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:9) – See section 4.3.
- LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling (2011:115) – See section 3.11.2 and section 4.5.1.
- Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan 2009:507 – See Section 3.2
- Bronfenbrenner 1979 – See section 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10, 6.2.
- Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:9) – See section 4.3.
- **Microsystem**- school principals, teachers, parents, family members.
- **Mesosystem**- Interaction between the members of the microsystem.
- **Exosystem** - Lawyers
- **Macrosystem**- DBE, SASA

In Table 6.3 above, Column A presents the findings of the study and Column B presents the literature that supports the findings including Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory, the theoretical framework of this study, while Column C presents the proposed strategies to support teachers to provide parental guidance.

In the first row of Column A, the findings provided evidence that teachers need guidance on parental support to enable them to guide parents to become more involved in their children’s education. The findings indicated that teachers want parents to become involved, but they don’t know what they can do to enhance their involvement. Since teachers do not know how to get parents involved in the
education of their children, they become despondent since they feel they are fighting a losing battle. Furthermore, most parents shift the responsibility of educating their children solely on teachers and believe that they are being paid to care for them. Most parents see the teachers as “babysitters” and send their children to school with the intention that the responsibility of the teachers is to care for their children. As a result, some parents distance themselves from the school system and leave the teachers to do the work that the parents felt they were not adequately trained to do. According to Van Schalkwyk (1990:55), this culminated in a situation where schools assumed full and exclusive responsibility for the teaching and learning of children as mentioned in section 3.2. In this regard, teachers need guidance and support from the DBE and school principals to fulfil their professional duties, to address the educational needs of the child and to get more parents involved in their children’s education. Henderson and Berla (1994:10), Hornby (2002:1-2), and Lemmer (2002:197) state that if parents are involved, teachers feel more supported, and their morale improves, which positively affects the entire ethos of the school (as discussed in section 3.3). If teachers are supported they can benefit from parental involvement because the parents provide them with useful information about their children (Hayden 2009:205). This in turn enables teachers to teach in an environment where learning will occur, without them having to be concerned about uninvolved parents (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan 2009:507; Bronfenbrenner 1979) as mentioned in section 3.2.

The second row of Column A indicates that most parents and teachers are unaware of the provisions of SASA and therefore need guidance and information concerning the content of this Act. The findings indicated that some teachers knew about the SASA but were not familiar with its provisions, whilst others were unaware of the existence of the Act. Most teachers did not know that their rights and responsibilities regarding the scholastic education of the learners were outlined in the Act and that it was easy for them to get hold of the document. The results indicated that teachers are unaware of the ELRC document that stipulates all stakeholders’ duties, and most teachers hardly open these files to view what their role entails. According to the South African Council of Educators (SACE) (2002:2), teachers have to have a harmonious working relationship with parents to enhance parental involvement. This was discussed in section 2.4.3 and 3.6. Teachers should feel free to contact parents
anytime to give a helping hand when needed. Moreover, the District-based support team needs to support and train school principals and teachers to ensure that parents are involved in assisting their children with their educational needs as stipulated in the educational documentation (Department of Education, 2008:24). Some of the parent participants indicated that they did not know about the existence of the SASA and what their roles and responsibilities are concerning the education of their children were. The South African Schools Act (SASA), as discussed in section 2.4.3, requires parents to be involved in school activities, yet it appears that some parents are still not as involved in school activities as they could be, because schools and communities have remained two separated and isolated entities for far too long (Theron & Botha 1990:26, as mentioned in section 3.4). LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling (2011:115) support this view and add that parents and teachers both have a role to play in the education of the children, and that parents and teachers should at all times be responsible role models to build on the success of the child (as discussed in section 3.11.2 and section 4.5.1.). In this regard Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997:9) believe that regular meetings and workshops with teachers and parents will help families to understand schools and will help schools to understand families. This is the ideal objective and needs to be encouraged by class teachers (as mentioned in section 4.3.). Lawyers specialising in Education Law can conduct parent-teacher evenings at school and workshop them on the subject of SASA.

Based on the above findings and the literature, the researcher will now discuss the guiding strategies to support teachers to provide parental guidance for parents to enhance their involvement in their children’s education, as illustrated in Column C of Table 6.2.3.

- Officials from the Teacher Unions can conduct workshops to empower teachers to provide parental guidance. At these workshops teachers should learn about professionalism, how to treat parents with respect and to instil educational values in parents.

- The officials from the DBE- should offer leadership courses that empower the teachers to be able to support parents. It is the core duty of the DBE to
support the teachers and to boost their morale therefore the DBE can send teachers on courses to develop their skills regarding what they can do to enhance parental involvement.

- Officials from the District-based support team can train SGBs and SMTs by offering teachers workshops on how to enhance parental involvement. It is the responsibility of the District-based support team to support and guide teachers in assisting parents to enhance parental involvement.

- The school principals can initiate a monthly award for those teachers who are able to boost the involvement of parents to attend meetings more regularly. This recognition should encourage and motivate teachers and boost their morale. The principal should explain the criteria to the teachers and throughout the month teachers are monitored about their progress regarding enhanced parental commitment. At the end of the month, a photo of the teacher is displayed in the foyer.

- Teachers should share expectations and set realistic goals for themselves to guide parents to become involved in their children’s education. They should change their strategy if it has not work for the past few years by trying something new.

- School principals should inform parents about their roles and responsibilities as stipulated in the policies. The school principals should inform teachers about their duties at the beginning of the school year. This information can be outlined on an Organogram of the school where each teacher receives a copy where their duties are stipulated.

- The school principal can invite the EDO or any official from the DBE to address teachers about their rights as educators. Such discussions would be an excellent opportunity for teachers to air their views on or to ask questions concerning the enhancement of parental involvement.
- The school principals can hold a power point presentation about teacher roles and responsibilities, support and empowerment according to the SASA, and with the help and support of Legal Representatives.

- School principals should discuss the content of SASA with the teachers. The principals should give every teacher a copy of the Act at these discussions.

Column B of Table 6.3 represents the application of the theoretical framework of this study to the guiding principle as well as the relevant literature applicable to the principle. The researcher will now indicate the implications of this guiding principle to the different systems and sub-systems of Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory. The microsystem consists of teachers, parents, school principals and family members. The members of the microsystem interact with each other on the mesosystem level. The quality of their interactions on the mesosystem level will determine by the quality of their relationships within each other. Therefore teachers should ensure that their relationship with the parents of their learners is in a good state. If this is the case it will enhance the probability that teachers and parents can function as a team and by doing this teachers can enhance parental involvement. Parents might then feel welcome to discuss their educational problems relating to the scholastic performance of their children with teachers. The parents are prerequisites for the operational possibilities of the proposed strategies on the mesosystem. Professional members of the community represent Bronfenbrenner’s exosystem. For the purpose of this guiding strategy, lawyers specialising in Educational law can be invited by teachers to present information sessions to teachers and parents about SASA. On the macrosystem level the DBE can conduct regular workshops for teachers to guide them to be able to support parental guidance. On the chronosystem level, the success of the implementation of the suggested strategy to support teachers in enhancing parental guidance depends on the updates of policies at schools concerning parental involvement and the distribution thereof over a period of time.

The fourth strategy namely, effective partnership between the home and the school will now be discussed in the following paragraphs.
6.2.4 Strategies to enhance collaboration between parents, the school and the community.

The results of the study indicated that parents, the school and the community should establish an effective collaborative relationship, therefore the researcher will now proposed strategies to promote such collaboration between these three groupings to enhance parental involvement at school. The researcher will present the findings, literature to back the findings and then suggest strategies to address the identified problems. Strategies to establish effective partnership between the home, the school and the community can be presented in the table as follows:

Table 6.4: Strategies to enhance collaboration between parents, the school and the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A FINDINGS</th>
<th>B LITERATURE BACKING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>C STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Parents, teachers, the school and the community should form a partnership to enhance parental involvement. See section 5.3.1.1 | • Bronfenbrenner (1979) – See section 1.8, 2.6, 3.10, 6.2.  
  • The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 – See section 2.4.3.  
  • Epstein (1986) – See section 4.3  
  • Comer, Hayes & Joyner 1996:10) – See section 4.6  
  • Wolfendale (1992:14) – See section 3.9  
  • Hosin (2007:2) – See section 3.5.5  
  • Barnard (1991:430) – See section 3.5.5  
  • Microsystem - parents, family members, teachers, school principals, neighbours.  
  • Mesosystem - Interaction between the members of the microsystem.  
  • Exosystem - community members | • A home visit from the teachers and school principals can show parents that the teachers, principal and school staff wants to support them to form a partnership and to enhance parental involvement.  
  • Alumni can offer their help and support with school activities and to enhance parental involvement.  
  • The partnership with community members, such as ex-pupils or teachers can offer assistance and coordination to help schools plan parental involvement activities to improve learner and academic performance. |
| Schools and the communities should prepare the children to become responsible citizens. See section 5.3.1.2 | • Bronfenbrenner (1979) – See section 1.8, 2.6, 3.10, 6.2  
  • De Villiers (2005:3) – See section 3.10.  
  • LeBlanc (1992:140) – See section 4.3  
  • Dekker & Van Schalkwyk (1990:6) – See section 4.3  
  • Hook (2009:505) – See section 3.10  
  • Donald (2002:53-54) – See section 3.10  
  • Microsystem - parents, family members, teachers, school principals.  
  • Mesosystem - Interaction with the | • The school principals and teachers can develop parental involvement strategies with SGBs, to train the parents how to become involved and assist the school whenever they can.  
  • School principals and teachers should invite role models in the community to address the learners, parents or teachers about the significant role the school played in their lives and to help the children to become responsible citizens. |
members of the microsystem and interaction with each others.

- **Exosystem** - community members, business in the community.

- Principals can ask members of the local churches in the community for the use of their church halls to have their awards ceremonies and special school services (memorial), if the school does not have a school hall.

**Parents and the school form a partnership with their workplace.**

- Epstein (1996) – See section 4.3
- Hornby (2011:29) – See section 4.7.4
- Swap 1992:29) – See section 4.7
- **Microsystem** - parents, illiterate parents
- **Mesosystem** - Teachers, school.
- **Exosystem** - workplace, aftercare facilities.

- Parents can ask neighbours to attend meetings on their behalf if they cannot attend due to their work schedule.
- Parents’ employers can accommodate parents’ work schedules to attend parent meetings.
- Parents’ workplace can form a partnership with the school in order to be knowledgeable of the needs of the school and their families.
- Members in the community can offer aftercare facilities to assist working parents and help the children with their homework.

In Table 6.4 above, Column A presents the findings of the research that parents, teachers and the community should work collaboratively in order for parents to become involved in the teaching and learning of their children. The community is seldom involved in school activities because there is no partnership between the parents, school and the community. Schools in the community are targeted regularly with burglaries and damage to the school property. The teachers are unhappy when their classrooms have been broken into as they first need to tidy the mess, before starting with their daily tasks. Therefore the school and teachers should develop a partnership with parents by asking them to assist with security measures at school that will enable the teachers to feel safe and secure.

A partnership between the parents and the teachers will encourage parents to volunteer to improve the security at school in order to support the teaching and learning of their children. If parents and the community are prepared to offer their services to the school without compensation, this partnership will be successful. If the partnership is successful, the two parties will be able to work hand in hand to lift the ethos of the school. Wolfendale (1992:14) believes for a partnership to be successful, both parties should be held accountable and share a sense of purpose,
mutual respect as well as sharing of information (See section 3.9). The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 (as mentioned in section 2.4.3) constitutes the legal framework for partnership between parents and schools, therefore parents are very important partners for a school to function successfully. The school principal has the important task to inform parents and teachers about the content of the Act and to encourage parents to enter into a partnership with the school and to ensure reciprocal communication between the school and the home (Hosiiin 2007:2; Barnard 1991:430) (See section 3.5.5).

The second finding in Column A, row two indicates that the home, school and the community should work hand in hand in order for children to have their rightful place in society to prepare them to become responsible citizens. Children are part and parcel of this partnership and should therefore become aware of their own progress at school, have knowledge of the action needed to maintain this progress or proceed to the next grades and realise the important role they play in the community to become a responsible citizen. Schools should integrate opportunities for meaningful interaction between individuals in schools, families, and communities into their educational programmes activities. In this regard, the school can arrange for a community member or ex-convict to address the learners on their experiences with gangsterism and drug abuse. This will teach the children about choices in life and learners can benefit from their testimony and develop a changed mindset about drug and alcohol abuse as well as violence in the community. The partnership between the stakeholders is to ensure that the childrens’ needs are met and to enhance the involvement of parents in the scholastic development of the child. It is the responsibility of parents to guide their children to be aware of parent/family/school/community supervision, to show respect and to develop positive personal qualities, habits, beliefs, discipline and values taught at home.

This is in line with the theoretical underpinnings of this study which are based on Bronfenbrenner (1979) eco-systemic theory, which indicates that families, the school and the community influence each other and postulates that reactions in one of these systems will have an impact on child development in all the systems. This was also mentioned in section 1.8.1, 2.6, 3.10, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6.3, 5.3.1 and 6.2. De Villiers (2005:3) echoes this belief and adds that if the community, the school and the
parents form a partnership, it will benefit the child because their involvement enhances the scholastic development and the self esteem of the child. Such a tripartite partnership ensures that schools (principals and teachers) can help families in the community gain access to support services, such as health care, cultural events, tutoring services, and after-school childcare programmes (LeBlanc 1992:140; Dekker & Van Schalkwyk 1990:6, Bronfenbrenner, 1979, Hook 2009:505 & Donald 2002:53-54). (See section 3.10).

The third finding in row three of Column A provides evidence that teachers should develop a partnership with parents and show an interest in their workplaces so that parents make the necessary arrangements to attend parent meetings. For most parents it is challenging to attend school activities due to their work schedules. Parents cannot play the supportive role and see to their children’s educational needs and have to rely on family or community members to help them fulfil their supportive role. The partnership between the school (teachers) and the parents’ workplace would enable the parent to make arrangements to be released from work to attend parent-teacher meetings, volunteer or spend time at the child’s school in other ways during term time. On the other hand, major local employers where the parents work can adopt family-friendly policies and create lunch time seminars on family and home-school relations topics. The partnership would blossom and the parents would want to become involved and so enhance their children’s learning. Epstein (1996) believes that schools should coordinate the work and resources of the community, business, educational institutions and communal groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices and the learning of the children. This was mentioned in section 4.8. These partnerships can be between professionals such as psychologists, social workers and the workplace of the parents. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005, 1995) support Comer’s SDP Model (Comer 1988:2) that described how schools and communities could offer a service to the school.

The community from their side can play a role in the education of their children by assisting children with their homework. Illiterate parents can also ask for assistance from family members or from neighbours to assist with the child’s homework or attend a parent meeting on their behalf due to circumstances beyond their control. This may develop into healthy relationships in the community and strengthen the
partnerships between parents and the school (teachers). The community can also assist with the development and education of the child by offering aftercare facilities that may help the child with their scholastic development and provide them with a meal while the parent is at work. Social workers in the community can offer their services that meet the needs of children and parents to give them support to become involved in their children's education.

Table 6.2.4, Column C, presents the strategies suggested by the researcher to address the above findings.

- A home visit from the teachers and school principals could show parents that the teachers, principal and school staff wants to support them to form a partnership to involve all parents in their childrens’ education. Home visits would demonstrate the teachers’ interest in their learners’ families and understand the situation at home better by observing the family in their home environment.

- Alumni can offer their help and support to the school by sharing the responsibility of educating youth, by coaching the youth in sport codes like soccer and netball. Additionally schools can expand the number of positive role models by offering various mentoring experiences to learners, for example, inviting sport heroes to the school to address the learners.

- The partnership with community members can offer assistance and coordination to help schools plan parental involvement activities to improve learner and academic performance. This partnership should encourage and support other schools in the community to form partnerships and a mentoring system.

- The school principals and teachers can develop, coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies, such as SGB workshops, to train the parents how to become involved and assist the school whenever they can to improve learner and academic performance.
• School principals and teachers should invite social workers to assist the school and parents with the social grant system to enable parents to provide food for their children and, in cases where the parents are squandering the social grant, request the social workers to step in. The social workers can also assist the school in developing programmes for the children to serve the community, for example, helping senior citizens with chores at their homes or the old age homes in the community. The school and the Department, with the help of the social worker, could see to the needs of foster, adoptive and orphaned children (where parents died due to HIV/AIDS as mentioned in section 3.6.5)

• Principals can ask the churches in the community to offer their support in the following cases:

  • To unemployed families with food parcels or soup kitchens so that children will not be hungry at school.

  • Churches can play a pivotal role in pastoral care to the teachers, parents and learners and also conduct assemblies to nurture the learners spiritually. The churches in the surrounding areas can enter into a partnership with the school through recreation groups, faith-based organisations and other groups that support children and families to create community learning centres for learners, parents and members of the surrounding community.

  • Community businesses can become involved in the education of the community by making people aware of their support for schools and families, through which businesses will benefit from the positive public relations associated with working closely with schools.

  • Members in the community can offer aftercare facilities to assist working parents and help the children with their homework. At these
facilities, children can have a cooked meal and it will be the responsibility of parents to contribute financially.

Column B of Table 6.2.4 represents the application of the theoretical framework of this study to the guiding principle as well as the relevant literature applicable to the principle. The researcher will now indicate the implications of this guiding principle to the different systems and sub-systems of Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory. The microsystem consists of teachers, parents, school principals and family members therefore the parents and schools should work harmoniously together to strengthen the teaching and learning of the child and to improve the quality of education. For the mesosystem to work smoothly, schools should work in partnership with professionals in the community to support those learners who have a learning barrier and who need inclusive education. This has been discussed in section 2.3.5.1. The exosystem refers to community which means not only the neighbourhoods where students’ homes and schools are located, but also all neighbourhoods or locations that influence their learning and development. Extending the use of school buildings can provide neighbourhoods with a place to hold activities thereby elevating the status of the school within the community. Community businesses can use these opportunities to make people aware of their support for schools and families, and so generate positive public relations from which the businesses derive benefits. The macrosystem refers to a partnership with the district managers and senior officials in the Department of Education including the Minister of Education and the important role they can play to enhance parental involvement. The macrosystem is the backbone of the education system therefore it is their responsibility to nurture this relationship between all stakeholders to uplift our education for the community to become our leaders of tomorrow. On the chronosystem it depends on how long it’s going to take for this proposed strategy to be applied by the school principals and teachers for the success of the enhancing of parental involvement.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter outlined proposed strategies to enhance parental involvement in their childrens’ educational and school career.
Clear strategies were set out, supported by literature and a discussion followed that stipulated what schools, principals, teachers, parents and learners can do to work harmoniously together to enhance parents’ involvement in the education of their children.

These strategies were based on the ecological and bio-ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner. All these systems, namely the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystems that influence parental involvement and the influence each system and sub-system has on the other, as well as the role the community, school, principals, teachers and learners play in each sub-system, are displayed.

The microsystem outlined the supporting roles of the parents, siblings, grandparents and other family members, and possible support was recommended. The mesosystem, on the other hand, pre-supposes strategies for school principals, teachers, and the District Team.

The exosystem proposed strategies for the workplaces of parents, churches and other religious organisations, health professionals and the community in general, whilst the macro focused on beliefs and values and the chronosystem on the developmental timeframes.

In the next chapter, conclusions and recommendations for the schools, the district office, the province as well as for the national office of Education will be presented.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present a summary of the study and to provide conclusions drawn from the whole study. Recommendations based on the findings are presented to enhance parental involvement in children’s education.

7.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

A brief summary of the chapters will be presented below.

Chapter One provided the background to the research and the research methodology. In this chapter the researcher clearly formulated the research problem, the research design, the data collection as well as the principles of data analysis. The programme of the study was given and essential concepts were illuminated. The theoretical framework of the study was also introduced.

Chapter Two contained a literature study of the concept of inclusive education, the implementation of inclusive education with special reference to parental involvement, the different kinds of curriculum, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological and bio-ecological systemic theory as well as parental involvement in inclusive education.

Chapter Three provided a literature review on parental involvement in the education of their children, the rationale for parental involvement, and discussed the factors that contribute to the lack of involvement of parents in school activities. The chapter further contains a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the study namely Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological and bio-ecological systemic theory.

Chapter Four presented a literature review on models of parental involvement deemed suitable for this investigation. The aim was to establish how these models can provide proposed strategies regarding how parents can become involved in the education of their children.
Chapter Five contained a discussion of the execution of the empirical research and a discussion of findings of the empirical research and how the research methodology was applied. The main findings of the empirical research were the following:

- **Collaboration between the parents, the school and the community is essential** (to enhance parental involvement).

- **Parents and teachers should be aware of the South African Schools Act** (In order for them to be conversant with its provisions when enhancing parental involvement in education).

- **Empowering parents on how to be involved in their children’s education is crucial.**

Chapter Six proposed strategies that could assist the Department of Education, schools, parents and teachers in enhancing parental involvement in the education of children. These strategies were based on the ecological and bio-ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979), as well as on the literature studies in Chapters two (inclusive education and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological and bio-ecological systemic theory), Chapter three (literature review on parental involvement and Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory) and Chapter four (models of parental involvement) as well as the findings of the empirical research in Chapter five.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

The extensive literature study conducted in Chapters two, three and four, as well as the empirical study presented in Chapter five and the proposed strategies presented in Chapter six indicated that parents and teachers need guidance on how to support their children in their scholastic education and how to become actively involved in school activities.

Throughout this study, it has been confirmed that parents play a major role in the education of their children and that they need support to enhance their involvement. Furthermore, for the parents to become more involved in their children’s education, the school and the parents need to form a partnership and
work closely with the teachers. It is therefore crucial that all stake holders (teachers, school principals and other officials and members of the general community) work together to ensure that parents are empowered to be involved in the scholastic education of their children.

To conclude the study, the researcher will now briefly provide answers to the sub-problems as stated in Chapter one.

The results of this investigation led to the following conclusions, related to the research problems:

7.3.1 First sub-problem

How can the policy of inclusive education contribute to parental involvement in schools?

To answer this question, a literature review was conducted on the policy of inclusive education, as well as the South African Schools Act, and the important documents related to inclusive education and parental involvement was presented in Chapter two. From the discussion in Chapter two it was apparent that parental involvement is important in the education of all children in an inclusive setting.

All the literature and policy documents discussed in Chapter Two indicated that parental involvement is crucial for children to develop optimally. For instance The Warnock Report (as discussed in section 2.3.3) emphasises that parental involvement is crucial and the parents of children should be treated in exactly the same way as parents of other children in the school. Furthermore, the De Lange Report (in section 2.3.4) reported that parental involvement is important when it comes to decision making powers at school. According to this report parents should be consulted when decisions are made that will have an impact on them and their children’s scholastic education. According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC) (in section 2.3.5) parental education must be supported by social welfare and medical services and parent-teacher
associations must be formed to encourage parental involvement in the education of their child.

The Children’s Charter of South Africa states that communities and families have a duty to protect their children from becoming homeless and abandoned (see section 2.3.6). Therefore parents need to see that their children are in a safe and healthy environment to ensure quality education for them. Parents also need support from teachers and other stakeholders to be able, in turn, to provide this support to their children. In section 2.4.1, the Salamanca Statement highlights that parents must play a pivotal role in the education of their children and that schools should cater for the development of the children. The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996) holds that the governing bodies of schools play an important role in the education of children (as discussed in section 2.4.3).

The Education White Paper No 6 of 2001 states that parents should be empowered in order to support their children at home and at school and that families should also be encouraged to be involved in developing policies and resources for the school (as discussed in section 2.4.7). Furthermore, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) as mentioned in section 2.5.2, states that parents should be fully involved and informed regarding the identification, screening, assessment and placement of their children at their respective schools. This document further emphasises that parents should be encouraged to take an active interest in the teaching, learning, and assessment of their children at school.

In addition, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in section 2.5.3 states that parents have a vital role to play and that they must become actively involved in their children’s education. This includes involvement in the activities of the school, the school governance structures, regular discussions with their children about general school matters, cultivating a healthy, open, and co-operative relationship with their children’s teachers, creating a home environment that is conducive to learning and assisting in protecting educational resources.

It is apparent from the interviews with the participants, the literature review and the discussions of the results that teachers should form partnerships with their
communities in order to support and involve the parents in the education of their children (as mentioned in section 5.3.1.1 and section 6.2.2.4).

7.3.2 Second sub-problem

Why is parental involvement important in the education of the child?

As indicated in the literature examined in Chapter three (see section 3.3) as well as the discussions of the empirical research and findings in Chapter five (see section 5.3.3), parental involvement in a child’s school activities is very important. Parents have a responsibility to be involved and to support their children in their education. Parental involvement has a positive effect on a child’s scholastic performance and holds significant benefits for the school, the teacher, the child and the parents themselves (as discussed in section 3.3).

An interesting finding in section 5.3.3.1 is that if parents are involved in the education of their children, children will develop a positive self-concept, and will therefore excel academically, in sport and in extracurricular activities. These learners will be proud of their achievements, which will, in turn, make their parents proud, and the parents will become eager to assist the school in whatever way they can. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecosystemic theory shows the interrelatedness of all the stakeholders through all the systems that are involved in the education of the child as discussed in sections 1.8, 2.6, 3.10 and 6.2.

Keeping the above mentioned in mind as well as the findings of the research, the researcher proposed strategies (as discussed in section 6.2) for the school, teachers and parents on how to enhance parental involvement in children’s education.

7.3.3 Third sub-problem

What are the barriers to parental involvement in a disadvantaged community?

The literature review in Chapter three indicated that parents can experience several barriers to parental involvement in their children’s education. It is apparent from the literature review in Chapter three and the results of the empirical research in Chapter
five, that there are several barriers preventing parents from involving themselves in their children's education. The socio-economic status of the parents has been found to be one such barrier, (see section 3.5.1, 4.5.3 and 5.3.3.4), as well as low literacy levels (see section 3.5.2 and 5.3.3.5), cultural and social factors (see section 3.5.3), challenges with regard to transport (see section 3.5.4), home-school communication (see section 3.5.5 and 5.3.3.2), as well as the education system and changes in the curriculum (see section 3.5.6). The study indicated that all these barriers contribute to a lack of parental involvement in the scholastic education of children. (See section 3.5).

As a result of the above-mentioned barriers, parents distance themselves from the school system and leave the teachers to do the work that they (the parents) feel they have not been adequately trained to do.

The factors mentioned above compelled the researcher to establish proposed strategies (see section 6.2) to empower the principals and teachers to support parents to become involved in their children's education. These proposed strategies were based on the findings of the empirical research and are discussed in Chapter five.

7.3.4 Fourth sub-problem

*How can Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory contribute to the establishment of proposed strategies to enhance parental involved in their children’s education?*

As indicated in Chapter one, Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory is the theoretical framework of this study. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory was applied and discussed in sections 1.8; 2.6; 3.10, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6.3, 4.7.4, 5.3.1 and 6.2. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory describes how systems and sub-systems (the Microsystem, the Mesosystem, the Exosystem, the Macrosystem and the Chronosystem) influence each other. Each of these systems plays a role and has an influence on child development and therefore its application is crucial in the understanding of the necessity of parental involvement. The contribution of Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory lies in the fact that it highlighted how the
different systems and sub-systems in the education of a child have a constant influence on each other and the system as a whole. Therefore, the quality of parental involvement will influence the educational system and it became apparent that parental involvement should be enhanced to be able to provide quality education to all children. It is for this reason that the theory was applied throughout this study. For instance, all proposed strategies in Chapter six end with an application of Bronfenbrenner’s eco-systemic theory in order to provide the reader with an explanation of how the strategy fits into the nested systems and that all have an influence on the development of the child and the enhancement of parental involvement.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study indicated that the enhancement of parental involvement in the education of children is important and that both teachers and parents need to be supported in this regard. Teachers need support and skills to enhance parental involvement. The recommendations of the study are thus based on the findings of the study (Chapter 5) and the proposed strategies (Chapter 6) which were based on the whole study. The following recommendations are thus proposed in terms of the micro, meso, exo and macrosystems:

For the parents, school principals and teachers at the micro and mesosystems the following recommendations are made:

**Parents, teachers and school principals**

- Parent committees may be formed at schools to provide support to the teachers and also look for ways to involve other parents, especially those who are unemployed. This parent committee should be formed at the beginning of the school year to work collaboratively with teachers and school principals.

- Parents need to be supported by teachers and school principals to enhance parental involvement and to improve the scholastic achievements of their children. The support that teachers can give to parents is to assist their
children with their homework and to invite members of the community to motivate parents to enhance their involvement.

- Literate as well as illiterate parents have an important role to play in assisting their children with their homework. Illiterate parents can be involved by providing a space and facilities for the child to do homework, for example, a table, chair etc, as well as providing an environment conducive to learning to do their homework. (as discussed in section 6.2.1).

- Teachers on the other hand can support literate and illiterate parents in their children’s scholastic performance, by explaining their parental role, encouraging parents to attend parent meetings as well as school and extra-curricular activities of their children.

- School principals can encourage the community to play a role in school activities, such as inviting members of the community to address the learners and parents about the importance of education in a child’s life.

- School principals need to have parenting or parent meetings more often and they should empower parents to be part of important decisions that need to be taken regarding to the scholastic performance of their children. These meetings should be held on a monthly or quarterly basis depending on the needs of the schools.

- Principals of the participating schools need to exchange ideas on how to enhance parental involvement with each other and share advice on programmes implemented at their schools to involve parents. This can be done when school principals have their principals’ meetings with the EDO’s.

- Gelvandale school teachers and principals, with their members of the SMTs (Senior Management Teams) can support each other and together look for solutions regarding the challenges they face with parental involvement. These
meetings can be held on a quarterly basis and report backs should be given to the rest of the staff.

**Benefits for learners**

- Learners can form study groups, especially the intersen and senior grades to support each other with homework or school activities.
- Learners from different cultural backgrounds can work together to narrow the gap between the culture at home and the culture at school.
- Learners can have a positive influence amongst their peers to achieve high marks and to encourage each other to deliver work of a high standard.

Towards the members of the *exosystem*, the following recommendations are made:

- The professionals in the community can be contacted by the school management to conduct workshops and motivational talks on parental involvement. These workshops could be about the enhancement of parental involvement and should be held on a regular basis, depending on the needs of the school.

- Professionals in the community can be approached by the School Management Team (SMT) to support parents to start parental support groups for specific problems that they might encounter. Social workers can inform parents about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse, how to prevent it and what can be done to establish a support group. (See section 5.7.3.1 and 6.2.1).

- Businesses in the community can be approached by School Governing Bodies (SGB’s) to sponsor workshops for parents regarding their roles in involvement in the school. This sponsorship will enable schools to pay for professionals to address parents on their involvement at the school.

- Religious organisations can guide parents about their spiritual input in their children’s life. These religious leaders can conduct the assemblies at schools
or the school principals can arrange with the religious leaders to guide the parents on a spiritual journey to be able to enhance their involvement in their children’s education.

Towards the roleplayer in the *macrosystem*, the following recommendations are made:

**The Department of Basic Education (DBE)**

- The Department of Basic Education (DBE) can play a pivotal role by conducting workshops for parents to enhance parental involvement at schools. These workshops can be held on a quarterly basis to support the parents in their parental role.

- The DBE should support teachers to implement the curriculum successfully and to ensure that parents know the role to play in their children’s education. Clear guidelines should be given to parents as to what is expected from them and what they can do to help their children in their educational journey.

- The DBE can conduct workshops and leadership courses for teachers on how to involve parents in their children’s education. These workshops should enable teachers to support the parents to enhance parental involvement to improve the childrens’ scholastic performances.

- The DBE should introduce the proposed strategies as discussed in Chapter six to schools and assist schools to employ these strategies at their schools to enhance parental involvement.

**The Department of Health**

- The Department of Health can become involved by presenting workshops to teachers, parents and learners about for example, hygiene, tuberculosis, the importance of healthy eating habits and HIV/AIDS.
**NGO's**

- The NGO's should become involved in various social upliftment programmes, to improve the quality of education in the community, for example the establishment of greening projects, recycling and creating vegetable gardens at school.

- NGO’s can also assist in establishing organisations such as anti substance abuse and anti-crime organisations and thereby foster a healthy environment for both parent and learner.

### 7.5 CONTRIBUTIONS THAT THIS STUDY MAKES TO THE SCIENTIFIC FIELD

This study contributed the following:

- Strategies were proposed to enhance parental involvement at primary schools. In Chapter 6, proposed strategies were highlighted to support parents, teachers and the community workers to enhance parental involvement in schools.

- The study highlighted the need to enhance parental involvement in schools. When parents are involved, it has a positive effect on children's scholastic performance and holds significant benefits for the child, school, parents and teachers.

- The study emphasises the importance of a systemic approach to enhance parental involvement. As mentioned before, Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic theory forms the theoretical framework of this study, where the one system has an influence on the other system. In other words what happens in one system will have a negative or a positive influence on all the other systems and sub-systems. This theory emphasises that schools influence families, and families influence schools, and both are affected by the communities in which they are located. The family, school and community contexts are also
influenced by larger social, political and economic realities. Since this systemic approach to parental involvement is essential.

7.6 LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted in a disadvantaged community in Port Elizabeth, therefore no claims of generalization are made since the results of the study pertained to the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.

7.7 FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the study, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations regarding further research:

- After the DBE has implemented the proposed strategies, their effectiveness should be researched further in another study.
- The enhancement of parental involvement at Senior Secondary Schools should also be investigated as parents need to know the important role they have to play in their children’s education.
- Further research could be done on how to motivate non-educational professional community members to become involved in enhancing parental involvement in education.
- Further investigations need to focus on school-based workshop activities for parents and the reasons for the low participation of parents in SGB meetings and PTAs.
In closing, if all parents could keep the following statement of Dr Jonas Salk in mind regarding the general and scholastic education of their children and try to apply this in their childrens’ education, our learners will become powerful citizens:

“My child, I can leave you only two things in this life: roots, to anchor you and wings that will enable you to soar high above your own expectations”

(JonasSalk,1995)
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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

Alpha Primary School
Bell Road
Gelvandale
Port Elizabeth
6000
2 February 2011

The Education District Officer
Department of Education
Private Bag X3931
North End
Port Elizabeth
6056

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

As part of my study, I am conducting research into studying: “Guidelines to encourage parental involvement at primary schools in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth”. I would be grateful if you would grant me permission for this project.

The data will be obtained from the parents and educators from the various schools in Gelvandale. I will conduct semi-structured interviews with the parents and educators. I will observe interaction relationships between the parents and the educators as well as the learner’s behavior with their parents.

I guarantee that I will observe good ethical conduct throughout. The necessary informed consent from the respective participants in this study will be obtained so as to ensure the credibility of the responses and the confidentiality of the participants.

I await your speedy response.

Yours in Education

_________________________
Mrs C. A. Hendricks
2 February 2011
Mrs C.A. Hendricks
Researcher
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Dear Mrs Hendricks

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS:
PORT ELIZABETH

I refer to your letter dated 02 February 2011.

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct your research on the following conditions:

1. Your research must be conducted on a voluntary basis.
2. All ethical issues relating to research must be honoured.
3. Your research is subject to the internal rules of the school, including its curricular programme and its code of conduct and must not interfere in the day-to-day routine of the school.

Kindly present a copy of this letter to the principal as proof of permission.

I wish you good luck in your research.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

DR NYATHI NTSIKO
DISTRICT DIRECTOR: PORT ELIZABETH

10 February 2011
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INVITATION TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Dear Sir

Project Information Statement/Letter of Invitation to School Principals

My name is Charlotte Hendricks, and I am a Doctoral student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). The title of my thesis is: Guidelines to encourage parental involvement at primary schools in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.

I am conducting research on parental involvement under the supervision of Dr CF Pienaar and Dr S. Mbokodi. The Provincial Department of Education has given approval to approach schools for my research. A copy of their approval is attached to this letter. I invite you to consider taking part in this research. This study will meet the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Aims of the Research

The research aims to:

• Determine guidelines to encourage parental involvement at primary schools in disadvantaged communities of the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.
• Establish how the policy of inclusive education can contribute to parental involvement in schools.
• Determine the importance of parental involvement in a child’s life.
• Establish what the barriers to parental involvement are in a disadvantaged community.

Significance of the Research Project

The research is significant in three ways:

• It will provide guidelines to encourage parents to become involved in the education of their children.
• It will provide schools and teachers with greater understanding about the importance of parental involvement and the important role schools and teachers have to play to involve parents.
• Benefits of the Research to Schools

The results of the study will be made available to participating schools, if so requested.
Research Plan and Method

The data collection methods will include semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. Permission will be sought from the parents and teachers prior to their participation in the research. Only those who consent will participate. The researcher and the co-researcher will visit the school to conduct the interviews which will be approximately 30 minutes. All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence and neither the school nor individual learners will be identifiable in any reports that are written. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The role of the school is voluntary and the School Principal may decide to withdraw the school's participation at any time without penalty. The data collected will be treated as highly confidential and the researcher will observe good ethical conduct throughout. If a learner requires support as a result of their participation in the survey steps can be taken to accommodate this.

School Involvement

Once I have received your consent to approach the parents and teachers to participate in the study, I will:

• arrange for informed consent to be signed by parents
• make appointment with your school for data collection to take place
• obtain informed consent from participants

Attached for your information are copies of the Parent Information and Consent Form and also the Participant Information Statement and Consent Form.

Invitation to Participate

If you would like your school to participate in this research, please complete and return the attached form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information

Mrs Charlotte Hendricks
The Researcher
ENHANCING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES.

School Principal Consent Form

I give consent for you to approach the parents and teachers to participate in the doctoral study entitled

I have read the Project Information Statement explaining the purpose of the research project and understand that:

- The role of the school is voluntary
- I may decide to withdraw the school’s participation at any time without penalty
- Teachers and parents will be invited to participate and that permission will be sought from them and also from the parents.
- Only parents who gave their consent will participate in the project
- All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.
- The learners’ names will not be used and individual learners will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
- The school will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
- A report of the findings of the study will be made available to the school if so requested
- I may seek further information on the project from Mrs Charlotte Hendricks on (041) 4523255.

Principal __________________________

Signature __________________________

Date __________________________
APPENDIX D: LETTER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

2 February 2011

Dear Parent and Teacher

My name is Charlotte Hendricks and I am currently studying towards a Doctoral Degree at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. As part of the requirements of the degree, I am required to complete a research thesis. My study entitled: Guidelines to encourage parental involvement at primary schools in disadvantaged communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, aims to determine guidelines to encourage parental involvement at primary schools in disadvantaged communities of the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.

In order for the study to be a success, I require parents and teachers to volunteer to participate in the research. I would be grateful if you would consent to participating in my study.

If you choose to participate in this research, you will be invited to take part in an interview aimed at gaining an understanding of parental involvement and the barriers to parental involved in the education of their children. The completion of the process will take 30-40 minutes and will be done at a venue convenient to you. Teachers will be interviewed at their schools.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times and in the analysis of the data and the completion of the Doctoral Degree.

A summary report of the findings will be made available to you.

If you would like any further information or are unclear about anything, please feel free to contact me via e-mail: charleyh1968@yahoo.com or telephonically on 084 5635425.

Your cooperation and participation is valued and appreciated.

Kind regards

________________________

Mrs C.A. Hendricks
Researcher
APPENDIX E: DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

I, ____________________________________________________________

hereby confirm as follows:

1. I was invited to participate in the above mentioned research project, which is being undertaken by Charlotte Hendricks a student in the Faculty of Education, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

2. This research aims to establish guidelines for parental involvement in primary schools. The information will be used as part of the requirements for PhD. The results of the study may be presented at scientific conferences or in specific publications.

3. I understand that I will need to complete the consent form and return it to the researcher on completion.

4. My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publication by the researcher.

5. My participation is voluntary. My decision whether or not to participate, will in no way affect me.

6. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to my participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalization.

7. Participation in this study will not result in any cost to myself.

(Please initial against each paragraph)
I CONSENT VOLUNTARILY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT.

Signed at __________________ on ______________________2008.

Signature of parent or guardian of participant: ______________________
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH PARENTS

1. Do you think that your involvement in your child’s school life is important? Motivate
2. Do you provide home conditions conducive to learning? Please explain.
3. What kind of support do you offer your child at home? Explain
4. Do you know your child’s teacher and do you have a healthy relationship with her/him? Give examples.
5. Do you know what the South African Schools Act stands for?
6. Do you attend parent meetings or grade meetings at school?
7. Do you volunteer when the school needs your assistance? Motivate
8. Do you support the school by paying school fees and are you up to date with your payments?
9. What do you do when you don’t understand the child’s schoolwork?
10. When the school communicates with you, do you take the initiative to respond and take action? Do you take the initiative to communicate regularly with the school to know what is going on?
11. How do you promote home-school relations?
12. What values are you upholding and how do you demonstrate them for your child to become a good learner?
13. What values and structures have you put in place to encourage your child to do homework?
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH TEACHERS

1. How do you empower parents to be involved in the education of their children?

2. In your opinion how do the vision and mission statements of your school inform your practice to engage parents?

3. In which part of the child’s scholastic life can parents be more involved? Elaborate please.

4. Why do you think parental involvement is important in a child’s life?

5. Are you aware of the South African Schools Act, which requires parents to be involved in the education of their children? Explain

6. What do you feel about the current state of parental involvement in your school? Motivate your answer and give examples.

7. What challenges do you experience regarding parental involvement and how can they be overcome in your opinion?

8. What do you do to empower parents from a deprived socio-economic background to improve their involvement?

9. How do you empower illiterate parents to become involved?


11. How do you see the importance of the relationship between your school, the community and the parents?
APPENDIX H: INTERVIEWS - PARENTS

INTERVIEWS: PARENTS

PARTICIPANT 1#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid in u kind se skoollewe belangrik is?

   Ja … die rede hoekom ek so sê is dat … ek wil vir my kind n beter toekoms het … want as ek nie betrokke in haar loopbaan het nie … dan weet ek my kind gaan een van die elemente buitekant is.

2. Wanneer u van elemente praat, is daar spesifiek iets wat vir u in die gemeenskap wat u as ouer ongelukkig maak?

   Ja … die rede hoekom ek so sê dat baie van onse kinders, of hulle nou jonk of in die tiener begin, dan sien ons hulle is betrokke by gangsterism. Hulle is met drugs deurmekaar, hulle is met skollies deurmekaar. Die einde van die dag dan het ons nie meer control oor onse eie kinders nie.

3. By u huis, is daar gesikte voorsiening gemaak vir die kind om hom of haar skoolwerk te doen?

   Ja … ons het ‘n aparte ‘n ‘n plek wat ons gebruik vir die kind om hulle huiswerk in te doen.

4. As u praat van n plek, is dit byvoorbeeld in die kombuis of n spesifieke vertrek en waarby aan tafel of presies waar sit die kind?

   Ons het n plek in die huis wat amper soos n study plek is, en daarom gebruik ons hierdie plek wat ingeruim spesiaal is om die kind te kan help in die verband.
5. **Watter ondersteuning tuis bied u vir u kind aan?**

   *Uhm … veronderstel die kind het tuiswerk gekry, dan sal ons, sodra die kind uit die skool uit kom, sal ons eers vra of die kind tuiswerk gekry het. As die kind kla geëet het, dan ook uitgetrek het, dan gaan ons onmiddellik na die plek wat innie huis is, om die kind se skoolwerk kla te maak. Na dit sal ons altyd eers n “gamepie” speel of iets om seker te maak dat die kind sal verstaan waaroor gaan die werk wat die kind moet doen.*

6. **Het u ‘n goeie verstandhouding met u kind se onderwyseres en weet u wie is die kind se onderwyseres?**

   *Ja … ek het n goeie verstandhouding met die onderwyser. Ek weet wie is die onderwyser. Mag ek die onderwyser se naam ook noem?*

   *Dis nie nodig nie meneer, dankie hoor!*

7. **Woon u gereeld ouervergaderings en klasvergaderings by?**

   *Ja … ek moet, ek is verplig om dit by te woon.*

8. **Waarom sê u so?**

   *Omdat ek die voorsitter is van die skoolbeheer raad en daarom is ek verplig om al hierdie vergaderings by te won en te … chair.*

9. **Sê vir my meneer aangesien u nou so n belangrike rol by die skool speel, dink u dat die ouers in ‘n groot mate die vergaderings bywoon?**

   *Dit was bietjie moeilik om dit te kan sê. Daar is by onse laasste vergadering was da … baie ouers wat opgedaag het, omdat hulle geweet het, dat hulle kinders se uhm … uhm … vir education kom eerste by die skool en daarom he tons hulle gemotiveer om asseblief die vergaderings by te woon.*
10. Die volgende vraag, gee u vrywilliglik u ondersteuning wanneer die skool u nodig het?

Ja ... as die skool my ten tye nodig het, dan gee ek my volle ondersteuning. Ons het nou begin met uhm ... ‘n feeding scheme, wat by die skool is waar ek verplig amper is om elke oggend die brood te gaan koop. So ... dan verwag ek ok dat die skool vir my niks moet gee nie want ek volunteer om iets vrywillig vir die skool te doen.

11. Is u kind se skoolfooie op datum, en betaal u gereeld skoolfooie?

Ja, dit is op datum en ek betaal elke jaar skoolfooie.

12. Wanneer daar ‘n spesifieke afdeling in u kind se skoolwerk is wat u nie verstaan nie, wat doen u in hierdie verband?

As da iets is wat ek nie verstaan by die skoolwerk nie, dan sal ek altyd n afspraak reël met die onderwyser om seker te kan maak wat sy bedoel het met die vrae of dit wat da is en so sal ek ok weet wat van die kind verwag word met ha antwoorde wat sy daarop volg.

13. Wanneer die skool kommunikeer met die ouers d.m.v. n brief respond u onmiddellik en neem u aksie daarop?

Ja ... want dit is my plig dat ek verantwoordelik moet optree ten alle tye, en daarom respond ek altyd wanneer die skool n briefie stuur.

14. Watter waardes hou U, of demonstreer u in u huis sodat u kind sy goeie plek in die gemeenskap kan staan. Watter waardes, bv. respek, verantwoordelikheid, moet die kind ken. Is daar enige iets spesiefiek wat vir u as ouer uitstaan wat u in u kind se kop imprint?

Ja ... by die huis, ek moet verantwoordelik is, ek moet respekvol is en ek moet seker maak dat my kind in tyd by die skool moet wees. Daar word van
ons verwag dat onse kind 10 minute voor die tyd by die skool is, en daarom speel n vaderlike plig n groot rol in n kind se lewe om seker te maak dat die kind ten alle tye in tyd by die skool is, huiswerk gedoen, als wat in plek moet gesit moet word is ouers se rol daar om die kind meet te kan help.

15. **Watter waarde** of **strukture het u in plek om die kind tuis aan te moedig om tuiswerk te doen.** Daar is kere wanneer die kinders voel, hulle wil nie nou tuiswerk doen nie, het u miskien n tipe van n motivering om die kind aan te moedig om tuiswerk te doen?

    *Ja, daar is motiverings wat ons gebruik by die huis. As die kind nie in die eerste plek wil hulle tuiswerk doen nie, dan sal ons hulle altyd aanmoedig te sê, gaan doen eers wat jy wil doen, dan ... ma sodra die kind kla gespeel het, motiveer ons die kind al is dit net 5 sinnetjies, wat hulle moet doen, ma dan sal ons altyd die kind sê, jy ken stop met die 5 dan ken jy ma weer verskoon word, maar sodra als in plek is by die aand, dan sit ons met die kind dat sy skoolwerk ken volledig ken maak.*

**Baie dankie.**
PARTICIPANT 2#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid by u kind se skoollewe is belangrik? Motiveer.

Ja, ek dink so want dit held die kind om ‘n confidence te het oor sy skoolwerk en ... uhm ... dit leer die kind om like sy skoolwerk gereeld te doen like as mammie dit saam met hom doen en as hy by die skool is dan is hy nie so bang as hy by die skool kom om sy skoolwerk te doen nie.

2. By die huis is daar ‘n voorsiening gemaak vir die kind, ‘n plekkie waar die kind sy skoolwerk kan doen.

Ja, sy kamer. Hy doen sy skoolwerk in sy kamer in, han sit hy in sy kamer en han werk hy van daar af want is stiller in haai area.

3. Watter tipe ... uhm support bied u, u kind by die huis aan?

Ek sit saam met sy huiswerk as die teacher sy huiswerk gee maar uh, ek dien nie net dit nie. Uhm ek gee ook my eie toetsies soos miskien tafels, ons doen multiplications, merk hom aan, ek doen dit saam met hom uhm, ek doen spelling en sy reading ... Ek doen dit saam met hom.

4. Ken u, u kind se onderwyseres en het julle ‘n goeie verhouding?

Ja, ek ken sy onderwyseres en ons kom bymekaar by werkswinkels, waar die teacher ons leer oor ouerskap en die betrokkenheid van ouers in ‘n kind se lewe.

5. Woon u gereeld ouer en klasvergadering by?

Ja, ons woon dit by want die teacher explain haa oor wat gaan die vergadering, die kinners miskien bietjie swak gedoen hit in sy werk.
6. Gee u vrywilliglik u diens vir die skool wanneer hulle hulp nodig het?

*Ja …*

7. Presies wanneer het u gehelp, of is daar iets spesifiek wat u kan dink of waar u betrokke was?

*Ek het sam met die teachers gegaan die kinners na Spar neem, waa hulle iets moes koop en daarvoor betaal. Ons het soonto toe geloop, toe help ek ha met die kinners.*

8. Betaal u, u kind se skoolfooie? Is u op datum?

*Ja, ek is op datum.*

9. Wanneer u kind tuiswerk het, en u kind verstaan nie die tuiswerk nie, wanneer u kind tuiswerk gekry het, en u verstaan miskien nie ‘n afdeling van die werk nie, wat doen u in die verband?

*Dit het … uhm nog gie gebeur saam met my nie. Ek kan nie op haai nou antwoord nie.*

10. Wanneer die skool met u kommunikeer d.m.v. ‘n briefie, antwoord u die skool onmiddellik terug, of moet die skool altyd wat op ‘n response?

*Ek antwoord onmiddellik.*

11. Watter waardes hou u in u huis op om van u kind ‘n goeie lewe te maak?

*Ons … uhm leer hom oor respek … uhm verantwoordelikheid, hygiene, is baie belangrik en uhm … sodat die kind ken weet as hy groot is nie nog haai goete moet aanleer nie, hat hy ken dat hy confidence wees. Dit is die waardes wat ons hom leer.*
12. Watter waardes en stukture het u in plek om u in aan te moedig om sy skoolwerk gereeld te doen?

Ons leer like wanneer ons skoolwerk doen ons so like dit fun wees vir die kind, nie net 'n boring manier nie, ons maak so 'n gamepie, miskien, sodat hy dit kan verstaan en lat, nie vir hom ... 'n ... uhm drag is om die skoolwerk te doen nie.

Baie dankie.
PARTICIPANT 3#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid by u kind se skoollewe is belangrik?
   
   *Ja ...*

2. Waarom dink jy dus belangrik?
   
   *Dit laat ‘n kind meer positief op himself voel.*

3. Uhm ... by die huis, maak u voorsiening vir die kind om sy of haar skoolwerk te doen?
   
   *Ja.*

4. Presies waar en hoe doen hy sy skoolwerk?
   
   *Presies en watter vertrek, in die kombuis uhm ... dan sal ek nou met ha sit en deur die werk gaan.*

5. Wanneer die kind tuiswerk doen is daar absolute stilte of en ook het U-hulle ‘n spesifieke tyd, wanneer u hulle tuiswerk doen?
   
   *Ja, daar’s ... net so, sodra sy by die skool, by die huis is.*

6. Watter tipe support bied jy vir jou kind aan by die huis wanneer dit kom by skoolwerk?
   
   *Ek laat haar toe om ... uhm ... dan sy moet sien ... uhm mammie is da vir my om saam met my om saam met haar skoolwerk te gaan, met die gevolg dit maak haar meer ywerig om met haar skoolwerk te sit.*
7. Ken u, u kind se onderwyseres en het julle ‘n goeie tipe van ‘n verhouding,’n verstandhouding?
   Ja ... ons kom gereeld bymekaar mos nê.

8. Gee vir my ‘n paar voorbeeld of iets wat uitstaan wat u kan sê dat julle ‘n goeie verhouding het.
   Ons kommunikeer gereeld ... Ja en ons doen saam workshop.

9. Waaroor gaan hierdie workshop presies?
   Uhm ... is om ‘n beter ouer, om ‘n beter ouer van jouself te maak.

10. Sê vir my hierdie werkswinkel wat aangebied word, geniet jy dit en het jy miskien enige iets daaruit geleer?
   (giggel) ja, natuurlik ... uhm, ... uhm ... Dit laat ‘n mens baie ... uhm ... jy leer ken die aner ouers ook en buiten daai, dit maak dinge meer interessant, leer baie idees van mekaar.

   Woon u gereeld ouervergaderings en klasvergaderings by by die skool?
   Ja ... 

11. Wanneer die skool miskien enige funksies het, is u vrywilliglik beskikbaar om u diens te lewer?
   100% ... (giggel) ... ja ons het die uitstappie na Spar toe baie geniet, met die kinners. Ons was drie mammies wat saam met die kinners gestap het.

12. Wat presies het u deur die uitstappie gedoen vir die skool?
   Uhm ... ons het saam met die kinners gestap ... uhm, uhm, hulle bietjie uitgeneem, bietjie oefeninge sodat hulle liggaampies bietjie oefeninge kry.
13. Sê vir my, betaal u, u kind se skoolfooie, en indien ja, is u op datum?
   
   Ja ...

14. Wanneer die kind sukkel met tuiswerk en u verstaan miskien nie ‘n spesifieke afdeling nie, wat doen u in hierdie verband?

   Ag ons maak dit die naaste ene wat miskien sal verstaan ma ... Dit was so ver nie moeilik werk nie …

15. Wanneer die skool met u kommunikeer d.m.v. ‘n brief, verwag u dat die skool wag, moet die skool altyd wag vanaf u vir ‘n antwoord? Of beantwoord u onmiddellik wanneer briewe uitgestuur word?

   Onmiddellik wanneer die brief kom.

16. Watter waardes as ‘n ouer staan vir u uit wat u in u kind se lewe in print, byvoorbeeld respek, verantwoordelikheid ... Watter waardes leer u vir u kind?

   Om verantwoordelik te wees en ... uhm ... sy moet vir haarsel kan besluite neem.

17. Nou wanneer dit kom by verantwoordelikheid, hoe dink U, is dit dus belangrik dat kinders verantwoordelik moet wees?

   Ja … dit help hulle om … om op hulle eie besluite te neem as mammie nie by is nie.

   Baie dankie.
1. Dink jy dat jou betrokkenheid by jou kind se skool is belangrik? As jy ja sê, motiveer.

*Ja, my involvement by my kind se skool is belangrik sodat hy kan goed dien in die skool en kan vorentoe gaan in die lewe.*

2. En as jou kind vorentoe gaan in die lewe, dink jy dit sal iets goed is vir jou? Dink jy, jy sal goed oor dit voel as ouer of nie?

*Ek sal goed voel oor dit … ja.*

3. By die huis, is daar genoeg voorsiening gemaak vir die kind om sy skoolwerk te doen?

*Ja, daar is ja.*

4. Verduidelik vir my wat dit is.

*As … baie stilte, en ek ken lekka sit saam met hom om hom te help sam met sy skoolwerk.*

5. Waar doen die kind skoolwerk? Sit hy by ‘n tafel of presies waar in watter vertrek doen hy sy skoolwerk?

*Ek doen dit in onse kamer op my bed.*

6. Wat, watter tipe ondersteuning gee jy vir jou kind by die huis?

*Ondersteuning … hmmm.*
Byvoorbeeld is daar enige support wat jy vir die kind aanbied as die kind miskien sukkel met sy skoolwerk of met enig ander problem?

*Ek help hom baie, ja by die huis met sy skoolwerk.*

7. **Sou die kind sukkel met klanke, wat doen jy byvoorbeeld om hom te help?**

*Ek gaan eerlik antwoord met daai klanke storie (lag) … Vanaf by die klanke, help hy vir eintlik, want ek verstaan nie hoe hulle nou klank in die skool in nie … maar ek vra.*

8. **By die skool, ken u, u kind se onderwyseres en het julle ‘n goeie verhouding?**

*Ek sal sé ja, want as ek iets nie verstaan nie, waar … uhm my kind se skoolwerk …. Uhm … betref sal ek by die onderwyser kom seker maak en uitvind.*

9. **Woon u gereeld ouervergaderings en klasvergaderings by die skool by?**

*Ja …*

10. **Wanneer die skool byvoorbeeld mense nodig gehad het, vrywillige diens, waarmee hulle kan help, het u al u diens beskikbaar gestel?**

*Ja …, ek het ja … Toe ons Spar toe gegaan het, en met ‘n … uhm … ek sal help in die klas as die juffrou my nodig he tom toesig te hou oor hulle, die kleintjies.*

11. **Het u al u kind se skoolfooie betaal en indien ja, is u op datum?**

*Ek het ‘n stukkie betaal … ma …. Uhm … ek sukkel ‘n bietjie ma ek sal die agterstalliges gee, wanneer ek reg is.*
12. Wanneer u miskien nie ‘n afdeling van die kind se werk verstaan nie, kom sê die kinders het tuiswerk gekry, u verstaan nie miskien iets van die kind se skoolwerk nie, wat doen u … wat doen jy in die verband?

_Ek sal try om uit te figure wat in die boek in staan ek as ek nie ken … uhm … verstaan nie, sal ek by die juffrou net doodseker maak._

13. Wanneer die skool d.m.v. ‘n brief met u kommunikeer, neem u initiatief om terug met die skool te kommunikeer of laat jy die briefie, briefie vir ‘n oomblik lê tot wanneer jy voel jy gaan nou weer die skool beantwoord?

_Nee, ek sal dit somme afhandel dat ek weet dus uitgesort._

14. Watter waardes skerp jy by jou kind in by die huis, m.a.w. wat voek u as ouer is belangrik in jou kind se lewe wanneer dit kom by waardes in sy lewe, byvoorbeeld respek, verantwoordelikheid, die kind moet betyds is by die skool? Is daar iets spesifiek wat vir u as ouer uitstaan wat u in u kind in drill?

_Ek sal sê riespek._

15. Waarom voel jy respek is belangrik?

_Dit sal jou pad oopmaak vorentoe … riespek._

16. Bemoedig jy jou kind gereeld om skoolwerk te doen, bv. al het hulle nie skoolwerk gekry nie, moedig jy die kind gereeld aan om te lees of enigiets betrekking sy skoolwerk?

_Ja, ek moedig hom aan om sy skoolwerk te doen … wan ek sê vir hom, as hy dit nie doen nie gaan hy nowhere kom nie. Hy moet alles insit in sy skoolwerk in._

_Baie dankie._
1. Do you think that your involvement in your child’s school life is important? Motivate.

_Uhm it is very important,

Why do you say so?

_Uhm … uhm dit is ok it is to sometimes you need to encourage your child, if a child perhaps lack in something, to do with their schoolwork you have to motivate them, it gives them, actually, encourage them to do good in their schoolwork and like to become something in life.

2. Do you provide home conditions conducive to learning? Please explain.

_Uhm … its very important to do that because sometimes you know children especially ok children in general, like you said they like to sit in front of the TV which is very wrong because then all their attention goes to the TV and then not their schoolwork, so it is important to make a small space at home for them.

So did you provide something for them at home? So where more or less do they do homework?

_In their bedrooms, at the little table there.

3. What kind of support do you offer your child at home? Explain

_Oooh I support my child in any way, for example, with their schoolwork, with their sports, I’m very much ok involved in their lives.
4. Do you know your child’s teacher and do you have a healthy relationship with her/him? Give examples.

I do have a very healthy relationship with him, the gentleman, uhm .. Mr Cunningham,

So do you have a nice understanding with the sir?

Oh, yes, we really do have nice understanding.

Which means the two of you communicate quite often regarding your child's schoolwork?

Yes

5. Do you know what the South African Schools Act stands for?

No, I never heard of it before.

6. Do you attend parent meetings or grade meetings at school?

I attend every meeting.

When was the last meeting you attended at school?

Uhm ... I am on the School Governing Body, well so, our last meeting was last month.

7. Do you volunteer when the school needs your assistance? Motivate

Yes I do volunteer.

Give me an example of when last you volunteered?
Just before the school closed, so whenever there’s not a teacher available, they’ll call on my number and I’ll be there for them.

8. Do you support the school by paying school fees and are you up to date with your payment?

Yes.

9. What do you do when you don’t understand the child’s schoolwork?

You go to your teacher and you ask your teacher to explain it.

So let’s say your child comes home from school struggling with a Math sum that was his homework, you don’t know what to do, will you wait till the next day or go for help to neighbours or friends or will you wait for the following day?

Obviously, someone at home if they can’t help you.

10. When the school communicates with you, do you take the initiative to respond and take action? Do you take the initiative to communicate regularly with the school to know what is going on?

I do communicate regularly with the school.

11. How do you promote home-school relations?

Uhm ... Sometimes it is a bit difficult, especially when, ok, me now for instance, I’m living in granny’s house with the grandchildren come there and the advantage they after, we are Moslems. They go to Madressa after school immediately when they come out of school, if my two children don’t go sit in their rooms there’s still the grandchildren they sit around the table in the diningroom they all sit and do their homework and help each other.
12. What values are you upholding and how do you demonstrate them for your child to become a good learner?

_Uhm ... They must just try and strive to be the best in whatever they do._

13. What values and structures have you put in place to encourage your child to do homework?

_Uhm ... Mmm ... What values? Er like for instance, values and structures, value like for instance ... Mm ... Patience is a virtue, they must have patience, in whatever they do, but if they don't understand what they doing what the next person is saying._

Tell me structures, is there a certain time that the child has to do homework or is it any time in your case?

_Well ... For one thing ... for one thing for sure ... I don't like them to do homework at night._

So your structure at home is after school they take a break and then they have to do homework?

Yes.

_Do you mind if I ask you a last question – are you married?_

Yes I am married.

_Thank you so much for your time._

_It's a pleasure._
PARTCIPANT 6#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid in u kind se skoollewe belangrik is? Motiveer.

_Baie belangrik._

_Waarom sê u so?_

_Want (ek moet nou eers dink) want as jy as ouer wat betrokke is by jou kind dan kom jou kind bo uit met ’n baie goeie gemiddelde punt – ’n A-simbool, dis baie belangrik dat jy as ouer en wat disipline concern wat ’n groot problem is op skool._

2. Maak u voorsiening vir ’n geskikte plek tuis vir die kind om sy skoolwerk te doen? Verduidelik.

_Op die huidige oomblik is daar ’n plek in die huis om haar huiswerk te doen._

_Waar presies, in watter vertrek?_

_Is in die voorvertrek waar daar nie ’n TV is nie, waar sy heeltemaal onafhanklik is vir haarself._

3. Watter tipe ondersteuning bied u vir u kind tuis aan.

_Wel ek sit baie met haar dat sy lees en help haar met haar huiswerk, ons doen goedjies saam in die huis in, whatever it is, she asks a lot of questions, en al daai goeters._
4. Wat doen u as u nie u kind met sy skoolwerk kan help deur iets wat jy nie verstaan nie.

In so verband sal ek haar help, dan sal ek na die teacher toe gaan, teacher sê vir my hoe moet die ding gedoen word? hoe maak ‘n mens so en so? wat ek gedoen het in grade 2 met haar, dan verstaan ek nie die teacher nie dan sê ek teacher, ek verstaan nie die werk nie, sê net gou vir my hoe maak ‘n mens, ek sê ons is nog van die ou mode soort vrouens, explain net gou vir my, toe explain sy vir my. So ek sal altyd terug gaan na die teacher toe om vir my te verduidelik.

5. Weet U van die Suid Afrikaanse Skolewet staan?

Nee, ek weet nie van dit nie.


Nee, ek maak seker dat ek weet wat aangaan, ek ken haar teacher baie goed, sy’s nou op die oomblik af met ‘n baba, die nuwe teacher, sy sukkel wel met my om te adapt, maar ek probeer dat sy haar maniere in toom hou.

7. Woon u gereeld ouer en klas vergaderings by die skool by?

Beslis, waar my kind concern is.

Wanneer laas het u ‘n vergadering bygewoon, min of meer, u hoef nie die datum te weet nie?

Min of meer, was dit nie laas maand nie? Maart, April, Februarie – dit was die end of April, end of March ja, toe he tons saam met die teacher meeting gehou.

Sê my waaroor het dit gegaan?
Ons moes gekyk het na die uhm ... What you call it now? Die books, na die boeke kyk en uhm ... Progress of the learners, and the points.

So tell me, when you look at the progress of your child, how did you feel?

Wel, surprised and a little bit disappointed, there is room for improvement.

8. Bied u vrywilliglik u diens aan by die skool wanneer hulp benodig word?

Beslis.

Kan u vir my ‘n voorbeeld noem?

Ja, ek is lief vir kinders, want as jy in die middae kom kyk dans my huis vol kinders, jy sal sweer dis ‘n aftercare, die way dit so aangaan daar, soos my dogter sal sê dis Christmas in ons huis, the way dit ken deurmekaar is. Nee, beslis.

9. Ondersteun u die skool deur gereeld skoolfooie te betaal en is u op datum?

Op die huidige oomblik is ek nie op datum nie, maar my laaste paaiemt is vir die end van die maand.

10. Wanneer die skool met u kommunikeer deur middel van ‘n brief, skenk u onmiddelik aandag aan die brief en ook hoe gereeld kommunikeer u op u eie om te weet wat by die skool aangaan?

Jy ken maar gaan vra, ek is lief vir vrae vrae. I like to ask questions. Nee, ek vra vir haar die moment sy inkom, is daar enige briewe, any letters in your bag or whatever, then she say, No mommy there’s no letter or there is, then I ask her what it is all about.
11. Hoe bevorder jy ‘n verhouding tussen die skool en die huis?

Wel, my huis is ‘n skool, want daar word gereeld – die skool het gesluit – dan is my dogter nog steeds die teacher – die twee dogters.

12. Is daar enige norme of waardes wat u tuis aanleer om van u kind ‘n goeie leerder by die skool te bekom?

Ek probeer om haar maniere te leer wat belangrik is – wat sy nie wil hê nie as ek try om dit af te los, try to be yourself, don’t do what other children do, just do what you must do.

13. Het u enige maniere wat jy jou kind tuis aanmoedig om hom/haar skoolwerk tuis te doen?

If you need to do your work, go and do it now, if you don’t have any work then you can go and play. When teacher’s talking in the class then you have to take note and then you can do your homework. It’s very important.

Thank you ma’am
PARTICIPANT 7#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid in u kind se skoollewe belangrik is? Motiveer.

Ja.

Waarom sê u so?

Waarom sê ek so? Want jy moet jou kind motiveer om sy skoolwerk te doen. Uhmm hoe kan ek sê?

Waarom is dit belangrik vir U?

Sodat om die kind opvoeding te kan gee.

2. Maak u voorsiening vir ‘n geskikte plek tuis vir die kind om sy skoolwerk te doen? Verduidelik.

Ja.

Presies waar doen die kind skoolwerk?

Voor die in die voorkamer.

Is daar ‘n TV in die voorkamer?

Ja.

Nou wanneer die kind huiswerk doen, wat gebeur met die televisie?

Afgesit.
3. Watter tipe ondersteuning bied u vir u kind tuis aan.

*Hehehehe … mmm, ek help hom met sy skoolwerk.*

4. Wat doen u as u nie u kind met sy skoolwerk kan help deur iets wat jy nie verstaan nie. Vra jy vir hulp of los jy dit net?

*Ek vra vir hulp. Sy moeder is ook daar. Ja.*

5. Weet U van die Suid Afrikaanse Skolewet?

*Nee, nog nie van dit gehoor nie.*


*Nee. Ek sien haar nie. Die moeder sien haar.*

7. Woon u gereeld ouer en klas vergaderings by die skool by?

*Nee.*

8. Bied u vrywilliglik u diens aan by die skool wanneer hulp benodig word? Motiveer.

*Ja.*

Wat bied u byvoorbeeld aan?

*As hulle strikes kom en dan is ek da, meetings, is ek da.*

9. Ondersteun u die skool deur gereeld skoolfooie te betaal en is u op datum?
Ja. Nee ek is nie op datum nie.

10. Wanneer die skool met u kommunikeer deur middel van ‘n brief, skenk u onmiddelik aandag aan die brief en ook hoe gereeld kommunikeer u op u eie om te weet wat by die skool aangaan?

_Ek skenk gereeld aandag aan ‘n brief, as hulle ‘n brief gee, dan lees ek hom._

11. Hoe bevorder jy ‘n verhouding tussen die skool en die huis?

_Tussen die skool en die huis. Nee ek ken nie haai antwoord nie._

12. Is daar enige norme of waardes wat u tuis aanleer om van u kind ‘n goeie leerder by die skool te bekom?

_Ja,_

_Sooos wat?

_Ek leer hom daar by die huis om sy skoolwerk te doen uhm ... nie sy skoolwerk ken nie, ander aktiwiteite soos sport, atletiek._

_Is daar iets wat uitstaan wat u u kind leer om ‘n beter plek in die gemeenskap te kan volstaan?_

_Hy is ‘n verstandige kind, hy’s – leer hom respek by die huis._

_Wanneer dit kom by die opvoeding tuis, dink u u of u vrou speel ‘n belangrike rol?_

_Die vrou speel ‘n groter rol._

_So u vrou is meer betrokke by die kind as u?_
Ja.

13. **Het u enige maniere wat jy jou kind tuis aanmoedig om hom/haar skoolwerk tuis te doen?**

   *Nee, ek moedig hom aan ja om sy tuiswerk te doen. Eers sy tuiswerk an dank an hy gaan speel.*

   **Is daar spesifieke tyd wanneer hy huiswerk doen? Smiddae of is daar enige tyd?**

   *Na skool – direk na skool.*

Baie dankie meneer.
PARTICIPANT 8#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid in u kind se skoollewe belangrik is? Motiveer.

   Ja, juffrou.

   Waarom sê u ja?

   Want omdat die kind moet ‘n goeie toekoms het, wanneer die kind groot is en klaar geleer het, juffrou, dan moet da kind werk op hom of op haar voete staan.

2. Maak u voorsiening vir ‘n geskikte plek tuis vir die kind om sy skoolwerk te doen? Verduidelik.

   Ja juffrou, ek het ‘n plek in die huis waar sy moet leer, haar werk doen vir die skool en wanneer sy kom dan vra ek vir haar Andrea is jou werk, het jy gekry-kom sit my kind dat ouma vir jou kan wys- jou werk moet jy doen.

3. Watter tipe ondersteuning bied u vir u kind tuis aan?

   O ja- ja juffrou, ek moedig haar baie aan, ek sê vir haar kom sit Andrea dat ouma kan sien jy doen jou skoolwerk, het jy tuiswerk gekry? Dan gaan sy sê ja Ma, ons het gekry, dan sê ek vir haar, sit, jy weet hoe was jy by Bethvale gewees, nou moet jy by Chatty ook jou tuiswerk doen.

4. Wat doen u as u nie u kind met sy skoolwerk kan help deur iets wat jy nie verstaan nie?

   Wanneer ek nie verstaan nie juffrou, of die word, wat sy miskien nou sê Ma ek ken nie die nie, dan nodig ek my kind in, sy bly in die huis saam met my, dan vra ek vir haar, dan sê ek Stephanie kom jy is nou klaar geleer, jy’s darem daar voor op die punte, kom help jy nou vir Andrea met haar werk, weet mos
nou die werkies, ek verstaan nou nie die nie, maar Ma was ook nou ou tyd gewees, maar kom jy en leer en dan gaan Stephanie voort gaan om te leer het.

5. Weet U waarvoor die Suid Afrikaanse Skolewet staan?

Oeeeeee, juffrou, nee juffrou, ek ken nie van dit nie.


Ja juffrou, ek ken haar en ons het ‘n baie goeie verhouding wat ons het, as ons by die skool kom dan gesels ons, ook soos dieselfde hier by Bethvale, die kleinkinders se onderwyser, ek ken hulle, hulle kan baie goeie kommekeer skool onderwyser.

7. Woon u gereeld ouer en klas vergaderings by die skool by?

Ja juffrou,

Wanneer laas het julle ‘n vergadering bygewoon?

Juffrou daar was nie nou ‘n vergadering nie, by Chatty voor die skool gesluit het, was daar ‘n vergadering gewees op ‘n Donderdagaand.

8. Bied u vrywilliglik u diens aan by die skool wanneer hulp benodig word? Motiveer.

Ja juffrou, wanneer daar hulp benodig ek is daar juffrou, enige tyd ken die hoof en die onderwyser op my druk, ek is daar.

Ek sien u dra ‘n voorskoot- ouma, wat is die doel van dit?
Die doel is ek help by die skool juffrou en ek like dit om te help by die skool. Die onderwysers hier by die skool, die hoof, ons kommekeer baie goed hier by die skool, as 'n familie vir my.

**Wat spesifiek doen u by die skool?**

Juffrou ek help hier by die skool, ek uhm vee die klasse, kantoor uit, vee hier by die voorportale, was af, en polish, en by die klasse daar agter was ek af, ek vee, en ek polish dit juffrou.

9. **Ondersteun u die skool deur gereeld skoolfooie te betaal en is u op datum?**

Ja juffrou, ek betaal by Chatty se skool, die skoolfooie van die kind juffrou.

**Nou waarom betaal u nie hier skoolfooie nie?**

Ja juffrou, ek betaal hier ook juffrou by die skool wat ek die skoolfooie betaal, en die skoolfooie is op datum. Om te betaal juffrou, want ek weet die hoof bring dit altyd aan by die byeenkoms, die mammies moet help, die oumas wat die kinders bring moet help om die skoolfooie te betaal want dit moet hulle ook die skoolfooie help om te gebruik by die skool, by die dinge om die skool reg te maak en als te doen juffrou.

10. **Wanneer die skool met u kommunikeer deur middel van 'n brief, skenk u onmiddelik aandag aan die brief en ook hoe gereeld kommunikeer u op u eie om te weet wat by die skool aangaan?**

Wanneer die brief kom juffrou dan vat ek hom die brief en ek lees, en dan gaan ek deur ek nie verstaan nie, gaan na die skool toe, ek kom hier na die skool toe, kan verstaan, by die juffrouens, by die meneer, wat dit is of so is, ek is daar, as daar 'n brief kom is ek daar juffrou.
11. Hoe bevorder jy ‘n verhouding tussen die skool en die huis?

Oooe ... Juffrou, my bevordering van die skool en die huis, ek vat die skool soos my huis juffrou.

12. Is daar enige norme of waardes wat u tuis aanleer om van u kind ‘n goeie leerder by die skool te bekom?

Ja juffrou, ek sal altyd vir die kinders sê julle moet weet hoe om by die skool soos julle by die huis is, moet julle by die skool is, julle moet die skool is julle klas onderwyser, moet julle respek soos julle, julle eie ouers respek, ouma en oupa respek.

13. Het u enige maniere wat jy jou kind tuis aanmoedig om hom/haar skoolwerk tuis te doen?

Ja juffrou, opt dit is ek nou baie, dan sê ek vir die kind, al is ek nie daardie jare het die ouers mos vir min geld gewerk, ek kon mos nie daa jare mos nie ver leer nie, maar ons het ‘n regte verhouding gekry by onse ouers, en ek sê ook vir my kinders jy moet leer, want die leer is nie altyd – jou ouers leef nie vir altyd – ons leef nie vir altyd nie, dan moet jy op jou voete staan, soos ek vir my kind gesê Stephanie jy’t geleer by die laerskool my kind, jy was by Arcadia se hoërskool en nou jy het gegaan vir die – Ma het gesukkel, maar Ma het jou gebring tot op hier dat jy so geleer het.

So Ouma ek ken hier aflei dat Ouma kleinkinders hier by die skool het en u het kinders op die hoërskool?

Ja juffrou, my kleinkinders is hier by die skool – twee en die enetjie is hier by Chatty se hoërskool.

Baie dankie Mevrou!
PARTICIPANT 9#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid in u kind se skoollewe belangrik is? Motiveer.

_Dis belangrik._

_Waarom sê mevrou so?_

_As ek nie gaan vra vir haar, my kind wat doen julle by die skool nie, dan gaan ek nie kennis dra van wat in haar boeke aangaan nie._

2. Maak u voorsiening vir ‘n geskikte plek tuis vir die kind om sy skoolwerk te doen. Verduidelik.

_Ja._

_Min of meer waar doen hy sy skoolwerk?_

_By die tafel ek laat hy by die tafel sit, dan gaan ek vir haar vra my kind kom wys vir my waaroor gaan jou skoolwerk, kan jy dit self doen, ja of nee, die samewerking is belangrik, en somtyds as sy nie kan nie dan moet ek haar help._

3. Watter tipe ondersteuning bied u vir u kind tuis aan?

_Oor die algemeen om gehoorsaam te wees vir eers en te verstaan._

4. Wat doen u as u nie u kind met sy skoolwerk kan help deur iets wat jy nie verstaan nie?

_Dan help haar broer haar. Hy’s nou in matriek – besig om klaar te maak met skool, dan gaan hy intree as ek nie kan nie, as ek nie verstaan nie._
5. Ken u die kind se klasonderwyseres en het julle ‘n goeie en gesonde verhouding. Gee voorbeelde.

   Ja, ek ken die meneer.

6. Woon u gereeld ouer en klas vergadering by die skool by?

   Ja.

   Kan u vir my sê wanneer u laas het u hulle ‘n vergadering by die skool gehad? Min of meer watter maand?

   Ons het nie vir die jaar vergadering gehad nie, ons het vroeg laat in verlede jaar vergadering gehet en daa was in November.

7. Bied u vrywilliglik u diens aan by die skool wanneer hulp benodig word? Motiveer.

   Oor die algemeen ja.

8. Ondersteun u die skool deur gereeld skoolfooie te betaal en is u op datum?

   Ja.

9. Wanneer die skool met u kommunikeer d.m.v. ‘n brief, skenk u onmiddellik aandag aan die brief en ook hoe gereeld kommunikeer u op u eie om te weet wat by die skool aangaan?

   Ja, my kind was in ‘n saak. Hoe ek geweet het, was toe ek die kleintjie kom haal toe hoor ek my kind was in die personeelkamer, toe kom ek personeelkamer toe om die hoof te kom sien, toe is dit dat sy op pad huistoe is, waarvan sy nie geweet nie van die brief storie nie.
10. Hoe bevorder jy ‘n verhouding tussen die skool en die huis? Wat ek daarby bedoel is daar ‘n deurgaans verhouding tussen U, die huis en die skool?

   Albei kante, ek is gewillig albei kante. As ek skool toe kom, sal ek altyd die meneerens vra hoe doen die een kind, hoe doen die ander kind, want dit is my belange. By die huis is dieselfde.

11. Is daar enige norme of waardes wat u tuis aanleer om van u kind ‘n goeie leerder by die skool te bekom?

   Oor die algemeen, maniere, ek hou daarvan kinders moet gehoorsaam wees, respek het, en ek sal respek het vir hulle. En volgens hulle skoolwerk, tuis, sal ek altyd vra kom, werk wat die juffrou klaar gedoen het, kom, sê vir my nou, verstaan jy wat die juffrou gesê het, maar daar verstaan ek nie so bietjie nie, maar kom ek weet my ma gaan my help, verstaan soos daa, hulle weet ek gaan hulle help.

12. Het u enige maniere wat jy jou kind tuis aanmoedig om hom/haar skoolwerk tuis te doen?

   Oor die algemeen, hulle is lief vir wiskunde, lees en alles sal ek doen waar hulle belangstelling is om hulle in die huis tehou, hulle skoolwerk, eers as hulle sukkel. As hulle nie ‘n woord verstaan nie dan sê ek - kyk hier my kind ek gaan nou ‘n voorbeeld maak, en as ek daa voorbeeld gemaak het dan nou verstaan ek wat beteken dit.

Baie dankie Mevrou.
PARTICIPANT 10#

1. Dink u dat u betrokkenheid in u kind se skoollewe belangrik is? motiveer.

_Dit is uitses belangrik want 'n mens moet weet op watter vlak jou kind is, of jou kind vordering maak of nie._

2. Maak u voorsiening vir 'n geskikte plek tuis vir die kind om sy skoolwerk te doen? Verduidelik.

_Ja, uhm dis of my kamer of haar kamer, maar daar moet 'n plek ingerig word vir haar om haar skoolwerk te doen, waar daar stilte is - verkieslik._

3. Watter tipe ondersteuning bied u vir u kind tuis aan?

_Uhm … ek sorg altyd dat daar ander materiaal is vir haar om mee te werk, soos sy gaan nou hierdie blaaie nodig het, ek maak altyd seker alles is daar._

4. Wat doen u as u nie u kind met sy skoolwerk kan help deur iets wat jy nie verstaan nie?

_Ek sal of haar pa vra of ek gaan wag tot die volgende dag waar ek die onderwyser kan sien sodat sy vir my kan duidelik, sodat ek nou weer kan oordra aan die kind._

5. Weet U van die Suid Afrikaanse Skolewet?

_Ja, maar eks nie seker van daai wet nie._

6. Ken u die kind se klasonderwyseres en het julle 'n goeie en gesonde verhouding? Gee voorbeelde.

_Uhm … ja, ons het 'n redelike goeie verhouding._
So jy weet presies wie die onderwyseres is?

Ja, moet ek die naam gee?

Nee, dis nie nodig nie.

7. Woon u gereeld ouer en klas vergadering by die skool by?

Uhm ... ja, dis my eerste jaar wat my kind by die skool is, maar ons het nog nie ‘n ouervergadering tot nou toe gehad nie, ek wag nog vir dit.

8. Bied u vrywilliglik u diens aan by die skool wanneer hulp benodig word? Motiveer.

Ja, wanneer ek kan, want ek werk ingewikkelde skofte, maar as ek vrye tyd het, sal ek dit doen.

9. Ondersteun u die skool deur gereeld skoolfooie te betaal en is u op datum?

Ek is op datum, maar enige iets anders wat die skool nodig het, dit sal ek maar bydra.

10. Wanneer die skool met u kommunikeer d.m.v. ‘n brief, skenk u onmiddellik aandag aan die brief en ook hoe gereeld kommunikeer u op u eie om te weet wat by die skool aangaan?

Mmm ... as die skool vir my ‘n brief stuur, ek probeer dit om die volgende dag te doen, wat dit ook al is, as die skool vra as ek dit nie die volgende dag kan doen nie, sal ek na die onderwyser gaan om te verduidelik, en as ek sien iets is sal ek dit aan die onderwyser noem.
11. Hoe bevorder jy ‘n verhouding tussen die skool en die huis?

_Ek probeer altyd vir haar verduidelik die skool behoort soos jou huis te wees, die respek wat jy vir jou ouer het, moet jy vir jou ma het, en anders om._

12. Is daar enige norme of waardes wat u tuis aanleer om van u kind ‘n goeie leerder by die skool te bekom?

_Mmm ... ja, daar's – ek sê vir haar wat jy by die huis doen, moet jy by die skool kan doen., soos jy jou ouer respekteer en moet jy jou mede leerders respekteer._

13. Het u enige maniere wat jy jou kind tuis aanmoedig om hom/haar skoolwerk tuis te doen?

_Uhmm ... ja, by die huis “aspeblief” en “dankie” behoort by die skool want hulle is net so mens net soos jy ‘n mens is, wat jy van hulle verwag, verwag hulle van jou, soos jy met hulle stief gaan behandel, kan hulle met jou stief behandel. Die skool is net soos jou huis._

_Baie dankie._
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEWS - TEACHERS

INTERVIEWS: TEACHERS

PARTICIPANT 11#

1. Hoe bemagtig u ouers om betrokke te raak met die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?

_Dit is belangrik vir ouers om hulle kinders 100% te ondersteun. Kinders hou daarvan om te sien dat hulle ouers belangstel in dit wat hulle doen. Dit sluit in die skolastiese sowel as die sosiale deel soos skoolkonserte, sportbyeenkomste. Dit is asof hulle dit spesiaal vir hulle ouers doen en dit bring die beste uit hulle._

2. In jou opinie, watter rol speel die misie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool?

_‘n Misie en ‘n visie is die doel van elke instansie. Dit is die hoogste mikpunt waarna daardie instansie strewe en as dit by ouers ingeskep word, sal hulle weet dat hulle en al by die skool en al sy fasette betrokke moet wees._

3. In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak. Verduidelik.

_Ouers moet vanaf die eerste dag betrokke wees, sodat hulle altyd op hoogte van die nuutste verwikkelinge wat in die leerprogramme plaasvind kan bly so kan hulle t? hou met alles wat in die skool aangaan en dank an hulle kinders ook leer om sover as moontlik by te bly._

4. Hoekom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe?
As die kind weet dat sy ouers sy boeke op 'n gereelde basis nagaan sal hy/sy meer verantwoordelik teenoor sy werk optree. Kinders neig om agterlosig te raak en begin dissiplinêre probleme te ontwikkel. Hulle vernalatig hulle werk en doen nie tuiswerk gereeld nie.

5. Is u bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolastiese opvoeding?

Die Skolewet vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees by hulle kinders se opvoeding maar baie ouers is baie min betrokke en ander glad nie. Baie kinders kry 100% ondersteuning terwyl ander soveel soos 0% kry.

6. Hoel voel u oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool?


7. Watter uitdaginge i.v.m. ouerbetrokkenheid ervaar u en hoe kan dit oorkom word?

Baie min. Ouers kom vir kinders vordering skool toe. Die skool hou ope dae om ouers betrokke te kry. Daar word ook sosiale byeenkomste gehou waar ouers teenwoordig kan wees.

8. Wat doen u om ouers van 'n agter geblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter?
Ek nooi ouers individueel om die skool te besoek. Dit is veral vir die leerders wat probleme ondervind met hulle skoolwerk. Hulle word ook aangemoedig om uit te styg bo hulle omstandighede.

9. **Hoe bemagtig u ongeletterde ouers om betrokke te wees by die opvoeding van die kinders?**

Ouers wat nie met hulle kinders se skoolwerk kan help nie word aangemoedig om met hulle kinders te gesels oor hulle skoolwerk en hulle daaroor uit te vra so kan hulle, ‘n bietjie meer te wete kom. Die fasiliteerder gee ‘n paar vrae wat ouers vir hulle kinders kan vra, bv. Wat het julle vandag gedoen? Was dit moeilik? Hoeveel het jy reggekry? ens.

10. **Hoe hanteer u en motiveer u moeilike ouers? gee voorbeelde en motiveer.**

Groet hulle, beleef met ‘n mooi glimlag. Die ouers wat moeilik skool kom is dikwels besope of bedwelmd, dus is hulle baie aggresief daarom is dit beter om hulle (reverse) te hanteer. Dit koel hulle onmiddellik af. Luister dan na die problem en gee dan ‘n oplossing.

11. **Hoe sien u die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?**

Die skool, gemeenskap en ouers is verantwoordelik vir die toekoms van die land. ‘n Gesonde gemeenskap sal ‘n gesonde land meebring. As leerders opgevoed is sal hulle produktief wees.

12. **Hoe ondersteun u enkel ouers by die skool?**

Hou ouers op hoogte van alle verwikkelinge van die kind se vordering, ook veranderinge wat bespeur word by die kind.

Baie dankie juffrou vir u bydrae.
1. How do you empower parents to be involved in the education of their children?

   By having regular meetings with parents. Request one-on-one meetings with the parents. Short notes to keep them informed about the child’s progress.

2. In your opinion how do the mission and vision statements of your school inform your practice to engage parents?

   It emphasises that the education and discipline of our children is the joint responsibility of parents and teachers.

3. In which part of the child’s scholastic life can parents be more involved? Elaborate please.

   I personally think that it is imperative for parents to be involved as early as possible. In doing so, parents are informed of their children’s scholastic strengths and weaknesses and know how to work towards the desired goals.

4. Why do you think parental involvement is important in a child’s life?

   It gives the child a sense of security. It keeps the child motivated and also a parent who involves themselves in their child’s schooling career seldom has discipline problems.

5. Are you aware of the South African School Act, which requires parents to be involved in the education of their children? Explain.

   No, unaware.
6. **What do you feel about the current state of parental involvement in your school? Motivate your answer and give examples.**

   I would not like to paint everybody with the same brush but I definitely think that we have a portion of parents at our school who are not very interested in their children’s scholastic achievements. Some parents have the mentality that a child learns at school and if that child is underachieving then it is the teacher’s fault. However there is also “growing” portion of parents who are very passionate about their children’s achievements and who back the school and its teachers no matter what.

7. **What challenges do you experience regarding parental involvement and how can they be overcome in your opinion?**

   A daily challenge which I face in my classroom is homework. Some learners never do their homework and their parents couldn't be bothered. Stationery is another challenge. A child without the necessary stationery disrupts the rest of the class. Parents just simply can’t afford to buy stationery and some just simply refuse to buy. Language barriers. Discipline.

8. **What do you do to empower parents from a deprived socio-economic background to improve their involvement?**

   Through meetings – parent-teacher, correspondence through letters and I personally sms my parents if there is something that needs urgent attention.

9. **How do you empower illiterate parents to be involved?**

   I taught at an ABET institution and I think that it is much harder teaching adults than it is teaching learners, older people are set in their ways, so getting them “illiterate” parents involved is always a challenge. However we take every opportunity we get to talk to parents, when we hand out reports, parent evenings, school functions, etc.
10. **How do you deal with and motivate difficult parents?** Give examples and motivate.

   *This is a challenge because normally if the child is difficult in classes, chances are good that the parent has the same attitude. My only way is by calling them in, explaining the problem that I have and asking for the parents advice on the situation.*

   **Thank you so much!**
PARTICIPANT 13#

1. Hoe bemagtig u ouers om betrokke te raak by die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?

Ouers word deur afsprake ingelig oor vordering van leerders. Briefies word aan ouers gestuur om opdragte van tuiswerk duidelik te maak. Ouers ook in besit van ons telefoonnommer, indien daar enige onduidelikhede of navrae is.

2. In jou opinie, watter rol speel die misie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool?

Ouers is nie eintlik bewus van die skool se visie en missie nie, aangesien hulle nie bloot gestel word aan die dokument nie, tensy hulle navrae doen.

3. In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak. Verduidelik.

Ouers kan deel word van hul skolastiese lewe deur meer betrokke te wees met tuiswerk en vaslegging van inhou. Ouers kan ook hul hulp aanbied by die skool bv. deur hulle vrywillig te verklaar t.o.v. funksies, fondsinsamelings en “maintenance” van skool.

4. Hoekom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe?

Ouers vorm ‘n integrale deel van hul kinders se lewe t.o.v. discipline, moraal en ook Christelike waardes.

5. Is u bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolwet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolastiese opvoeding?

Nee.
6. Hoe voel u oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool?

_Hulle kan meer betrokke raak by dissiplinering van hul kind se opvoeding, waardes te leer en Christelike beginsels vas te lê._

7. Watter uitdagings i.v.m. ouerbetrokkenheid ervaar u en hoe kan dit oorkom word?

_Leerders in Engels-medium klasse is hoofsaaklik Afrikaanssprekend. Die rede hiervoor is dat huistaal Afrikaans is, verkies ouers dat hul kinders in Engelse klasse is omdat dit `n status simbool is in die gemeenskap. Leerders bring hul ouers se gru-taal na die klaskamer en bemoeilik die leerkrag se dissiplinêre metodes. Ouers wat struwelinge tuis het, moet dit liefs afsondelik doen sodat leerders dit nie op skool openbaar, kom uithaal op klasmaats en selfs leerkrag nie._

8. Wat doen u om ouers van `n agtergeblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter (skool)?

_Deur middel van ouervergaderings en ook briefies – maar ouer reaksie is baie swak en onbelangstellend._

9. Hoe bemagtig u ongeletterde ouers om betrokke te wees by die opvoeding van die kinders?

_Deur afsprake te maak en ook deur middle van briefies. Spreek ouers ook toe wanneer verslagkaarte afgehaal word – maar ook hier is ouerbetrokkenheid baie swak._


_Maak `n afspraak met ouers en lig hulle oor probleme in. bv. waar `n leerder gru-taal gebruik het, of dissiplinêre problem het, sal problem met ouers_
bespreek word en saam sal bespreek word – watter oplossing die beste is. Ouers word ook aangemoedig om hulp by Childline te kry en gemeenskap polisie.

11. **Hoe sien u die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?**

*Dit is essensieëel dat die skool, gemeenskap n die ouers saam moet werk in belang van die kind om sodoende ’n verantwoordelik burger aan die lewe van die plaaslike, nasionale en wêreld gemeenskap te skep.*

12. **Hoe ondersteun u enkel ouers by die skool?**

*Enkel ouers werk meestal en probeer altyd om in kind se behoefte te voorsien. As daar ’n problem ontstaan, besluit ouer en leerkrag saam wat die beste moontlike oplossing kan wees.*
1. How do you empower parents to be involved in the education of their children?

Normally, at the beginning of the year, I send out a general notice to all my parents regarding the year that lies ahead, and in that letter I always stipulate the importance of the involvement in their child’s education, to what extent they need to be involved, and also how they can be of assistance throughout the year.

2. In your opinion, how do the mission and vision statements of your school inform your practice to engage parents?

I think to a certain extent, it does answer that, but it could do more to help me in that respect because often parents read that mission and vision statement, they can’t immediately see in that how they can be involved in their child’s education.

3. At your school, do you discuss the vision and mission statement with the parents or do you send it in the form of a letter?

We normally don’t discuss it with the parents. It is something that is drawn up, by the school and the staff, and the SMT. And we would discuss it then into consideration with the guidelines given by the Department of Education and that is introduced and that is sent out to the parents.

4. In which part of the child’s scholastic life can parents be more involved? Elaborate please.

I think where they can be more involved is in being hands on with regards to being knowledgeable about the tasks the children have, the requirements they going to have for that year with regards to task and testing and also simple and basic knowledge that the children should know, so parents should also
become really well-informed about the things the child is going to do during that year and really assist them and make sure the child knows exactly what is expected of them and also if the child has any questions regarding questions and tasks then the parents should also be well-informed regarding that.

5. Why do you think parental involvement is important in a child’s life?

I think it is important because over the year, now in my own experience now, I gathered and seen that parents who are involved in their child’s education in all spheres, are children that normally perform better than those that I know who are not involved, so that is an important aspect that stood out for me in my years of teaching.

6. Are you aware of the South African School Act, which requires parents to be involved in the education of their children? Explain.

Yes, I am aware of it. I don’t know the exact number regarding it but I know it does stipulate in there that our parents are not aware of I and that is why maybe we find this situation where a lot of parents are not as involved in the child’s education or maybe they don’t understand the importance thereof, what contribution they can bring to it, maybe they don’t even realise the Act is part of it or of the school and bringing that awareness to them is another challenge of its own.

7. What do you feel about the current state of parental involvement in your school? Motivate your answer and give examples.

I think parental involvement at my school is to the minimum. I find that in my own class there are about six parents in total who show true parental involvement, because when I look at that child, from head to toe, I can immediately see in that the parent is hands on, from the way the child dresses, to the way the child’s books are kept, to the work that is done, to the
level of answering the tasks and the tests, I can see that those parents are hands on, but that minimum I would like to see increase to a maximum.

8. So the minimum parents, how does that make you feel as a teacher?

It makes me feel motivated, to come to school, because I know through those five and six learners whose parents are involved I get their support immediately or anything that I take on, within the classroom situation, or within the education in general, who would support me, I can see that they are interested in their child’s education they are interested in who is the child’s educator and what is happening in the school in general.

9. What challenges do you experience regarding parental involvement and how can they be overcome in your opinion?

The challenges I experience with regards to parental involvement is the fact that parents don’t realise the important role that they play in the education of their children, until you sit them down and you show them and you tell them abcd this is what’s happening, this is how things has to be done, this is where you come in, then they look sort of more shocked than you are because then they themselves admit they didn’t know that they play such an important role in their child’s education

10. What do you do to empower parents from a deprived socio-economic background to improve their involvement?

Those that do come to the school because you find sometimes I see that the involved parents on a regular basis and then those that drift in now and again are those who are not involved, they come to confront you about certain problems, then I always make time, for them I always sit them down and would listen to them first of all and after that I would obviously have an opportunity to speak and also to let them know because often in our society I teach I find that in that they’re sort of hopeless because in that situation they are financially deprive. They come from an impoverished area, they think that
is the do all and end all, just simply by talking to them, by giving them examples of people that come from our community who have achieved great heights, for them to realise that is not the do all and end all for them or for their child at the school and by them becoming more involved in the school, because the minute they sort of, the parent lacking the involvement, the minute they become involved, there’s a change in the child regarding their involvement, scholastically, his behaviour even changes, because he can see my parent is now interested in what I’m doing so I better now also bring that part to it.

11. **How do you empower illiterate parents to be involved?**

   You know I find that very difficult and very challenging because I cannot pinpoint that I’ve ever experienced an illiterate parent because most of the parents I’ve encountered by speaking to them I do pick-up that they are educated to a certain level. Its not the case where they can’t read or they can’t write, but what I also find that their literacy level is not up to a standard where they are able to assist their child so to empower that parent I always sort of throw words of encouragement for them not to give up because a lot of them want to give up. I can’t even help my own child, because I don’t understand what is going on. Just that gentle persuasion and the friendly demeanour that you have with them sort of make them thinking about it and that would empower them to do something about it.

12. **How do you deal with and motivate difficult parents. Give examples and motivate.**

   Difficult parents, they are always a challenge and when you say difficult then I think on parents who come to you and who have more negative things to tell you. So I sort of deal with them, I try not to deal with them in a negative manner, I always welcome them and I ask them to state their problem, with who do they have the problem, is it with me, the principal, the school, is it with the child? So obviously they stating their problem know where to channel them, to say go here or you must go there, I will assist you then with whatever
challenges you have. And with the school where I teach at you have to be so
careful how you approach them. You have to be so tactful not to explode into
something you don’t want but for me I’m very receptive, I’m very
accommodating because all they want is somebody to listen because the
underlying problem isn’t actually that child or that principal or another
educator. It’s something that comes from home that has now manifested in
that manner so sometimes they just need to take something out on
somebody and you’re the first person they see. So you have to have a very
tactful way. You have to be accommodating, giving that listening ear to feel
comfortable, win over their confidence and then you can see where you can
build to that, then over two weeks the parent tend to come back to you if they
have a difficulty or they have a problem or they just want to chat about. They
pick you out and they say I want to go to that teacher, she helped me, she did
this, so I know I can go and talk to her.

I thank you ma’am.
1. **How do you empower parents to be involved in the education of their children?**

   Firstly, at this particular institution, we have a conference session in which we as a school getting to know and in this getting to know the parents are invited. And once the parents come on an evening set aside and then just to explain to the parents look this is the form the year will take and the other thing is at the conferencing with reports being given handed out the parents must come in before the reports are handed out. Parents have to come in and they have to look at the results across the, having have the ANA as well to compare that seeing that the child is on par what is being done and also to assess them, what the parent, do think of the child and your perception of the child that is key. So these conferencing sessions would be our institutions way of involving the parents and also parenting workshops.

2. **Tell me how often do you have the parenting conference, is it once a term, how often do you have it?**

   Ok it is firstly in the first term- will have getting to know -so that you know it’s a new grade and then will come the progress report, but there are also letters going out constantly should that child show any sort of misconduct or misbehaviour. Letters go out. The message books and whatever else, but the involvement of the parent for e.g. to the core of your question would be that I am an English teacher, a language teacher, a note will be sent out to that child instantly. The child needs assistance to read.

3. **In your opinion, how do the mission and vision statements of your school inform your practice to engage parents?**

   The principal has got a, in the past few assemblies, in every assembly there’s a lesson and so forth for the kids. He always stresses education breaks the poverty and the cycle of poverty which is vital for the kids. They watch
television. Media influencing them so much and they begin to get magical ideas of how they would drive a car one day and just be one day and they’re not in touch with how to go about actually, having a work ethic I would say.

4. In which of the child’s scholastic life can parents be more involved? Elaborate please.

In the scholastic life, with the OBEs proven that the basics, if those things e.g. they stress it, reading, the literacy level, writing because, ok compare the computers are available to children. But then we have other socio-economic problems as well, they might be doing things by candlelight e.g. but at the same time just to reinforce scholastic, to reinforce the reading, send the child home with a writing exercise at first. Especially at the beginning you find the transition from grade 3 to grade 4. There is also spatial involvement there because the child learns to write differently now, so yes and also photocopying books and telling the parents, I will go right back to the conferencing, getting to know conference, where you say look my stuff, those parents meet all the teachers and ok sometimes you’re preaching to the converted, but at the same time you know you get the message out that a story’s been photocopied, we don’t have so many reading books, certain stories are photocopied, the child has reading material, the child gets a maths exercise everyday to do, these are the kinds of things to do to assist the child scholastically, from a teachers perspective.

5. Why do you think parental involvement is important in a child’s life?

Because of our circumstances today telecommunications one, and two, and also the norm now is single parenting, its so scary, with that almost logically it just follows, there is a socio-economic backlog and therefore parental involvement is important because oftentimes parents don’t have the time they don’t realise, because they’re working, they don’t realise the time they need to sit with that child, they don’t, in fact sometimes they don’t know how to help the child and in our institution it goes right back to the conferencing sessions, to the parental workshops, parenting skills, goes like that, that child, I mean
the mother spends most of the time at work and quite a bit of time at school. Who is the babysitter? The television is the babysitter, or going to a friend to do whatever, and hence cover the curriculum see what it is like, educate parents about the curriculum because its vast.

6. **Are you aware of the South African School Act, which requires parents to be involved in the education of their children? Explain**

Yes that is what we try to do and the awareness is there and oftentimes I think some parents think that that I send the child off to school or its your duty, and when the child underperforms it is your, and so what happens is that the parents need to actually know that via SGBs things like that, let us go out for elections on the SGBs, lets just go out for assistance, because of our situation, to assist when educators are absent, taking into account our ratios and also our staff establishment things like that. Oh yes all that would encompass it and fall under the SA Schools Act and it is important that they would be aware of it and ourselves as educators.

7. **What do you feel about the current state of parental involvement in your school? Motivate your answer. Give examples.**

Presently most parents come and they often very confused because of the curriculum there are so many changes. Yes they might show that it is dynamic but at the same time oftentimes we regress, it not progression. It is so vital because the parents are so- what is this EMS? its a huge word for somebody e.g. with a little one in grade 4, they will come back to you and say TGK e.g. what does it stand for and because that intermingling, our cross-cultural and multicultural schooling, inclusivity. We need that explanation, we need to explain more to the parents and it makes evenmore of a demystification which we should be all aware of.
8. What challenges do you experience regarding parental involvement and how can they be overcome in your opinion?

For e.g. we have the conferencing sessions with the parents

Do you have a lot of parents that attend the parent conferencing session, percentage wise, more or less?

I think parents are increasingly beginning to realise and there I quote the headmaster saying again that they should break the cycle of poverty. You know, even going to our mission statement, knowledge is power. Because without that parents realise to want more, if I had those opportunities what would I have not been able to do, instead I've got to go work on the line in a factory and it's just a physical drainage and tiring, that we cannot get to the child and his or her holistic development.

9. How do you empower illiterate parents to be involved?

Due to the fact that we have the parental parenting workshops and being involved to the GM Foundation with what they have to offer courses they have to offer, we need that to speak to the parents so that we can also give back, some parents sit back, just don't know how. I see what does this NS mean, what does this EMS mean, does that TGK mean? So this is where we come in to have more of these workshops in order to explain to them, to give them opportunity, whether you'd write it down, communication between educator and parent.


When it comes to difficult parents, it oftentimes, its poverty, because they are illiterate, and we fear the unknown. That in itself is challenging that parent, that oftentimes just to say look they are understand we know where you are coming from, to reflect and encompass that feeling of helplessness and then
to say now look this is how you would like this little one to get on in life. And to make progress in life and to have what you didn't have because the majority of parents are there. We want the best for our children.

Thank you so much for your time ma'am.
1. How do you empower parents to be involved in the education of their children?

   Uhm I would say by getting them to attend meetings that you have at school and by having a constant contact with them and letting them know what is happening in their children’s education like if they are lacking in certain areas. The child cannot read the parent must be involved so that they can know that they’ve got to send the child to the library and so forth.

2. In your opinion, how do the mission and vision statements of your school inform your practice to engage parents?

   Well, our vision and mission statements is obviously – knowledge is power – and uhm ... Ok ... obviously if we can then get our parents to get more knowledge and understanding to what is going on in the school then we will be empowering them as well.

3. Do you mind if I ask you at your school did you discuss the mission and vision statement with your parents or did you paste it in a book?

   Man, seeing that I am a new teacher at this school, our mission and vision statement is always referred to in the meetings that we have that is as far as I know, because I’m a very short time at this school, so I cant say much on that one.

4. In which of the child’s scholastic life can parents be more involved? Elaborate please.

   Ok, in their scholastic life ... does that refer, come back to discipline as well? Ok that would be the first thing … the parents should be more involved with the discipline and parents should be more involved with er … the children’s reading skills. We have discovered that children cannot read. There is a lack
of reading skills. And to assist parents with that give them breakdowns, tell them what to do, to, for instance, limit the television time er ... and so forth. That is what I would say ... how we can involve them.

5. **Why do you think parental involvement is important in a child’s life?**

   Well parental involvement must be important, if a parent is not involved then that child is gonna feel that he is not wanted, the child is going to feel that the parents don’t care, I can do and please as I like, but um ... and parents should be involved, they must know what is the child’s programme like, what homework does the child get, check the books and so forth, that way they gonna keep the child on track.

6. **Are you aware of the South African School Act, which requires parents to be involved in the education of their children? Explain**

Ja, I am aware of that, of the Act, but have not read it yet, that parents should be involved in the education, because in most instances er ... where discipline is concerned parents are quick to come to the school to inform you of that problem ok.

7. **What do you feel about the current state of parental involvement in your school? Motivate your answer. Give examples.**

To a certain extent you have your parents who are involved, ok and how you pick this up is when you have your class meetings, your parent conferencing. It is always the parents whose children are excelling in their work who will come so you’ll know they’re involved. The parents you really want to see are never around and here you will see it will take you back to the previous question er ... one of those questions where the parents are not involved in the child’s life, ok, to do as you pleases so obviously there’s no involvement or discipline around so the child’s marks won’t be of a high standard.
8. **What challenges do you experience regarding parental involvement and how can they be overcome in your opinion?**

_Uhm … well the biggest challenge you have with parental involvement is er … most parents want to be involved, some want to come and some people are shy to discuss their problems they have at home and most problems stem from how can I say er … Most of the problems stem from a.. a.. a household problem, family problem, and and, they do not come to the fore and it affects the child, so uhm, so the challenges we experiencing where parents are hiding behind certain issues and they do not come to the fore._

9. **What do you do to empower parents from a deprived socio-economic background to improve their involvement?**

_That’s a very difficult question because we both come from schools where I have experienced – teaching at a school – where the socio-economics background is very bad and to get those parents you’ve only got to dangle a carrot in front of them in most cases wor, but I would say, to try to to get them their own er … how can I say? To get their own self worth up, improve and let them know that they are worth something, let them know they are worth something and carry, they can carry that message over to their children, and by them doing that, the children will start to improve in their education and they will start taking an interest in their childs work as well._

10. **How do you empower illiterate parents to be involved?**

_The only way to empower the parents is to get involved, to get them literate, is to try and get them into a reading program, they can overcome the barrier.cos if they don’t then that should explore the barrier then that barrier will go over to their own kids._
11. How do you deal with and motivate difficult parents? Give examples and motivate.

Uhm ... dealing with difficult parents er obviously you have to work within the practices of the school, sometimes you as a teacher your hands are cut off in those instances, er ... the only way to deal with er er ... difficult parents that come and ask you you know in most instances these parents listen to their childrens stories They wouldn’t come with the true story so but you’ve got to have, you always got to have proof of what you are doing in the class, keep your incident book, keep your examples, keep you recording sheets, so if a parent comes to you and say my kid didn’t fare well in that subject draw your book and say this is the reason why there’s his assignment, theres nothing there, that is why I’ve got that and er ... I had an incident where the parent came to me, asked why the child get a level one in Arts and Culture and I could explain to them, this is the reason why. The other thing difficult parents in the school is of discipline problems, you’ve got to have your incident book there.

Thank you so much sir.

Pleasure my dear!
1. **How do you empower parents to be involved in the education of their children?**

   *I give them a task uhm ... where I ask the parents to help the children to complete it and help them with the research.*

2. **In your opinion, how do the mission and vision statements of your school inform your practice to engage parents?**

   *Er… We normally involve the parents in school activities and then through that you'll know the parent better you'll obviously know how to involve them.*

3. **Tell me regarding the mission and vision statement of the school, is it pasted in a book of the child?**

   *No answer*

4. **In which of the child’s scholastic life can parents be more involved? Elaborate please.**

   *Definitely, the discipline and definitely help them with reading.*

   *So reading is a challenge in most of the schools – our learners can’t read.*

5. **Why do you think parental involvement is important in a child’s life?**

   *I think if you care for your child, uhm ... you would be involved with them.*
6. Are you aware of the South African School Act, which requires parents to be involved in the education of their children? Explain

I wasn’t aware of that but it’s nice to know that there is something like it.

7. What do you feel about the current state of parental involvement in your school? Motivate your answer. Give examples. Do you feel that the parents are 50% involved or less, or do you think most of the parents are at school?

Nah I think 50% or less, ja the parents is more concerned about having a job, than looking after their children and because of the times that we live in.

Do you think when they have to work, is it important for families to work?

I think so yes.

14. What challenges do you experience regarding parental involvement and how can they be overcome in your opinion?

Uhm ... I think the problem at this stage is parents ... Uhm ... don’t care about children ... Uhm ... They want to get the children out of the way, put them in front of the TV or in front of the PSP and tell them just get out under my feet.

15. What do you do to empower parents from a deprived socio-economic background to improve their involvement?

I think by getting them involved in school, then they’ll know what we are trying to do, if they are, they know, they can now fuss with that.
Does the school have perhaps a program to teach parents skills or something?

Er, I think at this stage, there is a program busy at the school, uh, teaching the little children’s parents to help them.

16. How do you empower illiterate parents to be involved?

I think they busy with a program on that for the small children, they’ve started at the Foundation Phase. Ja, and the motivation is to ask them to take the little ones to the library.

17. How do you deal with and motivate difficult parents? Have you experienced a difficult parent in your career? Give examples and motivate.

Ja, parents think they know everything and I don’t think they’re aware of what’s going on at school, so most of the time we call them in and say listen this is the situation, are you willing to work with us or do we need to take other steps or other people to inform you of what’s going on?

Thank you so much ma’am.
PARTICIPANT 18#

1. Hoe bemagtig u ouers om betrokke te raak by die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?

_In die begin van die jaar, hou ons ‘n ouervergadering en by daardie vergadering sê ons aan die ouers wat ons as leerkraktes van hulle verwag vir reg deur die jaar._

2. In jou opinie, watter rol speel die missie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool.

_Om ouers meer te betrek by die skool, stuur ons altyd vir hulle uitnodigings of ons roep die ouer na die skool waarby ons met die ouers hieroor praat oor die vordering van die kinders._

_Ek wil graag weet of julle die missie en visie al met die ouers bespreek of is dit iewers net vasgeplak?_

_Nee onse missie en visie is nie iewers opgeplak nie, maar aan die begin van die jaar het ons vir die kinders al die reels voorgelê, maar ‘n visie en missie – niks van die soort nie._

3. In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak. Verduidelik.

_Ouers kan meer betrokke raak by die skolastiese lewe van die kinders by die skool is deurdat hulle as ouers hulle deel kan doen by die kinders._

_Dink u miskien deur die help van lees of klanke of so?_

_Ouers kan kinders baie help met lees en klanke veral hier in die junior primêr want dit is die plek waar ons die ouers nodig het om hulle kinders te help, veral sukkelaars._
4. **Hoekom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe?**

   *Ouer betrokkenheid is belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe want by die skool het ons baie kinders in ‘n klas en as ons die ouers vra om tuis met die kinders te help, sal dit ook ‘n bydra kan wees daar by.*

5. **Is u bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolasties opvoeding?**

   *Ons is bewus van so ‘n wet en ouers moet hulle kinders help in die opvoeding. Dit is wat ons as leerkrante verwag van die ouers.*

6. **Hoe voel u oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool? Motiveer jou antwoord en gee voorbeelde.**

   *Die huidige stand van ouer betrokkenheid by jou skool is – ons verwag dat hulle hier moet wees deur ons na hulle roep, sê hulle moet kom na die skool toe, maar oor die algemeen ek praat nou van my eie klas, ouer betrokkenheid in my klas, as ek hulle roep, hulle verduidelik of vra hulle dan is my ouers altyd daar.*

   *Juffrou sou u vir my nou sê is daar verskil van ouerbetrokkenheid in graad een en graad sewe bv. is daar ‘n verskil?*

   *Volgens my, sal ek nie sê daars ‘n verskil nie, maar my persoonlike opinie is dat by my ouer betrokkenheid is daar, want as ek ‘n kind tuiswerk gegee dan kan ek sien, nee daai mammie het daar gehelp, en ‘n mens sien ook daar by kinders se werk soos die tyd aangaan, nee jy word tuis gehelp.*
7. Watter uitdaging i.v.m. ouerbetrokkenheid ervaar u en hoe kan dit oorkom word?

Ouers ondersteun my in baie opsigte – of dit woekerpogings is of tuiswerk, my ouers support my.

8. Wat doen u om ouers van ‘n agtergeblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter (skool)?

Ouers van ‘n agter geblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid daar te verbeter, ek moet maar vergaderings reel met hulle of ek moet hulle nooi na die skool toe ek moet met hulle praat, vir hulle uitwys oor hulle kinders se tekortkominge en wat kan die ouers dan doen om hulle te help.

9. Hoe bemagtig u ongeletterde ouers om betrokke te wees by die opvoeding v.d. kinders?

In my geval het ek ontdek dat ouers wat ongeletterd is op ‘n baie eenvoudige manier behandel wil word, m.a.w. luister na hulle, en moet hulle nie minderwaardig laat voel nie.

Laat hulle spesiaal voel om vir jou as onderwyser eenvoudige takies te doen deur te help om boeke oor te trek of om na skool te help met versiering van die klas. Verlede jaar het ek in my klas ‘n vader gevra om my klas te verf. Hy het dit met trots gedoen en waarvan ek hom besoldig het, ek het hom verseker hoe ek sy help waardeur het.


Uit my ondervinding het ek ontdek om eers te luister na die ouers se problem want in meeste gevalle kom hulle met probleme van die huis af. Graag soek hulle om na te luister. Daar was ‘n geval waar ek ‘n moeilike ouer na die kantoor geneem het en aan die uiteinde toe ontdek ek die problem was met ‘n
ander ouer in die klas en verbasend het ons twee die problem opgelos. Hulle soek somtyds net ’n oor om na te luister waar hulle probleme kan afpak. Hulle gaan gebukkend met moeilike huislike omstandighede.

11. Hoe sien u die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?

Die skool, gemeenskap en ouers speel ’n belangrike rol met die opvoeding van kinders en ’n suksesvolle gemeenskap. Ons kinders is die toekoms van more en saam kan ons aan hierdie werk die skool maak die gemeenskap uit en moet die gemeenskap dien. As ons drie saam werk sal ons ’n suksesvolle gemeenskap hê. Dit is uiers belangrik dat elkeen van ons, ons deel moet doen vir die opvoeding van ons kinders.

12. Hoe ondersteun u enkel ouers by die skool?

By ons skool het ons baie sulke gevalle en hierdie ouers kan somtyds nie finansiëel hul kinders ondersteun nie, waarvan meeste van hierdie kinders op ’n toelaes afhanklik is. Maar ek het gesien hoe hulle net die beste vir hul kinders wil hê. In die geval waar die mammie werk sal die ouma vergaderings bywoon. Ons skool het nie ’n program in plek nie, maar ek dink tog dis belangrik om hierdie tipe ouers te ondersteun sodat hulle hul plek in die gemeenskap kan volstaan.

Baie dankie Mevrou.
PARTICIPANT 19#

1. Hoe bemagtig u ouers om betrokke te raak by die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?

Gewoonlik vra ons die ouers vroeg aan die begin van die jaar om te kom insit by lesse, en om hul kinders se reports af te haal. Daarom verduidelik ons vir hulle die werklading van die jaar, dat hulle kennis dra, van wat van die kind verwag word, en hoe hulle betrokke kan raak.

2. In jou opinie, watter rol speel die missie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool?

Er... ongelukkig is ons by 'n skool waar ongeletterdheid veral onder die nuwe ouers, die jong ouers, 'n groot rol speel, so of hulle die missie en visie duidelik verstaan weet, is 'n vraagteken ... Uhm ... maar ons verduidelik so ver as moontlik aan hulle en wat ons vir die skool wil hê.

3. In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak? Verduidelik.

Oooe ... in alle fasette, veral in die leerareas, soos les, oooe ... lees is 'n verskriklike problem by ons skool, en as ouers maar net met die kind kan sit, selfs al is dit net 'n storie lees, er ... sal dit baie help.

4. Hoekom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in 'n kind se lewe?

Die kinders se toekoms en ouers behoort te weet, ek meen as 'n ouer rente ingebore is, 'n karakter trek van ouer betrokkenheid, die ouer moet weet wat gaan by die kind aan, as 'n mens weet en die kind sien sy ouers stel belang voel hy baie beter.
5. Is u bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolasties opvoeding?

Ja, ek is bewus daarvan, errr ... – die vraag is - die ouers steur hulle nie aan die Skolewet nie, as hulle err. verwag hulle het iets om te doen sal hulle die kind by die huis los al hulle die kind by die huis los dan moet kinders somtyds die rol as ouer vertolk, dis die problem by ons skool.

6. Hoe voel u oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool? Motiveer jou antwoord en gee voorbeelde.

Die...non-existent. Daar is geen of minimale, baie dankie vir die ouers wat belangstel eer ... 'n Mens kan sien aan die kind se vordering, die globale vordering. 'n Mens kan sommer in 'n klas van 42 kinders twee uitdaal waar jy kan definitief sien waar ouers betrokkenheid is.

7. Watter uitdaging i.v.m. ouerbetrokkenheid ervaar u en hoe kan dit oorkom word?

Geen antwoord.

8. Wat doen u om ouers van ‘n agtergeblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter (skool)?

Kyk ons het ‘n werkprogram by die skool, er er ... ouers word betrek om skoon te maak, broodjies te kom smeer, die kinders, so hulle voel glad nie dat hulle agtergelos is as gevolg van hulle omstandigheid nie, en dit is hoe ons hulle betrek, selfs in onse errr ... klasse dan voel hulle hulle het iets gedoen vir die kind of vir die skool.
9. Hoe bemagtig u ongeletterde ouers om betrokke te wees by die opvoeding v.d. kinders?

Ouers wat ongeletterd is, kan die skool help deur eenvoudige takies te doen bv. om tuine aan te lê, om te help met die voedingskema, om uhm ... die toilette skoon te maak. Hierdie ouers se kinders sal trots voel vir wat hul ouers vir die skool doen.


Eeerrr ... ondervinding speel 'n rol, baie groot rol, uhm ... jy benader die ouer as 'n ouer want jy is basically eers 'n ouer en dan is jy 'n onderwyser, en ek dink as 'n mens errr ... as 'n mens astant raak moet ek al geleer in die ses-en-dertig jaar tot veertig jaar ondervinding ... Om bevoegd af te kom en dan ... dan ... dan ... dan werp jy vrugte af.

11. Hoe sien u die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?

As die drie nie saam werk, tevergeefs, te-ver-geefs, die belangrikheid is die skool, gemeenskap en ouers, oooeee... is een, hulle sé mos dit vat 'n gemeenskap om 'n kind op te bou, dis belangrik, ons moet saamwerk, ons moet hier wees, ons moet maar come to the party, ja, we can make a difference, en as dit die dag gebeur dan het ons 'n perfekte skool.

12. Hoe ondersteun u enkel ouers by die skool?

Uhmm...enkelouers, ek meen sal ek sé die meeste gevalle het ons by die skool, meestal so uhhmm ... we have, ons het 'n er ... er ... in onse setup, het ons 'n afslag bv. ons finansies, en dit is jus die ouers wat uhm ... kom help om er ... af te betaal, fondse in te samel indien daa enige, maar verbasend meer van die enkelouers kom uit vir hul kinders soos miskien nou fondse of
wat ook al. Dan is dit hulle, ek dink, enkelouers het 'n baie groot trots en hulle werk rērig waar saam.

Baie dankie.
PARTICIPANT 20#

1. Hoe bemagtig u ouers om betrokke te raak by die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?

   Deur kontak te maak met die ouers d.m.v. rapportering en om ouers op hoogte te hou van die kinders se vordering by die skool.

2. In jou opinie, watter rol speel die missie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool?

   Die missie en visie van die skool het 'n positiewe uitwerking. Behoort 'n positiewe uitwerking te hê by die skool want er dit is die oogpunt is om kinders er ... Holisties op te voed en en ... Hulle uhm ... Goeie citizens van die sameleweing te maak.

   Sê vir my by u skool het julle 'n missie en visie?

   Ja ons het.

   Het julle dit al met julle ouers bespreek of is dit in 'n boek vasgeplak?

   Er ... er ... persoonlik het ek dit nog nie gedoen nie omdat ons het gmerge met die skool, en op die oomblik is ons nog in proses om te stabiliseer.

3. In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak? Verduidelik.

   In die wat noem 'n mens nou die… die skool, die skoolwerk klink nou so plat, maar … lees is 'n problem.
Is daar spesifieke leerareas wat udink wat ouers meer kan help?

Ja, ek sou dink die lees want dis die belangrikste deel wat ek sien waar die kinder ser … ‘n groot, … meeste van die kinders het ‘n agterstand in die geletterdheid en dan ook die wiskunde.

4. **Hoe kom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe?**

Ouers kan kinders motiveer om beter te presteer en en … deur die kind te help kry die kind daa positiewe er … er positiwiteit teenoor die skool.

5. **Is u bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolastiese opvoeding?**

Ja, ten alle tye betrokke te wees by die opvoeding van die kind.

6. **Hoe voel u oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool? Motiveer jou antwoord en gee voorbeelde.**

_Uhm ... nie baie ingenöe nie want meeste van die ouers er ... stel nie belang nie, en spesifiek by ons skool is daar ouers wat uhm ... met misbruik van alkohol, en met baie ander dinge besig is wat veroorsaak dat hulle nie hulle, hulled eel doen nie in verband met die betrokkenheid van hul kinders nie._

7. **Wat doen u om ouers van ‘n agter geblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter (skool)?**

_Achter geblewe betrokkenheid … agtergrond … deur middel van uhm … kontak deur briefe te skryf na die ouers toe en hulle uit te nooi om te kom kyk of en deur te kom uitvind oor die vordering van die kind so … doen ons die goete._
8. **Hoe bemagtig u ongeletterde ouers om betrokke te wees by die opvoeding v.d. kinders?**

*Meeste van die ouers van ons area is ... ek sal sê ... baie van die ouers, ek sal nie sê meeste van die ouers nie is ongeletterd maar volgens wat ... wat ek ondervind het is is hulle nie skroom om betrokke te wees nie, dit is soos in my persoonlike ervaring, ouers wat vir my kom vra het juffrou verduidelik vir my die sodat ek my kind kan help, as ek weet dan sal ek weet hoe om my kind te kan help, bv. met tuiswerk of wat ook al.*

9. **Hoe hanteer u en motiveer u moeilike ouers? Gee voorbeelde en motiveer.**

*Uhm ... Ek entertain nie eintlik moeilike ouers nie, hierdie jaar het ek ‘n ouer gehad wat uhm kom complain het oor die. ‘n ... sy seun en toe het ek vir hom gesê uhm ... die kind se level se vlak is so, toe sê die ouer vir my dat ek moet meer tuiswerk gee en meer dit en dit, toe sê ek meneer u moet moet u kant ook en u deel ook doen, in die skool kan ek net ‘n sekere er ... Gedeelte doen en dit uhm dit verg van u om ook u hand by te sit of u deel te doen.*

10. **Hoe sien u die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?**

*Die ... die skool, gemeenskap en die ouers moet hand in hand saam met mekaar werk want so die die gemeenskap, die ouer, maak die gemeenskap, die ouer en skool saam werk en en hoë er ... hoogtes bereik en as hulle in ‘n positiewe rigting beweeg.*

11. **Hoe ondersteun u enkel ouers by die skool?**

*Uhm daar word nie gediskrimineer teenoor enkel ouers by die skool nie. Ek behandel enkel ouers net soos enige ander ouer, behandel en ons moedig hulle ook aan o mom deel te wees van hul kinders se skoolloopbaan. Ek spesifiek het baie enkel ouers in my klas wat kom en kom vra en dan kom*
hulle verduidelik vir my juffrou ek kan nie dit nou bekostig nie, want die saak staan so dan verstaan ek, want ek ek ek is altyd positief teenoor hulle. Ek sal nou nie hulle met ‘n negatiewe ding wegstoot nie want ek wil hulle betrokkenheid hê by die skool.

12. Het u dit miskien al ondervind dat enkel ouers net die beste vir hul kinders hê – hulle is altyd daar?

Dit is wat ek eintlik nou wil sê juffrou hulle is baie baie er motivated teen towards hulle kinders opvoeding, regtig waar. Baie van hulle wat ek nou meer gewerk het.

Baie dankie Juffrou.
1. Hoe bemagtig u ouers om betrokke te raak by die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?

   *Ek roep gewoonlik ouers in wanneer ek sien kinders het probleme dan bespreek ek die probleem met hulle.*

2. In jou opinie, watter rol speel die missie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool?

   *Die skool het ouer vergaderings waar daar gepraat word oor uhm gedrag en skoolwerk wat nie gedoen word ensovoorts en ek dink dit is ‘n manier om die ouers te betrek by die missie en visie van die skool.*

3. In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak? Verduidelik.

   *Lees is vir my baie belangrik, want ‘n kind wat nie kan lees nie sukkel oor die algemeen en met wiskunde ook uhm ek sal dink ouers moet sorg dat hulle kinders aan ‘n biblioteek behoort sodat hulle gereeld kan lees om hulle uhm ... Vocabulary uit te brei.*

4. Hoekom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe?

   *As die ouers die kind nie help nie, kan die kind nie; n sukses behaal nie. Dit is waarom dit belangrik is vir ouers om betrokke te wees in hulle kinders se lewens en dat hulle kan wee twat in die kind se lewe aangaan.*

5. Is u bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolastiese opvoeding?

   *Ja ek is bewus van die Skolewet.*
Het u al die Skolewet gelees?

Ja ek het deur dit gelees al.

6. Hoe voel u oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool? Motiveer jou antwoord en gee voorbeelde.

Die ouerbetrokkenheid tans by die skool is baie swak. Want baie van die ouers kom glad nie as jy hulle laat roep nie. Of hulle kom dronk na jou toe.

7. Wat doen u om ouers van ‘n agter geblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter (skool)?

Ek probeer my beste om die ouers gerus te laat voel, en dat hulle by my kom dat ek nie n hooggeplaaaste persoon is en hulle is daaronder nie en uhm ...
Sodat hulle gerus kan wees wanneer ek met hulle gesels en so ook die kinds se werk, dat hulle nie moet uhm ... inferior voel nie.


Ek probeer maar om rustig te wees, nie myself op te werk nie, en uhm ... die ouers met respek te behandel.

9. Hoe sien u die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?

Ek sien dit as baie belangrik want die gemeenskap kan selfs help met skoolwerk, die kinders help met skoolwerk, as die ouers dan nie daar is om dit te doen nie, dank an ons die gemeenskap gebruik.
Op die vraag van gemeenskap, ek sien die skool gaan gebukkend onder vandalisme. Dink u daar is enigsins ‘n rol waarin die gemeenskap kan speel met die verband?

Ja, die gemeenskap kan uhm ... sulke gevalle aan die polisie rapporteer. En as hulle sien daar is kinders in die skoolgronde dan behoort hulle dit te rapporteer aan die polisie sodat die polisie kan intree, as daar dalk ingebreuk of gevandaliseer word.

10. Hoe ondersteun u enkel ouers by die skool? Sou U dink enkel ouers is meer betrokke by die skool as ander tipe ouers?

Uhm ... enkel ouers, in die meeste gevalle ek sê, hulle kom na jou toe, en luister na wat jy te sê het. Hulle probeer hulle beste, ek praat nou van die wat ek nou alreeds by my gehad het en met wie ek gesels het.

Baie dankie juffie.
1. **Hoe bemagtig U ouers om betrokke te raak by die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?**

   *Ek roep gewoonlik die ouers in wat se kinders probleme ondervind in hulle werk en dan gee ek vir die ouers riglyne hoe hulle die kind by die huis kan help.*

2. **In jou opinie, watter rol speel die missie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool?**

   *“n Mens kry gewoonlik nou net as jy die ouers by die skool wil hê, dan kry jy die verkeerde ouers, want die ouers wat hulle kinders by die huis help hulle help ons om die missie en visie van die skool uit te leef.*

3. **In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak? Verduidelik.**

   *Uhm ... vernaam in die letterkunde, moet die ouers baie meer tyd met hulle kinders spandeer, vernaam met die aanleer van die klankte en woorde, en dan ook die sigwoorde. Hulle moet sorg dat die kinders daardie woorde memoriseer en dit ken.*

4. **Hoekom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe?**

   *Kyk, as die ouer nie in die kind belangstel nie, het die kind like er … don’t care attitude. Die kind gee nie om hoe hy in die klas optree nie en hy gee ook nie om hoe hy sy werk doen of hoe dit lyk nie.*
5. **Is U bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolastiese opvoeding?**

Yes, I am aware of that, but as I’ve said it’s a problem to get parents to become involved in their children’s education.

6. **Hoe voel U oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool? Motiveer jou antwoord en gee voorbeelde.**

Soos ek vroëer gesê het jy kry die ouers wat jy nie graag wil sien nie. Probleem kinders se ouers bly altyd weg.

As ons kyk percentage-wise, Sou U dink die ouerbetrokkenheid by U skool is 50% op of onder?

_Ek dink dit is bo 50%._

7. **Watter uitdagings i.v.m. ouerbetrokkenheid ervaar U en hoe kan dit oorkom word?**

_Die uitdaging wat ons tans ervaar, dink het … uhm … die ours wat jy as onderwyser graag hier wil hê is die ours wat nie na die skoll kom nie._

8. **Wat doen U om ouers van ’n agter geblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter (skool)?**

_Wel die ouers word gewoonlik maar ingeroep, en hulle word ingelig omtrent die kind se stadium en ontwikkeling en of die kind nou baie agter is, dan word die ouer gemotiveer om die kind tuis aan te help._

9. **Hoe bemagtig U ongeletterde ouers om betrokke te wees by die opvoeding v.d. kinders?**

_Nee, ek glo nie ons het ongeletterde ouers nie._

    Uhm ... gewoonlik dan verwys ons die ouer, as jy die ouer inroep, die kind se werk stadig is, dan vergelyk jy ’n goeie leerders se werk met die ouer se kind se werk sodat hulle kan sien waar hulle kinders eintlik kort kom in hulle opvoeding.

11. Hoe sien U die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?

    Hulle moet almal saam werk want die skool kan nie bestaan sonder die ouers nie en wat in die skool aangaan veral die invloed in die gemeenskap, wat in die gemeenskap aangaan, beinvloed ook die lewe hierop die skool.

   Baie dankie Juffrou.
PARTICIPANT 23#

1. Hoe bemagtig U ouers om betrokke te raak by die opvoeding van hul kinders en by die skool?

*By ons skool, word ouervergaderings aan die begin van die jaar gehou om die ouers in te lig oor hul rol wat hulle moet speel met die opvoeding van hul kinders. Sover moontlik lig ons hulle in van die akademiese sy sowel wat ouers kan doen om die kind tuis te help met lees of klankte veral in die junior fase.*

2. In jou opinie, watter rol speel die missie en visie van die skool om ouers meer te betrek by die skool?

*Die missie en visie van ons skool is slegs op papier en dit verskyn nie in ons voorportaal nie. Gewoonlik word die reëls en regulasies met die leerders bespreek en selde word klem daarop gelê. Die leuse van ons skool is sigbaar op die skoolwapen, maar min leerders is bekend met die missie en visie van die skool.*

3. In watter deel van die kind se skolastiese lewe kan ouers meer betrokke raak? Verduidelik.

*Ouers kan ‘n rol speel deur meer betrokke te help met sy lees aangesien oor die jare dit uhm … ‘n negatiewe resultaat gehad het. Ons kinders sukkel verskriklik met lees en die minste wat ouers kan doen is om die kind te help met lees en dat die kind sal aansluit by die biblioteek. Wanneer dit by wiskunde kom, kan die ouer die kind help met telaktiwiteite, sowel as met die maaltafels.*

4. Hoekom dink jy is ouerbetrokkenheid belangrik in ‘n kind se lewe?

*Ouerbetrokkenheid is van kardinale belang in die kind se lewe aangesien die ouer die kind die pad moet aanwys hoe om sy plek in die gemeenskap vol te
kan staan. Sou ouers meer betrokke wees glo ek dat ons uitstekende resultate en leerders hê. Dit is belangrik dat ouers meer betrokke moet wees, sodat die kind waardig kan voel en weet dat ouers vir hulle omgee. Ouers kan kinders op verskillende gebiede ondersteun bv. sport, akademie of die kulturele aspek.

5. Is U bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet, wat vereis dat ouers betrokke moet wees in hulle kinders se skolastiese opvoeding?

_Ek is bewus van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet maar het nog nie deeglik gelees nie._

6. Hoe voel U oor die huidige stand van ouerbetrokkenheid in jou skool? Motiveer jou antwoord en gee voorbeelde.

_In die junior fase is ouers geneig om betrokke te wees. Sou jy hulle nodig het, kry ons die ondersteuning maar snaaks genoeg sou daardie kind na ‘n ander fase gaan is dit dieselfde ouer minder betrokke. Hierdie ouers woon selde ouer vergaderings by veral wanneer die kind in die senior fase is._

7. Watter uitdaginge i.v.m. ouerbetrokkenheid ervaar U en hoe kan dit oorkom word?

_Gewoonlik is dit die ouers wat ‘n mens graag by die skool wil hê wat nie die skool bezoek nie. In hierdie gevalle wil die leerkragte graag die vordering van die kind met die ouer bespreek, maar dan is die ouer nie betrokke nie. ‘n Manier om die probleem op te los is om die ouer op komitees aan te stel dan sal so ‘n persoon weet hy/sy het ‘n verantwoordelikheid. Nog ‘n manier, is om uit te vind of die ouer ‘n skill het om dit met die skool te deel en te help waar hy kan (bv. naaldwerk, verf, houtwerk)._
8. Wat doen U om ouers van ‘n agter geblewe agtergrond om hulle betrokkenheid te verbeter (skool)?

In die omgewing waar ons skool gelêe is, werk meeste van die ouers en,‘n manier wat hulle kan doen is om die minder bevoorregte kind te kan help deur middel van tweede handse skoolkler of selfs ‘n toebroodjie te skenk. Ouers van ‘n agter geblewe agtergrond kan help om die skool terrain te versorg of selfs te help om die klasse te vee.

9. Hoe bemagtig U ongeletterde ouers om betrokke te wees by die opvoeding v.d. kinders?

Sou ouers nie iets verstaan nie, kan hulle die skool nader vir help. Die skool aan die anderkant kan klasse aanbied om hierdie ongeletterde ouers te help met kort kursusse. Die skool kan ‘n survey doen en die ouers aanmoedig om kursusse by te woon om hulle selfbeeld te lig.


Dit is belangrik om te luister na die ouer en om saam ‘n oplossing tot die problem te kry. Sou ‘n moeilike ouer ‘n hand uitruk is dit belangrik om die ouer tot bedaring te bring. Baie gevalle is dit hierdie selfde ouers wat om verskoning kom vra vir hul gedrag en in baie gevalle het hulle probleme tuis die oorhand gebied. So dit is belangrik om net na hulle te luister.

11. Hoe sien U die belangrikheid en die rol van die skool, gemeenskap en ouers?

Die skool, gemeenskap en ouers moet hand aan hand saamwerk om ‘n suksesvolle kind na vore te bring. Dit is belangrik dat hierdie drie moet saamwerk sodat die kind sy plek in die gemeenskap kan volstaan. Die een hand was die ander hand.
12. **Hoe ondersteun U enkel ouers by die skool?**

Enkel ouers by die skool styg al hoe meer by die dag en hierdie tipe ouers het ek ontdek wil net die beste vir hul kinders hê. Hulle verwag dat hul kinders suksesvol moet wees. Finansiël gaan dit baie swaar met die ouers en die skool kan die ouers ondersteun deurdat hulle minder skoolfooie kan betaal. Uhm ... die skool kan ook uhm ... die ouers se ondersteuning kry deurdat hulle uhm ... take of pligte by skoolfunksies kan hê. Sou die ouer er ... 'n vaardigheid besit kan die ouer haar werk uitstaal en dit by 'n woekerpoging verkoop om die ouer finansiël te ondersteun.

**Baie dankie.**

END OF INTERVIEWS
APPENDIX J: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

17 February 2011
Mrs CA Hendricks / Dr CF Pienaar / Dr S Mbokodi
Education Faculty
NMMU

Dear Mrs Hendricks / Dr Pienaar / Dr Mbokodi

GUIDELINES TO ENCOURAGE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHERN AREAS OF PORT ELIZABETH

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the February meeting of the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee of Education (ERTIC).

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The ethics clearance reference number is H11-Edu-ERE-003.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Ms J Elliott-Gentry
Secretary: ERTIC
1. Dink U dat U betrokkenheid by U kind te skool is belangrik?

2. Waarom?

3. Wat tipe ondersteuning bied U vir U kind toe aan?

4. Verduidelik vir my wat dit is.

5. Woon U gereeld ouer en klas vergadering by die skool by?

6. Woon U gereeld ouer en klas vergadering by die skool by?

7. Woon U gereeld ouer en klas vergadering by die skool by?

8. Waarom sê U so?

9. Sê vir my meer aangestel U nou so'n belangrike rol by die skool speel, dink U dat die ouers in 'n groot mate die vergaderings byvoen?

10. Woon U gereeld ouer en klas vergadering by die skool?