PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF
TEENAGERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FROM A HIGH
SCHOOL IN PINETOWN DISTRICT

BY

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Parental Involvement in the Education of Teenagers with Special Needs from a High School in Pinetown District

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DECLARATION

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I declare that Parental Involvement of Parents of Teenagers with Special Needs from a High School in Pinetown District is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_______________________  __________________
Nonhle O. Khumalo-Mbokazi  December 2015
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Mrs. Ntombenhle Sybul Khumalo, a true believer in tomorrow, a fighter, a born leader and a peacemaker. The most optimistic individual I have ever known. Death may have stolen you but your values shine on from within. They forever brighten the path of our lives. To you I dedicate this achievement.
ABSTRACT

Parents play a crucial role in the support of learning. The study focused on the parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs in a High School in Pinetown district. The aim as to understand the role of parents in the education of their special need teenagers, thus, an in-depth literature study on different ways of parental involvement was undertaken. The comparison was made between how developed countries and developing countries perceive and engage parents in the education process. The laws and legislations that promote parental involvement were also looked at. Epstein (1995) theory of overlapping spheres of influence was discussed. It is emphasised that learners should be the focal point of all programmes to foster parental involvement and that learners succeed at a higher level when internal and external models of influence intersect and work together to promote learning. Furthermore, Epstein (2001) typology of parental involvement was discussed. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecocystemic theory showed that a strong family and school linkage for the academic and socio-emotional development of a teenager with special needs is important and should be sustained.

Qualitative research methodology was applied to gather data. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants which the researcher thought would provide with rich descriptions of their beliefs. Ten parents were interviewed, using the language they best understood. To better understand how they viewed parental involvement and what were the techniques they would like the school to employ to improve parental involvement. Tesch’s (1990) method of data analysis was used to assist the researcher in reducing the massive data into relevant themes and sub-themes.

The results revealed that the beliefs that parents hold about the school, level of education, unwelcoming atmosphere in the school, limited time availability of parents, lack of support to equip parents with necessary skills to be effectively involved in the education of their teenager learners were identified as some of the barrier to parental involvement. The results also indicated that parents, school and community needed to be involved in teenagers’ education and
development. For collaboration and partnership to take place there should be clear lines of communication and professional relationship guided by trust and respect.

The study concluded with recommendations to develop strategies that could be used for effective parental involvement. The results may assist the school to fulfil its role as a community institution, assist parents to realise their role in the development of their teenagers, promote awareness of the factors that might influence the formulation of policies. However, further research on the topic was suggested.
KEY CONCEPTS

- A parent
- Parental involvement
- Education
- Teenager
- Special needs
- High School
ABBREVIATIONS

DoE : Department of education

DSM-5 : Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

(5th edn.)

IEP : Individual Education Programme

S.A.S.A no. 84 of 1996 : South African School’s Act no. 84 of 1996

S.G.B : School Governing Body

S.A.C.E : South African Council of Educators

WP6 : White paper six
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, schools are required to have School Governing Bodies (SGB) (Khumalo, 2006, p.1) who among other things, encourages parents to provide their services to the school and community. Through this body, parents of special needs children are permitted to participate in school meetings, have rights to have educational options and take part in school programmes. Blok, Peetsma and Roede (2007, p.5), clearly demonstrate that parents who understand the school philosophy are more likely to be satisfied with the education that their children are receiving. It should be noted that there have been regulations of parental involvement in regular education activities. Therefore, parents should be involved in the process of educating their children with special needs. It remains a fact that parents have a unique knowledge about their children and this provides an invaluable basis for the learning process.

Research has proven the effect of parental involvement in a child’s education. Blok, Peetsma and Roede (2007, p.5), found that schools of special needs children having higher level of parental involvement and empowerment had a higher student criterion reference test score. This idea is also supported by Li and Hung (2011, p.50) that parental involvement in children’s education is associated positively with academic achievement, social competency (Patrikakou, 2008, p.1), and school success (Brown-Thatcher, 2012, p.12). Non-the-less much attention has been focused on ways of involving parents in individual education planning for students with disabilities outside South Africa (Rusk & Gerulaitis, 2010, p.15, and Huntsinger & Jose, 2009, p. 390), rethinking parental participation in special education ways of meeting all children’s needs through parental involvement (Dowling, 2012, p. 2), as well as parental involvement in classroom life in rural schools (Khumalo, 2006, p.1).
Little research has been done on the involvement of parents. This indicates a gap and a need for a research focusing on the parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs in high schools.

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

When a research project is undertaken it becomes imperative that a survey of current problems be carried out. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2006, p.39) state that a literature review can provide a researcher with important facts and background information about the subject under study. This is usually done to find out the results of other relevant studies that are linked to the study, which in this case is about parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs in a Pinetown district high school. The researcher has to consider the conclusions made by other researchers about parental involvement in the education of their children to substantiate the current study by acknowledging the literature relating to the topic under study. Doing literature review was vital for me as the researcher, because the researcher would now what others had said and also got ideas on how to proceed with the research.

Parents and teachers have widely varying conceptions of what parental involvement is and the differing forms that it should take. Parents are the first and primary educators of their children. So child development occurs concurrently at home and at school. The involvement of parents emphasises the utilization of existing skills but also necessitates that the school fosters new skills in parents which should enable them to participate effectively in school programmes (Bakker & Denessen, 2007, p. 190). The school carries the responsibility to make parents understand their involvement in education and also how to make their participation effective.

The school needs to encourage parents to become involved in the education of their teenagers. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003. p.7), believes that there is no single formula for involving parents but that involvement is recognised as something that can make a difference and is considered an essential tool for improving effectiveness of the school (Mulholland & Blecker, 2008. p.49). Khumalo (2006, p.15), as well as Bakker and Denessen (2007, p. 189), further
state that parents can become involved in many areas such as parents as an educator, supporter and helper.

Parental involvement in schools is based on the natural right of parents (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010, p.16) to co-educate their teenagers. Parental involvement in schools is significantly related to:

- Improved academic achievement of learners
- Improved school attendance
- Improved high school graduation rates
- Improved teenage behaviour in schools

By this, parental involvement may be seen as the coming together of educational and the social institutions that shape each teenager. This also suggests that the researcher will also look at the importance of family school partnership as a more meaningful method of educational intervention.

In many countries, for example, South Africa, there are laws that prescribe that parents should play an active role in the education of their children (South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996, 24). The government is also encouraging the equal participation of all stakeholders in education. In practice collaborations between schools and parents is very formal (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010, p.1), in a sense that it is usually limited to informing parents about the teenager’s achievements and needs. Teachers of children with special needs often feel that the parents of teenagers are unrealistic and ill-informed. As a result, parents’ desires and concerns remain unheard by teachers and are not integrated into the education process. The improvement of parental involvement has become one of the challenging task facing schools. It is imperative to note that parental involvement requires the establishment of two-way communication, which enables parents to play a crucial role in their teenagers’ learning process.

Many people seem to think that parental involvement has a positive effect (Li & Hung, 2011, p. 501) in that it enhances the individual opportunities of development and success (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010, p.10). It also assists the
educators, learners and parents to know exactly the areas that need to be changed or improved. In the study, the researcher discussed the theory of Bronfenbrenner (Woolfolk, 2010, p.16), which was relevant to the claim believing that it would provide a conceptual framework to explain how and why parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs was envisaged. The researcher also looked at the fundamental aims of parental involvement in relation to the academic performance of their teenagers. Further to that, the researcher looked at the forms of parental involvement in schools and their implications which might lead to a change of attitude and approaches to teaching and learning.

1.2 Definition of key concepts

The following terms are defined for the purpose of the study:

1.2.1 A parent:

A parent is any adult whose role is to guide and accompany the child towards responsible adulthood (Narian, 2005, p. 20). According to the South African Schools Act, 84 (1996) a parent is defined as:

a) The parent biological or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a learner
b) The person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or
c) The person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in line (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school.

For the purpose of the study, a parent shall mean any individual whose role is to nurture and raise a child towards responsible adulthood, and is also responsible for the well-being of that child.
1.2.2 Parental involvement:

According to the South African Schools Act, 84 (1996), parental involvement refers to the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling of his or her child. It can also be described as the willing and active participation of parents in a wide range of activities in this case school and home-based activities. A more holistic definition is offered by Epstein (1995, p4), who maintains that parental involvement includes six types of involvement:

**Type 1:**
Basic obligations of parents covering the provision of positive home school conditions that support children in learning by taking care of the health and welfare of the child and regular checking on the child’s learning progress.

**Type 2:**
Basic obligations of schools covering a range of communication from school to home, e.g. informative letters and communication on the progress of a child.

**Type 3:**
Parental involvement at school in the classroom as well as attending events, for example, parent’s meetings, consultations with the teachers, etc.

**Type 4:**
Parent involvement in learning activities at home, including parent, child and teacher-initiated activities.

**Type 5:**
Parental involvement in school governance matters and advocacy.

**Type 6:**
Collaborating with community, covering resources and services that strengthen home-school links which list decision-making and management, home-school communication, school support for families, family and community help for
schools, school support for learning at home, collaboration with community agencies, and community education.

The parent may also be involved in the education of his or her child through giving financial contributions if possible, help with fundraising activities to improve school facilities, and assisting with school construction when needed.

In the study, any of the six types of parental involvement will be referred to. Please note that the terms parent involvement and parental participation will be used synonymously for the purpose of the study, as they mean anyway in which an adult is involved in the education of the child.

1.2.3 Education

Education is used by people as an instrument of deliberate social change. It is designed to empower learners’ conscious about social skills and to engage them actively in problem solving. Education must relate to one’s life but at the same time should not only be limited to one’s imagination. Education can be defined as the process of receiving and giving systematic instructions, especially at school or university. In the study, the term was used as referring to the process of imparting knowledge, skills and habit from one person to another which could be formal or informal.

1.2.4 Teenager

A teenager or a teen is a young person whose age falls within the range of thirteen through to eighteen (Louw, Van Eden & Louw, 2001, p. 385). They are called teenagers because of their age number ends with “teen”. Unless specifically defined by the researcher, the term teenager, teen, adolescent and youth are used interchangeably. For the purpose of the study, the researcher used the term teenager to refer to a person in his or her teens who will typically be a learner in a high or secondary school.
1.2.5 Special needs

A special need is a term used in clinical diagnostic and functional development to describe individuals who require assistance for disabilities that may be medical, mental, or psychological. A person with a special need can include individuals with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5, 2013, P.59), learning difficulties, slight hearing impairment, missing limbs etc. In the study, special needs were used to refer to individuals with mild learning disabilities which might be as a result of injury or were born with the impairment.

1.2.6 High school

A high school (also secondary school) is a school that provides children with part or all of their secondary education. A high school could be a public or an independent school which enrols learners in one or more grades from eight (08) to grade twelve (12). The term was used to refer to a place where learners obtain formal education between grade eight and twelve.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teenagers flourish, learn and grow in their family communities so it is crucial that parents be encouraged and supported to engage in their teenager’s special educational needs. The idea of parental involvement has become a crucial component in education (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010, p.15. Li & Hung, 2011, p. 503). South Africa is a democratic country; people have a say in activities that affect their lives. For example, to vote for the government or decide on the choice of subject offered in a particular school etc. As schools are calling for more involvement of parents in education of their teenagers, it is imperative therefore that parents realise their contribution in the development of their special need teenager. If parents fail to see their contribution and the value, they add in the education of their children they stand a good chance of not involving themselves in any school activities.

Education White paper 1 (1995, p. 21) and Patrikakou (2008, p. 3) stipulates that parents have a primary responsibility for the education of their children, and
have a right to be consulted by the state authorities with respect to the form of education their children should take and to take part in its governance. Unfortunately, parents of special needs teenagers are more likely to have been struggling learners themselves. The researcher has formulated the following research questions:

1.3.1 How do parents perceive their role in the special education process?

1.3.2 Does a learner achievement level improve through parental involvement for teenagers with special needs in high schools?

1.3.3 Is there parental satisfaction in the opportunities granted by the school for them to be involved in the education of their teenagers with special needs?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Parental involvement is a desired role in the school that is seen to be part of a community. The support that may be provided can assist the school to fulfil its role as a community institution (Khumalo, 2006, p.25). The general aim of the research was to investigate the parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs in a Pinetown district high school. On the basis of information gathered and in order to achieve the above general aim of the research, the objectives were:

1.4.1 To ascertain how parents perceived their role in the special education programmes.

1.4.2 To determine whether teenagers’ performance improved as a result of active involvement of parents in their education.

1.4.3 To ascertain whether parents were satisfied with the opportunities offered by the school for them to become involved in the education of their children.
1.5 INTENDED CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Through the study parents would be able to see and influence how their involvement would benefit their teenagers in gaining academic success. The results of the study could contribute to the establishments of guidelines for the support of parents to equip them so they are able to deal with their children with special needs. This would also assist in their psychological well-being. The educators would understand the perceptions of parents on the contribution being made by them (teachers) thus would lead to a more approachable method being adopted by educators. The study would also assist in the development of effective programmes which could help foster parent’s awareness and parent training sessions which would introduce parents to their new roles in schools. The Department of education would see their role of encouraging the active participation of parents through the use of School Governing Bodies (S.G.B).

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell (2013, p.44), qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of quantification. It can refer to the research about the people’s lives, stories, behaviour and organisational function. It is concerned with understanding the phenomenon from the participant’s perspective (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006, p.287). Thus, qualitative research regards participants as the primary source of information. Since the general aim of the study was to find out the parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs, a qualitative approach considered to be appropriate. This means that, the researcher was interacted with the participants as closely as possible in order to acquire much understanding.

The main study was a case study as it allowed the researcher to focus on a particular group of parents and their views. The case study also allowed the researcher to be flexible within the context to explore the topic in a naturalistic environment. According to Creswell, (2013, p.970, The purpose of the case study was to gain a better understanding of a social issue and to assist the
researcher in gaining knowledge about social issues. The researcher maintained a reflective journal or field notes (De Vos et al., 2011, p.359) and engaged in regular discussions with the supervisor.

Selecting a sample rather than studying the whole population was convenient and inexpensive. The participants were chosen based on the researcher’s knowledge of the participants and the purpose of the research (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p.139). Therefore, purposive sampling method was used. Creswell (2013, p.100), states that purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants according to the needs of the research. The participants were (10) Zulu speaking parents from different socio-economic backgrounds. Details of the participants are in Appendix I. The researcher explained to the parents using the language they understood best for the purpose of the research as well as their required participation (De Vos et al., 2011, p.333). The parents will read and signed the consent form and those who could not wrote giving a verbal consent. None of the parents knew that the other was part of the study and all interviews were done at the place convenient to participants. Real names were not used to protect their identities.

The researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interviews (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 351) in order to get a detailed picture of the topic under study. Since all participants were IsiZulu speakers, the interviews were tape recorded, translated into English then transcribed. During the interview process, “bracketing” and “horizontalization” was applied (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p.82). From this, the researcher will develop clusters of meaning into themes which will be interpreted. Observations will also be used (De Vos et al., 2011, p. 333) as they will provide additional information that would assist in understanding verbal responses (Creswell, 2013, p.172).

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p.101), whenever humans are the focus of investigation, the researcher needs to look closely at the ethical implications of what he or she is proposing to do. Participants were informed about the study and the procedure that was followed. Information regarding the participants’
personal details were treated in strictest confidence, which was communicated before the research took place. A formal request to conduct the study was obtained. All participants were informed about the nature of the study in writing and given opportunities to seek clarity on issues they have not understood. The researcher needed to show respect to the participants so pseudonyms were used to protect their identities. Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p.102) point out that each participant should be given a pseudonym rather than using the participant’s original name.

The participants were also assured that none of them would be harmed during the proceedings of the study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 67) and they would not be compelled to participate in the study (De Vos et al., 2011, p.333), and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were not deceived about the nature of the study and also the findings with the participants.

1.8 FEASEBILITY

The researcher identified the following factors as ones that would contribute to the successful completion of the study:

- The researcher could reach the participants with ease.
- Permission could be sought from the participants.
- Participants would be interviewed outside working hours and within their homes if that did not cause a threat to them.
- The researcher had applied for funding from Senate research funds.

1.9 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

There were no intellectual rights anticipated to arise from the research except for the common copyright matter.
1.10 KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

Research results would be disseminated through harvesting articles from the dissertation and public sharing in journals. In order to reach a wider audience, some research findings would be disseminated through workshops and seminars.

1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One

Chapter one provides introduction to the study, the background, the rationale and purpose. It also outlines the research design and methodology used.

Chapter Two

This chapter offers review of the literature on parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs. Literature both nationally and internationally was reviewed. The chapter would also focus on the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The study was looked at through the role theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Chapter Three

Chapter three provides a discussion on the research design and methodology used to explore the parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs.

Chapter Four

This chapter deals with the representation and analysis of data. Data is analysed and categorised into themes. The themes are then discussed in the chapter.

Chapter Five

Chapter five provides the recommendations and the conclusions reached in the study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Educating a child is not a task of a single person. The parent, educators and learners themselves take part in education. When parents, schools and communities support and encourage teenagers with special needs in their learning and child’s development that results into positive effect not only for learners but on all other parties, as well. According to Altshut (2011), and Schoeman (2012), changes such as providing special education services to learners with special needs at ordinary schools and providing relevant educational support service for such learners have resulted in the inclusion of many of these learners in general education classroom at the secondary school level. Inclusive practices cause educators to require a more parental support in their programmes. Besides, parents have the primary responsibility for educating their children and it is thus, essential that they should collaborate with the educators and their involvement is based on their natural right (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010) to co-educate their children. In as much as these learners are in secondary school, they have not reached their full operational thinking thus they need consistent motivation, encouragement and acquire positive attitude around them to develop ideal self.

Learners with involved parents are more likely to perform better in their academic work (Altshut, 2011; Lemmer, 2007; MeCoy, 2013), attend school regularly (Young, Austin & Growe), have better social skills and confidence (Li & Hung, 2011), adapt well at school and finish their basic education and go to tertiary institutions (Mchunu, 2012). Bronfenbrenner (1974) also believed that parental involvement in schools is related to children’s increased academic achievement. However, effects of parental involvement in academic work of learners appear to differ among racial ethnic groups. People with special needs are at risk of living in poverty and in abusive conditions if they do not have the
necessary skills that would help them adapt into the real world and because many teenagers with special needs do not complete high school education or go to universities. The likelihood of these learners to be dropouts is high especially if the parent is not involved in his or her education (Lemmer, 2007). Parents exercise by far the most powerful and lasting influence upon attitudes, behaviour and academic performance of their children. Much of what a child with special needs will eventually know and be able to do is determined in the home.

2.1. MEANING OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents and family members are the child’s first window to the world. Children begin to communicate at home before they go out to the world. Their parents are the first educators. Because of this, they know their child better than anyone else and are the child’s most valuable resource. Parental involvement is crucial in the child’s development as well as to his or her success in life. What normally happens at home influences what happens at school. In as much as the home or parents cannot meet all the needs of a child alone, the school cannot also meet all the needs of the child. For that reason, parents need to partake in school activities of their teenagers thus, would be assisting in shaping the teenagers’ view about the school. Parental involvement may mean different things to different individuals.

Various authors (Elias, 2012; Mulholland & Becker, 2008; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009) use different terms to define parent involvement. For some it is only associated with parents serving on school governing bodies where the main function are matters of policy, finance and governance. The South African Schools Act, 84 (1996) defines parental involvement as the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling of his or her child. It can also be described as the willing and active participation of parents in a wide range of activities in this case school and home-based activities.

According to Makgopa and Mokhelele (2013), parental involvement is a combination of supporting learner’s academic achievement and participating in school initiated functions. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) believe that parent
involvement may take many forms which may include things such as good parenting in the home, provision of secured and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussions, educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment, contact with the school, participating in the work of the school, and also participating in school governance. Having said that they also believe that parent involvement is further influenced by social class, maternal level of education, status of parent and family ethnicity.

A more holistic definition is offered by Epstein (2001), who maintains that parental involvement includes six types of involvement. Epstein sees it as parenting, communicating with the school, offering their services to the school for free, participating in decision making, supporting learning at home, and working in collaboration with other structures for the benefit of the child (Epstein, 1997, p. 12). Again, it may be seen as active participation of parents in a wide range of school and home-based activities.

For better understanding of parent involvement, it is important to distinguish between home-based involvement and school-based involvement. School-based involvement include activities such as attending school meetings, helping a child choose subjects at school, teacher-parent meetings, school based parent organisations, volunteering parent’s services at school, fundraising activities, and attending events, while home-based involvement includes providing a conducive environment for a leaner to complete homework (Kannapaththi, 2012, p. 32), assisting a learner with his or her homework (preparing for test, projects), engaging a child in intellectual activities, and discussing with the child school related issues. Parental involvement may mean introducing children to hard labour, that would demonstrate the value of education so one day they can be able to be on their own and be contributing citizens of the country. This would suggest that parents encourage and motivate teenagers to do better at school to avoid poverty or being abused by others.

Parental influence can have considerable impact on their children because they indirectly support their children’s education while indirectly encouraging achievement. Parental involvement in the education of their children also has a benefit to parents. Some parents who participate in their children’s education
help educators to monitor and to manage the learner’s educational process in the classroom (Al-Shammari & Yawkey, 2010) as well as outside the classroom in different settings. In this way parents would gain an opportunity to learn about their children with special needs within the classroom and capitalise outside classroom with their knowledge and understanding of their children. Helping parents understand their teenagers would improve the life experiences of them and their children. This would then mean both parties would work in tandem, to encourage and develop students into productive individuals. Teenagers, whose parents provide them with support and encouragement, develop positive expectations and take an interest in, participate in school related activities.

Griffin and Steen (2010) state that the key to increase learner achievement and ensure more equitable in schools is to increase parent involvement. Epstein’s theory of overlapping spheres of influence and six types of parent involvement suggest that learners succeed at high levels when the internal and external models of influence intersect and work together to promote learning and development (Epstein, 1995). The three overlapping spheres of influence in Epstein’s (ibid.) model refer to the family, school, and the community locating the child at the centre. Whether these three spheres of influence interact and influence each other to benefit a learner in his or her schooling process depends largely on the factors of experiences at home, experiences at school, and experiences in the community which come through involvement activities. When teenagers are exposed to these activities by the school, family and community whose only goal is to interact and collaborate with each other to influence learner’s academic success, learners become the winners in their schooling process (Ibrahim et al., 2009, p. 100). Epstein (2001) views the school and home as overlapping and brings about cohesiveness to the well-being of learners in their schooling process, at the same time sharing the same goals and mission.

Learners learn and achieve more when the external contexts in which they live work together to support and enhance academic learning and success suggesting that the patterns of interaction between the spheres should work together, and that would be parental involvement. The common goals of children are achieved most effective when educators and parents work together thus,
causing an overlap of responsibilities between them. Epstein (1987, p.137) in this model of overlapping spheres of influence assumes that educating teenagers could be promoted by policies and programmes of organisations and the actions of individuals in the organisation. This theory (ibid.) also suggests that there should be practices at home and at school that share the same responsibility (see the figure 1 below). According to Ibrahim et al. (2009, p. 1), Figure 1 indicates the overlapping spheres of influence in Epstein's model which is referred to as parental involvement.

![Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence](image)

**Figure 1:** Source: Epstein, et al. (2001)

When the three major players shown in figure 1, that is school, family, and community establish a partnership, the partnership activities will support, motivate and guide the students to achieve success in their schooling process. Each sphere influences the learning process, attitudes and experiences of teenagers in their educational processes. The minute educators focus on teaching alone and parents on buying uniform, the spheres of influence are pulled apart.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) assert that when educators adopt the role of separate responsibilities, they emphasis the specialised skills needed by educators at school and by parents for home training. However, when both educators and parents focus on their shared responsibilities, they support the generalisation of skills required by educators to produce successful learners.
The researcher designed the diagram (figure 2) below to show the three spheres of influence overlapping with the external structure (working together) to influence teenager’s academic performance through parental involvement.

![Diagram showing spheres of influence](image)

Figure 2: Spheres influencing parental involvement

Their combined efforts, therefore, matches the sphere of family, school and community together. Thus, there will be an increase in the interaction between parents, school and the community (Lemmer, 2007), thus, leading to the establishment of school like families and families like school. It should be borne in mind that the six types of parent involvement operate within the framework for organising behaviour, roles, and actions performed by school personnel and family to increase learner achievement. The processes are the ones through which parents involve themselves in the schooling of their children and influence their children’s academic performance and behaviour.

Research shows that there is a consistent, positive relationship between parent’s engagement in child’s education and learner’s outcomes. This statement is supported by the work of Chabra and Kumari (2011), where they explore the effect of parental encouragement achievement motivation of their children. Their findings indicated that there was a correlation between parental encouragement and academic achievement motivation. This suggested that any
nature of encouragement given to teenagers is crucial for their performance at school or in life generally. Therefore, it is crucial that parents be partners in the education of their children and share the responsibility with educators.

2.2 TYPES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Epstein (1995, p. 704) distinguishes six types of parent involvement in the model of parent involvement. The topology includes many different practices of partnership and has many challenges which should be met in order to involve all parents and redefines some principles of involvement. The interaction in these six types can occur at an institutional level, for example, where the school invites families to participate in school activities or at individual level such as parent-teacher conferences. The six types are:

Type 1. Parenting

According to Epstein (1995), parenting is a basic obligation of parents covering the provision of positive home school conditions that support children in learning by taking care of the health and welfare of the child, and regular checking on the child’s learning progress. It involves helping all families establish home environment to support children as learners. Putting this in practice would mean that the school would need to assist families with parent workshops such as child development skills, provide family support programmes on nutrition, health care and other services, provide parent education to enhance employability, literacy, and also support and recognise the role played by grandparents in the extended family as educators.

Epstein (ibid.), further maintains that family environment is crucial in the development of the child so parents need to try to provide space and time for schoolwork at home. Information about school activities should be made available to all families who want or need it not only a few who can access it through meetings or workshops. Griffin and Steen (2010) assert that educational programmes at school should be responsive to their needs and interest as parents perceive them. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) believe that there is no single formula for involving parents so conducting interviews and group activities
would prove effective prior to the drafting of parent involvement programmes so to find out exactly what parents need.

Learning is an experience which takes place both at school and at home. Increasing parental involvement would be a positive initiative. Effective parenting programmes will empower parents with information and strategies for supporting and dealing with the special educational needs of their children. The parental involvement programmes should be aimed at enlightening parents about their participation in the education of their child (Bakker & Denessen, 2007, p. 190). Providing parent education would mean the school has to reach out to parents through home visits or other communication techniques. It is important that the relationship between the school and parents should be conducive to such programmes as educators would have to contribute their expertise.

Parents are the dynamic forces in the development of a child and serve as a continual, persistent, and stable resource for their children throughout their lifespan. According to Ibrahim et al. (2012), when educators assist parent build skills and understanding, parents become involved in higher level. For that reason, parents need to be educated of their role in educating their children. Empowering parents would benefit teenagers as their attitude about the importance of education, and learning would begin with the expectations and beliefs of their parents (Coleman, 2009, p. 459). Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) adds that through parental involvement, parents would gain greater understanding of parenting and confidence on their parenting style, as well as a better understanding of a special need in the teenager’s development and changes needed at home as a teen progress with his or her education.

Al-Shammari and Yawkey (2010) believe that helping parents understand their teenager’s special need is an important factor for improving child’s education and life experiences. Parenting would benefit educators in providing parental training on using and developing emotional and educational support would facilitate educators understanding of their learners and in turn, help these teenagers do better in their social (Patrikakou, 2008) and academic performances (Okeke, 2014, p. 5). Educators would also develop sensitivity to diversity in families and would be able to share their professional knowledge.
Above all, educators would develop respect for families’ strengths and endeavours. According to Al-Shammari and Yawkey (2010), research indicates that learners with special needs achieve positive education outcomes as a result of parental involvement in their education programmes. Many parents need to be emancipated from the idea that the school is the domain of educators.

**Type 2. Communicating**

According to Epstein (1995), communicating is a basic obligation of schools covering a range of communication from school to home, for example, informative letters and communication on the progress of a child. It is about designing effective forms of school-to-home environment communications and home-to-school communications about school programmes, learner progress and behaviour. In this type the school solicit the assistance of parents in helping the school fulfil its institutional mission. Epstein and Dauber (1991) declared that school may communicate with parents through memos, notices, phone calls, report cards, newsletters, conferences or any other mode they may find useful as school do not communicate with parents the same way. Schools vary in form and frequency but what is important is the fact that information sent to parents be understandable and clear to them. Parents should also be able to communicate with the school and it is the responsibility of the school to establish enough opportunities for parents to communicate with them (Coleman, 2010, p. 219). Parents or family members who cannot read or understand English well should be considered (Grant & Ray, 2013, p. 47).

When educators engage parents in the education of children with special needs by using direct one-on-one interactions with them, it causes parent involvement to be meaningful for teenager’s success. Coleman (2010) affirms that letting parents know that their attendance at school events can increase school achievement is important. For example, school plays or musicals are wonderful opportunities for parents to support their children at school. Communication between educators and parents should not always be about the difficulties teenagers face at school but should also focus on in-depth, individualised meetings that focus on the child’s unique needs (Ibrahim et al., 2009). Epstein (1995) further states that a clear welcoming policy may be published and posted
in a prominent place. There should as well be written policies that specify areas for parent involvement. Positive, honest, and clear communication is suggested as the foundation to build personalised relationships. According to Okeke (2014), personalised relationships lead to social support which in turn, is a necessary ingredient to build trust. This trust and support would give parents a sense of belonging and contribute to a positive climate for learning.

For families to become active participants in the life of the school, they must feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to the school staff, and to what their children are doing at school. To foster the feeling of welcome, Padak and Rasinski (2011, p. 296) believe that educators and school authorities may develop a school handbook and solicit parent’s assistance in determining its content. The way in which the telephone is utilised needs to be considered as in most cases parents first contact with the school personnel is over the phone.

Epstein (1995, p. 704), points out that through this type of communication, learners would have awareness of their progress and the actions needed to improve their performance. Good communication means that both parents and their children have an understanding of academic progress and steps needed to improve performance. The issue of discipline in most schools is serious so learners through communication would understand the school’s policies on conduct and their role in conveying information from school-to-home or home-to-school. Parents would benefit as they would be capacitated on how to monitor emotional changes, adaptation, and control homework. Parents would be able to communicate at ease with educators regarding issues they may not understand.

It should be noted that increasing parent’s knowledge and skills, especially in the area of disability and different programmes or options available, help to develop parents’ self-efficacy (MeCoy, 2013, p. 17). Before parents could become advocates for their teenagers in education, they need to be able to accept their child’s needs through new information on the subject. Educators on the other hand would expand their knowledge, skills and strategies (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009, p. 26). The communication between parents and the school should not be
viewed as educators checking up on parents or parents evaluating the work of educators but as providing insight to both the school and home.

**Type 3. Volunteering**

This type of parent involvement involves recruiting and organising parent help and support, and this is done through volunteering. It talks about parent involvement at school in the classroom, as well as attending events (Grant & Ray, 2013). For example, parent’s meetings, consultations with the teachers, etc. Getting parents involved in many school programmes may be difficult at times because of jobs and scheduling problems. Parent involvement at school includes parent volunteers who assist educators especially with field trips (Blok et al., 2007, p. 3), academic work and career related information (Rasinski & Fredericks, 2014, p. 181).

The first step in seeking volunteers is to extend the invitation to all parents. The school may create a parent room or family centre for volunteer work, support and resources. Most schools depend on the help of parents to keep some school activities and events running smoothly. When parents are a part of a child’s education that greatly benefits the child. When a child sees that his or her parents are interested in what he or she is doing at school, it can increase his or her chances of success (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2008, p. 77; Lemmer, 2007, p. 221) and educator morale thus creating a valuable relationship between educators and parents. The school would have to conduct a survey on what parents can offer to the school, how and when. To contribute in making the school safe for learning to take place, parents may volunteer to patrol working closely with the security personnel and disciplinary committee.

A family-like school recognises each child’s individuality and makes each child feel special and included. Such schools welcome all families and not just those that are easy to reach (Epstein, 1995). Recruitment should not be biased, all families should be recruited so they would know that their time and talent are welcomed and valued. Coleman, (2007), believes that volunteering training programmes to help parents and other concerned community members on how they can participate and use their skills effectively for the benefit of the school
and learners. Epstein et al. (1997), supports this point by saying volunteers should be trained on the work to be done and the talent used should address the areas of need for the school and learners alike. Again, there should be continuous evaluation of the school’s parental involvement programme.

The school can formulate a team that would draw up a flexible schedule to accommodate even those parents who are working (Epstein et al., 1997, p. 18; Grant & Ray, 2013, p. 47). It is important to recognise and appreciate the effort parents make to the school. To show gratitude, the school may have the “Volunteers Wall of Fame” where they would display all those who have given a certain amount of time to better the school. Parents would feel welcomed and comfortable at school, and that would boost their self-esteem and confidence about their ability to work with teenagers and other professionals. They would also gain specific skills during volunteering which may lead to more participation in formal educational programmes. Parent involvement through volunteer contribution, either physical or material can lighten the educator’s load significantly. Volunteers help spread the word to the rest of the community. They would tell the good news and troubleshoot some misconception or misunderstanding that may be prevalent.

**Type 4. Learning at home**

According to Griffin and Steen (2010), this type of parent involvement is about providing information to parents and families about school procedures in order to help them augment their children’s academic activities. Under this type, the school would provide information to parents about how to help, for instance, helping learners with homework at home and other curriculum related activities, decisions and planning (MeCoy, 2013). According to Epstein, Coates, Salines, Sanders and Simon (1997), homework does not mean work done alone but interactive activities shared with others at home and the community linking school work to real life. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) are of the opinion that learners need guidance of an adult to complete at home educational tasks, and parents often do not see themselves as adequate surrogate teachers for their teenagers. For that reason, parents need to be trained on how to assist their
teenagers. Grant and Ray (2013) further state that schools need to provide parents with regular homework schedules and content of their teenager’s class work if parents are to be effectively involved.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011), states that parents would have to be actively involved through listening, encouraging teenagers to read, supervision of homework, praising and guiding. Family workshops and training sessions are important to home learning programmes as they would provide opportunities for educators to model activities and for parents to practice using learned strategies. Patall, Cooper and Robinson (2008), state that children do better at school if they get support from their parents and perceive their homework activities as less difficult and more manageable. If the homework is enjoyable learners would not delay to do it and would always do their best to get the correct answers.

Through learning at home, parents get a chance to show their beliefs that schoolwork and learning is important. They show support of what their children are doing and gain better ways of assisting them. Parental involvement is crucial as many teenagers may be lacking self-regulatory skills and in the process of developing self-management and study skills (Patall et al., 2008, p. 1043). Through this type, educators may become aware of many hidden resources in the community, which could be used to enhance their teaching. In many occasions schools are faced with social problems which they cannot address. With this type, educators would learn to whom and how to refer parents and children in need to get specialised assistance.

Although all families may want their teenagers to succeed in school, it is not all families that have the same resources or opportunities to be involved in their teenager’s education. The barrier may be that some children may be staying with grandparents with visual impairments and illiterate. It is, therefore, important that schools understand the demands that exist on families of their learners and work to overcome them.

**Type 5. Decision making**

This type involves parents and family members from all backgrounds as representatives and leaders on school committees thus participate in decision making for instance in school governance matters and advocacy (Epstein et al.,
1997, p. 9) through various collaborative organisational teams. Ibrahim et al., (2012) state that parents must have a say in school related affairs which directly or indirectly affect the schooling process of their teenagers. Epstein et al., (1997) argue that decision making is a process of partnership, of shared views and actions towards shared goals, not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas. Okeke (2014, p. 1) maintains that the views of the parents have been silent for many years and parent involvement was limited to fundraising by parent organisations at school.

In many countries, for example, in South Africa, there are laws that prescribe that parents should play an active role in the education of their teenagers (South African Schools Act, 84, 1996, p. 16). Such legislations have made it imperative to ensure better participation, recognition and visibility of parents within the school system. Parents should have an active structure that is a School Governing Body (SGB) for their participation and leadership. The views of parents should be considered in decision-making. Through SASA, (84, 1996, p. 16), parents are regarded as integral partners in developing a new inclusive system, where decision making and responsibility for outcomes are shared. Ruskus and Gerulaitis (2010) affirm this and state that parents are involved in the drafting of Individualised Education Programmes (IEP) for their special needs teenagers. Through the SASA, schools are obliged to provide information on the new educational policies and legislations, and elections of the members of the SGB.

The school needs to have an open-door policy for talking to parents and create awareness about parent involvement. Epstein et al., (1997), makes it clear that parent leadership should include all racial, ethnic socio-economic, and other groups in the school, and they should be capacitated in being leaders (Grant & Ray, 2013, p. 47; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009, p. 28), so they be able to govern and represent other parents when decisions have to be taken. Parent leaders can provide input into school policies (MeCoy, 2013, p. 5) both at a local and national level. Through parental involvement in decision making they become aware of meeting procedures, budgeting and legal requirements, and develop other civil responsibilities.
Type 6. Collaboration

This type is about collaborating with community, covering resources and services that strengthen home-school links which lists decision-making and management, home-school communication, school support for families, family and community help for schools, school support for learning at home, collaboration with community agencies, and community education (Griffin & Steen, 2010, p. 219; Van Wyk and Lemmer, 2009, p. 28). Through this type schools do not only have a responsibility to shed light to learners and parents but also to other members of the community through forming partnerships. Schools are to set a tone for collaborations, provide an atmosphere between parents and educators, and help all parties gain skills to work together effectively for learner success.

The school may make use of the community expertise in matters like health, technology, business and recreation. However, schools need to be strategic in how they involve different communities. For example, they may have cultural carnivals to showcase the rich culture of the school thus showing the community how they embrace diversity. Epstein et al., (1997), state clearly that there should be a match between community contributions with the goals of the school. This suggests that there should be a link to community activities that support learning and talent development. South Africa is a multicultural country, therefore, it is important to pay attention to the changes in today’s multicultural society and ensure participation of all members of the society regardless of socio-economic status.

Communities that feel as part of the school feel they own the school and as a result chances of vandalism are low. In most cases, parent use local resources to improve their skills and talent. Therefore, collaboration is a better approach. In collaboration, educators, parents, learners and communities work together to share information, guide each other, solve problems and celebrate success. Esler, Gober and Christenson (2007, p. 397) propose looking at the three areas when developing a partnership programme. The first area is attitude. They define it as values and perceptions held about family-school relationship. The second area is a relationship and it refers to the quality of interface and type of
family-educator interaction. The last one is “action” which refers to strategies for building shared responsibility and effective partnerships.

Epstein (2001, p. 4) points out that children are present in all three (home, school and community) and links members of each group together. Schools do not operate in isolation and are built within certain communities, above all, learners and their families live in communities whether far or close from school. Wherever schools may be located, communities have individuals, groups and organisations that care about children, and share responsibility for children’s future. This type says educators need to understand the context in which learners live, work, and play because if they do not understand them that would mean educators are working alone without the people who are important in the lives of their learners. It promotes that learners be looked at in the context of an eco-systemic approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 38) rather than as an individual because that would reduce involvement of relatives, religious leaders and other adults.

Among these communities there would be great awareness of the school’s role as well as community contributions to the school. The process of collaboration with community will lead to openness and development of skills, where the school makes use of business partners (Grant & Ray, 2013, p. 47) and community volunteers to assist in the teaching and learning.

Schools compel educators to continually improve the way they educate all learners, especially those who benefit from extra support and resources to meet their needs and help them become academically successful. It is without doubt that collaboration requires strong and skilful leadership that would encourage participants to respect different opinion and expertise, and enable parties to come to agreement on a common goal. Linking school, family and communities is helpful especially where educators work with learners with special needs.
2.3 COMPARING DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

A call for parent involvement in children’s education has been made worldwide. According to Deslandes and Bertrand (2005, p. 165), parental involvement in high school declines. Developing countries experience parent involvement is different from that of developed countries due to historical, political, social (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009) and economic factors. According to Mncube (2010), not much has been documented about effective parent involvement in developing counties.

2.3.1 Parent involvement in developing countries

Ghana is a country in the Sub-Saharan West Africa. It was the first country to gain independence from British colonial rule in 1957. The first president of Ghana Nkwame Nkrumah introduced the acceleration Development Plan for Education (Donkor, 2010, p. 23) which meant that every school going age child was to have access to basic education including those with special needs. Despite government initiatives, the rate of illiteracy in Ghana remains high and the level of education for those who received it is low (ibid.). As a result of that, parents do not have the education to engage their children in schoolwork or the resources to hire tutors. Many parents work far from their homes often leave their children unattended in the community without proper care. Chowa, Masa and Tucker (2013) explain that parent involvement in the past was limited to monitoring that the child completed homework. However, these days, parents attend parent meetings and recreational events.

In Zimbabwe, the most popular form of parent involvement is participating in the work of the school and attending meetings (Mutas, Goronga & Gatsi, 2013, p. 21). They have the Education Act of 1987 and 2006 which state that parents should form part of the development team to raise funds for infrastructure, recognise and acknowledge the involvement of parents in the provision of necessary equipment, facilities and material for proper implementation of quality education in an inclusive environment (Afolabi, Mukhopadhyay & Nenty, 2013, p. 382). The same can be said for South Africa. According to the South African Schools Act, 84, 1996 (SASA, 84, 1996, 16), parents have a primary
responsibility for the education of their children, and have the right to be consulted by the state department authorities with respect to the form that education should take and to take part in its governance. The White Paper Six (06) of 2001 states that the active involvement of parents in teaching and learning process is fundamental to effective learning and development as parents are a central resource and a primary caregiver of their children in the education system.

Parents are considered partners with educators and other professionals in ensuring appropriate education for children. Further to that schools with learners with special needs have special law ensuring adequate participation of parents (SASA, 84 of 1996, p. 24). Even the South African Council of Educators (SACE) stipulates that educators must recognise and acknowledge the role of parents and keep them informed about the well-being and progress of their children. It is clear though that the government of some developing countries have systems in place which allow parents to share in the responsibility of their children’s education, ensuring the active culture of learning.

Even though there are laws that promote and encourage the involvement of parents in the education of their children, there seems to be a lack of actual involvement of parents in many of the school activities (Okeke, 2014, p. 1; Skaliotis & Epstein, 2010, p. 977). Makgopa and Mokhele, (2013), believe that this lack of involvement is not due to lack of interest, but rather problems associated with knowledge and insight for pro-activity, poverty, single parenthood, poor educational level, limited time availability and fear of embarrassing children. In the study by Karangwa, Miles and Lewis (2010), many children with disabilities who lived in urban affluent families did not have a place in their families. They were kept indoors and did not interact with the siblings or other community members let alone going to school. Karangwa et al., (2010), further state that these parents hid their children because of superstitious beliefs or were ashamed of them.

Children, whose parents were not part of the social mainstream, could not acquire skills to make them fight in the society unless they were taught in school and there was parent support for their acquisition and use. As parents in
developing countries lack knowledge about disabilities as a result chose not to be involved in the learning and development of their child, disadvantage their children.

Parent involvement differs depending on the parent’s gender and educational level. According to Chowa et al., (2013), mothers have a significant and positive influence on academic performances as compared to fathers. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) support this view but also noted that no systematic research has been carried out to determine what type of involvement has the strongest connection with achievement.

2.3.2 Parent involvement in developed countries

In England the council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) sees parent involvement as an obligation by parents (Okeke, 2014, p. 2). There are laws that stipulate that any parent whose child fails to attend school will be prosecuted (Okeke, 2014). Comparing this to developing countries no such law is in place to hold parents accountable for the education of their children. They have a government strategy for securing effective parent involvement which was set out in 1997 White Paper, Excellence in Schools’ (Foster, Rude & Grannan, 2013, p. 7). The strategy includes three elements:

- providing parents with support
- giving parents a voice
- encouraging parental partnership with the school

The three elements are in line with Epstein (2001), typology of parent involvement. In the USA, it was through the parents of children with special needs that the government was able to endorse the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Afolabi et al., 2013). When a child is referred for an evaluation by either parents or educators, special education law states clearly that parents have the right to participate in the process (Blok et al., 2007, p. 7; MeCoy, 2013, p. 6). Developed countries usually make use of school psychologists to ensure that best practices are implemented in order to establish a healthy relationship between the school and parents. After much evaluation, teenagers with special needs have their IEP which is drafted together with the
parents (Ruskus & Gerulaitis, 2010). Public law 89-794 (Morrisette & Morrisette, 1999, p. 2) states that parents are expected to assume an active role in their child’s education by making informed decisions about the evaluation process, and acquire teaching skills in order to extend education within the home context (Mitchell, 2010).

The US data from the national educational longitudinal study, showed that average level of parental involvement appeared to increase and decrease, depending on what element of parent involvement was done (Skaliotis & Epstein, 2010). In as much as the law says parents must be involved in the development of IEP, they are not always involved just like it happens in developing countries. This according to MeCoy (2013), is due to a lack of knowledge, traditions, and experience.

Overtime, parents have become more involved in the education of their children which is a shift from seeing a child’s education as the responsibility of the school. In 2003, in Philadelphia a group of parent volunteers to support their children with special needs started a support group called Autism Sharing and Parenting (Foster et al., 2013, p. 17). Through this group, they were able to provide hands on information to educators and to other parents and advocate for their children (Morrisette & Morrisette, 1999). Through support groups parents liaise with schools regarding parental involvement programs by helping participants to benefit from each other’s experiences.

According to Afolabi et al., (2013), research indicates that parent’s knowledge, concern and contribution to their child’s education shapes a child towards appreciating schooling, at the same time, prompt him or her to embrace positive behaviour). Schools and government agencies must fashion out different tactics and programmes that embrace families as equal partners in education.

2.4 BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents do not usually get involved in school activities and this is evident in poor attendance of parent’s meetings, inability to control learners support material issued by the school to their children, and failure to request feedback on the
progress of their children during the course of the year. Many parents encounter problems to participating in their children’s education. The problems they may experience may range from unwelcoming atmosphere in the school (Maphanga, 2006, p. 36), low level of education (Chabra & Kumari, 2011, p. 74), time availability (Nojaja, 2009, p. 79), language barrier (Keane, 2007, p. 3), a negative attitude towards parents (Anfara & Mertens, 2008, p. 61) to poor communication lines (Decker, Decker & Brown, 2006, p. 8). Social class, economic status, race and religion of parent may influence how one participates in the school (Roll-Pettersson, 2007, p. 335).

Parents of children with special needs experience greater stress and a larger number of caregiving challenges, such as, more health problems, greater feelings of restriction, and high level of parental depression than those of non-special needs children. So when considering parent involvement, it should be that the severity of a learner's disability may directly impact parental time, responsibilities and energy.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011), noted that family circumstances may act as a barrier to parent involvement. For example, single parents or large families may find it difficult to be involved because of caretaking responsibilities. Further to that, working conditions may also present obstacles. Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) are of the opinion that parents who are poor may not have time or energy to participate in the school activities. Many African parents work far from their homes. They leave early for work and come back late in the evening exhausted, and some only come home during weekends and month ends. By the time these parents get home they do not have the energy to assist their children with homework or even listen to school related stories.

In the work of Bae-Suh (2012), on parental involvement of parents in Korea, the researcher found that time conflict was the top reason for parents not being able to frequently participate in parental involvement events for their children. Okeke (2014) points out that many parents have many commitments and find it difficult to juggle and manage the multiple demands on their time and resources.

Those parents with low wage jobs find it difficult to request time off from work to attend school meetings for the fear of losing their jobs. Above all, Coleman
(2007) states that these parents may feel alienated, helpless and intimidated by all what the school represents as a result decides not to involve themselves in school activities. Grant and Ray (2013) point out that low income families are not always not interested in their child’s education, but it was their uncertainty over how they could be involved in the education system, particularly when work hours made it difficult for them to attend school events during the day or help with homework at night.

Schools that do not have bilingual staff also contribute to barriers. A parent who does not speak English would find it difficult to communicate with educators. If parents and educators cannot communicate by using the same language, parents would find that enabling to communicate their wishes, fears and anxieties and chose not to form part of any school; programmes.

Many parents have high expectations of schools since they perceive education as a vehicle to social mobility. However, they are not familiar with the system being used in schools and they do not know their role in the process. Parents see themselves as having a role at home to provide food and buy textbooks, and expect educators to take full responsibility at school. They see a school as an expert rather than a partner (Nojaja, 2009, p. 58). This is supported by Ruskus and Gerulaitis (2010), when they say parents of children with special needs hold educators in high regard and prefer to defer decision making to them. Parents do this because they trust educators as experts to make critical decisions in the best interest of a child.

One cannot stress enough the importance for parents to see their role in the education of their children. They need to be made to understand how education at home serves as a foundation for education at school. Parents who see their role as simple paying for the child’s education would not participate in other educational programmes. Again, the belief that parents have in their own ability to help their children succeed at school is also important. Parents who do not believe that they have the ability to help their children are likely to avoid contact with the school because of their own views that such involvement would not bring about any positive outcomes for their child. For example, parent lack of
self-confidence may be linked back to language of instruction, where parents may fear that would not be able to communicate appropriately with educators.

Parent’s level of education may be a determining factor in their involvement in the school (Chabra & Kumari, 2011, p. 74) as that would influence their views on whether they have sufficient skills or knowledge to engage in different aspects of their child’s education. Some parents who are not educated do not always see the value of education to a child with special needs. Nojaja, (2009), shows that parents who have a high standard of education and high level of socio-economic status than educators, make educators feel inferior and as much educators become hesitant to encourage their involvement.

MeCoy (2013), claims that parents are the most consistent individuals in the lives of their children and have a major impact on their development and education. Because of this they know their child better than any other person and are their child’s valuable asset. This says a poor or limited personal education might leave a parent lacking confidence, competence (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003, p. 44) and a vision in supporting their own child (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005, p. 164). This also points to the fact that parents are unsure of their responsibility, and how and why they can be involved in school activities. Parents require guidance so that they are empowered to participate in school activities.

Some parents may believe that it is not their role to help children with their homework as may want to leave that to educators since they hold university degrees. Feeling that they have inadequate education may cause them not to partake in their child’s educational programmes (Roll-Pettersson, 2007) especially if the school is a high school where work is much harder. These parents with low-efficacy would avoid school because they would perceive that their involvement would not produce positive outcomes for them or their children. This would be a barrier even though the ability to support a child does not solely rest on the educational level of a parent.

According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011), many parents hold a view that children’s intelligence is fixed and that school achievement is mainly due to children being lucky enough to have a high ability as a result they do not see a
point in getting involved in their education. They believe that children’s innate ability will set a limit on their achievement so that such things as encouraging children to do their homework or attend parent-educator meetings at school are seen as a waste of time and energy. Parents would also regard their children as more educated than them so they think they should take responsibility for their educational decisions. As parents may hold a view that their child is intelligent and finds that educators hold the different view, parents in this situation may lose confidence in the school and pull back. This may even lead to conflicts between the school and parents. According to Grant and Ray, (2013), if educators are to deliver negative information to parents it would be likely to be received well when educators communicate that they are genuinely interested in working together with parents in helping the child succeed.

When parents feel that their involvement is not valued by the school they are less likely to involve themselves. That is why Epstein (2001) believes that parents are most effectively involved when encouraged. Therefore, parent’s perceptions of invitation from the school are crucial. Schools which are not welcoming to parents do not usually get effective parent involvement. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) further state that parents see high schools as large bureaucratic organisations which are not welcoming to them and that is, usually, the reason why there is less parent involvement in high schools than in primary schools. It is noted that unhealthy school climate also discourages parents from being involved.

Educator’s attitudes toward parents play an important role. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009, p. 27) postulate that the involvement of parents in high schools becomes productive if they are directly invited in a sensitive and professional manner. As pointed by Esler et al., (2002) that the quality and type of interaction that exist between parents and educators, compared to primary schools, high school educators do less to encourage and promote parent involvement which could stem from the attitude the high school educators may have on parents. Roll-Pettersson (2007) proclaims that educators need to remember that schools are an extension of home.
The negative relations at the school would lead to an unfriendly climate that reduces the likelihood of parent involvement (Keane, 2007a, p. 2). Maphanga (2006) states that if parents had negative experiences in their own schooling days, they would already have formed negative views about the school as a result would not like to form part of any schooling activities. For example, if as a child one was humiliated or bullied he or she would not like to set foot at school.

Deslandes and Bertrand (2005) posit that parental involvement decrease as children grow older more so because adolescents are less keen about parents going to class trips as they want to be independent of their parents. Non-the-less, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) are of the opinion that adolescents still need their parents as are still considered to desire and benefit from their parents being involved in helping than helping with homework, ask parents idea for projects and decisions about subject choices. The assumption is that parents tend to think that adolescents do not want them to be involved in their education or are old enough to complete their homework without their assistance, and then parents decide to stay away from participating in their educational activities. The involvement of parents is important and in drafting and implementing IEP, parents are needed (MeCoy, 2013) and their involvement would encourage other parents of special needs to be involved.

Decker, Decker and Brown (2007) note that communication in high school tends to be a one sided power relation. When a family is contacted, it is because their child has a misconduct. Children associate parent’s visit to schools with their disciplinary situations or with their poor academic performance. Parents may wish to be involved in school activities but would not know how (Nojaja, 2009, p. 17) and nobody bothers to equip them with basic skills necessary for that concept.

It is not always schools that can encourage parent involvement. Children can also influence their parents to be involved where they act as active agents. Students are the key to successful school and family partnerships. Epstein (1995, p. 702), explains that “The unarguable fact is that students are the main actors in their education, development, and success in school.” Children may do
this through informing parents about their day at school or even inviting them to assist with school projects.

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) believe that children may chose not to involve parents as they see themselves as autonomous and with right to some privacy. These children usually feel embarrassed to see their parents at school (Nojaja, 2009). This point is supported by Desforges and Lafaele (2003) when say that some children see parent involvement as a private matter that should not be mixed with their peers and educators. They see school as their domain. In other cases, children may not choose to involve their parents because they are simply trying to save them stress from a long hard day at work. It may be true that adolescents might perhaps insist on greater autonomy, but parents and educators need to actively collaborate in order to create a safe haven in which the teenager can be autonomous, yet not fare poorly in school.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) also state that there is sometimes a problem with parent involvement when parents of child with special needs require that a child achieve more than what he or she can and when the school wants more support from the parents than they could possible give. Because parents do not have time, energy or are illiterate, they do not encourage the climate of learning at home. For example, parents do not set good examples by reading for pleasure and in many homes there are no extra learning materials available.

Parents care very much about education of their children. The negative perceptions of parents persist because Schools of Education have not adequately equipped educators to understand and network with parents (Keane, 2007). Epstein and Sanders (2006) affirm this argument by stating that there is a lack of educators’ preparation to work with learners’ families and communities to support their learners. Apparently, very little if any training is given to educators to prepare them to work with parents and other adults. Educator training on parental involvement can assist educators in changing parent’s perceptions which is limited to collecting progress reports. According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004), their training should include how to communicate with parents both verbally and in writing.
Educators may be reluctant to involve parents for the fear that parents may question their professional competence. Research also demonstrates that educators hesitate to involve parents because of time investment required and the absence of external rewards for efforts to involve parents (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). Blok et al., (2007) believe that educators may have mixed feelings about parent involvement, especially when this means that they are subject to critical scrutiny and pressure to produce good results. Working with teenagers with special needs requires a high level of expertise as are often special resources and modified learning materials, so misunderstanding can easily arise between the school and parents. The school would think that parents are expecting too much (Li & Chung, 2011) given their child’s abilities as a result there would be no collaboration. Mutual lack of respect between educators and parents could act as a barrier.

Schools are often very quick to conclude about why parents are not participating in their child’s educational activities but forget that educators may be the reason (Keane, 2007). Both parents and educators sometimes misinterpret parent’s right in the education of their children, hence, involvement at times shakes the authorities of the school. Kannapathi (2012), states that educators are reluctant to allow parents to assume decision making role and school governance because they feel like they are intruding in their domain. Nojaja (2009) also supports this point and states that some educators view the involvement of parents as another form of policing educators in their jobs. It should not be forgotten that parents may at times choose not to be involved in other school activities of their child in order to sustain their parental effectiveness to maintain a balance commitment to other members of the family.

2.5 IMPLICATIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Learner’s attitude improves when parents are actively involved and as parents become involved in the education of their children, more children benefit. For example, according to Mncube (2012), when high schools conduct workshops on post-secondary planning, more parents respond by discussing higher education opportunities and career plans with their children. Ibrahim et al.,
(2012), state that when educators communicate clearly with parents about late coming and absenteeism policies and how school attendance impact on performance, school’s average attendance improves and absenteeism decreases. According to Chabra and Kumari (2011), parental involvement, and family communication help to motivate children’s higher aspirations.

The value that parents attach to education affects the adolescent’s attitude to school and eventually affect their motivation for success in school (Kannapathi, 2012). As a result, leaners whose parents are more involved in their school life and attend more school activities have higher educational aspirations (Coleman, 2007, p. 459) and parent child communication improves (Nojaja, 2009, p. 54).

As parents participate, they develop a better understanding of their child’s strengths and weaknesses (Morrisette & Morrisette, 1999). Their involvement affords them an opportunity to view their child in a different context. The involvement of parents would also assist school psychologist with the family and educational history that impacts the child’s present learning situation for better drafting of IEP. Further to that, children whose parents are involved are more successful at all levels (Okeke, 2014). When parents show an interest in their children’s education and have high expectations of their performance they promote the attitude forming the key to achievement (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009). Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) are of the opinion that if parents are involved in the education of their children it would raise not only achievements but will change their self-concept for the better. Roll-Pettersson (2007), shows that when educators make parent involvement a part of their teaching practice, parents increase their interaction with their children at home and feel more positive about their own abilities to help their children.

Above all, parents would begin to appreciate their roles, strengthens social networks, personal efficacy and are encouraged to improve their level of knowledge in relation to their child. Further to that, they may develop a positive attitude about the school and school personnel (Nojaja, 2009). Epstein and Dauber (1991), also assert this view and state that parents would begin to rate educators highly. In this way parents may be utilised as a link to partner with businessmen, agencies, and cultural institutions in the community (Coleman,
2007). This would mean the school is sharing the responsibility to promote a teenager's growth with another expert.

2.6 BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOSYSTEMIC THEORY

This theory considers the influence on the child’s development within the context of the complex of relationships that form his or her environment (Lewthwaite, 2014). This theory suggests that a child’s development is the product of variety of critical dimensions, including, process, time and the individual’s personal attributes. It suggests that the construction of development and the multi-system layers of the environment influence the development of a child. This theory also suggests that parents have a significant influence on the education of their children (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). It considers an individual typology (Lewthwaite, 2014), his or her setting and the way in which individual and external forces interplay to influence development. According to Grant and Ray (2013), an individual is seen as part of a system and cannot be isolated from the different context. It emphasis the quality and context of the child’s surroundings and considers family influences as very powerful in producing change. Ibrahim et al., (2009), explains that the Eco-systemic theory comprises of the five environmental systems that range from close interpersonal interactions to broader based influences such as culture, law and so on. The development of a child is seen as happening within the microsystem, Mesosystem, exosystem, and macosystem of which all four interact with the Chronosystem. The five systems are shown in the diagram below:
This theory clearly explains that a child cannot live or learn in isolation from family, school or community, that is why, it is important that there is a link between the layers of the environmental system. The most important system children are a part of is their family as it has long recognised that parents are the child’s first teacher and that the home serves as the first classroom. Parents are the most consistent individuals in the lives of their children and have a major impact on the child’s development and education.

2.6.1 The microsystem

This is the first level and is called microsystem. The microsystem is the direct contact in a child’s world (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39). This may include family, friends, educators, day care groups, neighbours and other people one has a direct contact with. The face to face interactions that the child has with the people in his or her home, school, and community will have a strong influence on the child’s growth and development (Grant & Ray, 2013, p. 38). This theory state that people are not mere recipients of the experiences they have where they are socialising with other people in the microsystem environment.

Bronfenbrenner (1979), states that the interactions at this level happen in two ways. That is, child towards a parent. A child’s parent has an influence on his or
her beliefs and behaviour, but a child can as well influence the parents’ beliefs and behaviour and it is called bi-directional influence. They have their strongest influence on the child. Parent involvement at school promotes connections between adults in two of the child’s primary microsystem. Through a child, both parent and educator can understand the skills they require in order to bridge the gap that exists between them to form collaborations for the benefit of the child.

There should be valuable communication between the child, parent and educators at which the educational progress and problems of the learners can be discussed openly and freely. This can happen when a child informs a parent about his or her school day and invite them to assist in his or her school projects. Parents have an opportunity to become involved in the education of their children through discussing general school matters with the child and they can support educators by being co-operative, and appreciate the attempt made by educators in order to assist the child in his or her education. There should be on-going interaction between the parent and educators. It is the responsibility of all parties to educate an adolescent on norms and values of the society.

2.6.2 The Mesosystem

The Mesosystem involves the relationships between the microsystems in one’s life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). This means that it includes the influences of all relationships or links that exist in the microsystem. One’s family experiences may be related to his or her school experiences, so a Mesosystem is a system of microsystem. The quality of the different relationships or the degree of connectedness that a teenager has with individuals in the microsystem forms the mesosystem level (Grant & Ray, 2013, p. 39). The influence factors have to go in the same direction. If the teenager is not being supported by the parents in his or her education, he or she may have a low self-esteem and a low chance of developing a positive attitude toward school. As a result, the child may feel awkward in the presence of peers and resort to drop-out or withdrawal from a group of classmates (Lemmer, 2007, p. 220). A teenager who has a thin Mesosystem with few positive relationships will have little support for learning and development, while a teenager who has a rich Mesosystem with strong, nurturing relationships will have many resources for school achievement.
2.6.3 The exosystem

The exosystem is the setting in which there is a link between the context where in, the person does not have any active role, and the context where in, he or she is actively involved (Grant & Ray, 2013, p.39; Harkonen, 2007, p.11) but nonetheless, influence a teenager. A teenager here would be influenced by the parents who have proximal relationships with his or her in the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). If parents have aspirations for their children, they would make an attempt not to disappoint their children by striving to make time for their children’s education. If the parents working hours permit them to participate in their child’s education, the child would perform better at school. Many times a parent’s workplace may require the parent to work more hours, giving less time for the children to spend with the parent and negatively affect the teen's life.

2.6.4 The Macrosystem

The Macrosystem is a setting, culture, lifestyle, and resources of an individual and even an ideology. This level may include the influence of race, ethnicity, language, religion and geographic locations. Harkonen (2007) says this system also involves the dominant socio-economic status of the person or his family). Okeke (2014) states that parent with the type of culture aligned to the school would be at a greater advantage to participate in school activities. According to Harkonen (2007), it can be thought of as a blueprint for particular culture other broader social context. The behavioural and conceptual models that are a characteristic of this layer are transferred from one generation to another by the means of different cultural institutions like family, school, church etc. (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Therefore, it holds inside it the cultural values traditions and laws. If the culture says teaching children is the responsibility of educators because they are trained to teach then that culture would not help educators in their effort to involve parents in the education of their children (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). By changing the belief that educators are the only ones responsible to teach children would mean everyone participate in educating a child on social norms and values.
2.6.4 The Chronosystem

It is about the transition and shifts in one’s lifespan. It suggests that the interaction between systems and their influence on an adolescent development are all crossed by development time frames. Each historical time influences the generation growing up in that time. The family in which an adolescent comes from is in the process of development itself. As parents get involved in the education of their children, they learn new things about their children which help them to grow and develop, and their development will automatically interact with their children’s stage of development (Narain, 2005, p. 19). This layer may cover either a short or a long period of time.

2.7. SUMMARY

Parents play an important if not critical role in educating and supporting their children. They are first and foremost parents, with all the rights and responsibilities of their roles, but they are sources of information, partners in designing and implementing programmes for their children as supported by Keane (2007). Even Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart, Kutching and Eloff, (2005), believe that positive involvement of parents facilitates the education of a child with barriers, through communication, commitment, equality and respect for successful relationship in a school. Teenagers learning and development are strongly influenced by their family experiences and involvement in their education. Parent involvement is a process by which parents and educators work and learn together. Schools need to consider that parents face problems and they need to work with parents to overcome these barriers. It seems both developing and developed countries have prescribed statutory duties and guidance about various roles and responsibilities concerning parent involvement in education. All what is left is for schools to encourage that collaboration.
3.0 INTRODUCTION

All research work is based on some underlying philosophical assumption about what constitutes a valid research and which methods are appropriate for the development of knowledge in a particular study. Therefore, this chapter discusses the philosophical assumptions and the design strategies of the current research study. It will also relate the methodological choices to the research question and purpose of the current study. Furthermore, it will provide a detailed account of the data collection, data analysis method and interpretation procedures used. In conclusion, the ethical procedures and quality criteria followed in conducting this study will also be discussed.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Breakwell, Hammond, Schaw and Smith (2006), the researcher needs to formulate research questions so as to ensure, during the course of planning, that the data which is collected will actually address the research questions which are of interest. Research questions are important because they guide the research processes (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009, p. 10). Breakwell et al., (2006, p. 250) believe that the researcher needs to allow the research question to act as a prism through which the researcher can view the data collection. A qualitative research project usually begins with general overall areas of investigation. For example, factors influencing learner achievement in high schools or the reason why parents take their children to private schools. For this research to proceed it was crucial that the researcher becomes more precise and for that reason the researcher formulated the following research questions as a guide in realising the objectives of the research:
3.1.1 Was there parental satisfaction in the opportunities granted by the school for them to be involved in the education of their teenagers with special needs?

3.1.2 Did a learner achievement level improve through parental involvement for teenagers with special needs in high schools?

3.1.3 How did parents perceive their role in the special education process?

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Parental involvement is a desired role in the school that is seen to be part of a community. The support from parents that may be provided can assist the school to fulfil its role as a community institution (Khumalo, 2006, p.25). The general aim of the research is to investigate the parental involvement in the education of their children who are at teenage level with special needs in a Pinetown district high school. The researcher aimed to investigate how parents carried out their parental duties, as well as investigate the attitude and behaviour of parents in relation to helping their teenagers with schoolwork. On the basis of information gathered and in order to achieve the above general aim of the research the objectives were:

3.2.1 To ascertain whether parents were satisfied with the opportunities offered by the school for them to become involved in the education of their children.

3.2.2 To determine whether teenagers’ performance improved as a result of active involvement of parents in their education.

3.2.3 To ascertain how parents perceived their role in the special education programmes.
3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Research paradigm

Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima and Haider (2011, p.2083) define a paradigm as an essentially worldview, a whole framework of beliefs, values and methods within which research takes place. A paradigm implies; a systematic scientific and academic ideas. Therefore, it is within this worldview which the researcher worked. Creswell (2007, p.16), defines a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide action. While Lincoln and Guba (2005, p.7), define it as a way of looking at the world. The researcher tries to understand phenomena through the meaning that people give to them as will be focusing on the human sense making as the situation emerge. Lincoln and Guba (2005, p.8), classify research paradigm into four philosophical categories as post-positivism, constructionism, transformative and pragmatic.

The constructivism as it has phenomenological approach was seen as ideal for the study as trying to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge. Constructivism is closely related to interpretivism. As interpretivism often addresses essential features of shared meaning and understanding whereas constructivism extends this with knowledge as produced and interpreted. In the context of the study, individuals constructed their own knowledge and understanding within their socio-economic context influenced by their prior knowledge and understanding. For the purpose of the research the interpretive paradigm shaped and informed the practice of this study.

Interpretive paradigm assumes that meaning is socially constructed and that knowledge is gained through language and shared meaning. In this paradigm, there are no correct or incorrect theories but the data is interpreted according to how interesting it is to the researcher and is underpinned by observations and interpretation. Bhattacherjee (2012, p.19), points out that people’s actions can be better understood in terms of the complex situation in which they find themselves. In the study that would refer to participants who had to assist their children with special needs in their education. It stresses the need to put analysis in context by understanding the world as it is from subjective experience of the individual.
The researcher entered into the world of individuals, attempting to understand it from within, as a result the researcher saw best to study an individual as a whole and took the context into consideration to produce a rich description of an individual case rather than predictive generalisation. In this way the authenticity of experiences could be retained. As the researcher worked directly with participants to understand and build a view on their involvement in the education of their children with special needs, also wanted to make sense of the participant’s feelings, experiences as they happened in the real world. The researcher was supported by Moriarty (2011), and Lincoln and Guba (2005) when they state that this paradigm centres on the way human beings make sense of their subjective reality and ascribe meaning to it.

The participants in this research speak isiZulu but they have different beliefs and values. The researcher acknowledges that fact and that is why the study was not about generalised conclusions about the population but to provide a rich description of the meaning they made of their experiences. Again, the research paradigm reflected on people’s beliefs about the world they lived in and wanted to live in. This would therefore show how parents perceived and experienced their involvement in school and what are the programmes they would like to see employed to equip them to better assist their teenagers.

3.3.2 Qualitative research methodology

A qualitative research is unlike a quantitative research in that it does not make the same type of production, even though in both questions and methods are linked. Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural science to study natural phenomena and presents statistical results represented by numerical data while qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. According to Creswell (2013, p.44), qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of quantification. It can refer to the research about the people’s lives, stories, behaviour and organisational function. It is concerned about understanding the phenomenon from the participant’s perspective (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006, p.287). Since the general aim of the study was to find out the parental involvement in
the education of teenagers with special needs, a qualitative approach was considered to be appropriate. According to Creswell (2012, 534), neither of these methods is better than the other, it depends on which needs to be decided by the context, purpose and nature of study as some researchers use both methods. Qualitative research regards participants as the primary source of information. The researcher used the qualitative research methodology because it had more to offer when the researcher needed to explore participant’s feelings or asked the participants to reflect on their experiences.

Joubish et al., (2011) state that it embraces the concept of inter-subjectivity usually understood to refer to how people may construct meaning in order to interpret their social world. Thus, the researcher also explored the feelings and experiences of the participants and what lay at the core of their lives so as to describe their world. Qualitative research according to Denzil and Lincoln (2005), tries to make sense of the social phenomenon and the meaning people bring to them. Myers (2009), supports this argument and shows that qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live. Creswell (2005, p.37) is of the opinion that qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning an individual ascribes to a human or social problem.

Therefore, the researcher used this approach in a natural setting sensitive to participants to allow them to tell their stories so that one could understand the context in which participants in the study addressed problems, encounter and then give textual descriptions of how they experienced the world. This means that, the researcher interacted with the participants as closely as possible in order to acquire much understanding. The researcher sought a shared understanding with the participants regarding what they thought constituted a parental involvement, what barriers if any existed and what could be done to remove those barriers. Lastly, this approach was used to explain social processes, such, as the relationship between parents and the school. It helped provide potential useful explanation of what parents would like to see happening and to form a platform for new inquiries.
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection in an empirical research project and answers specific research questions (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p.35). For any research, one needs a structure before data collection or analysis can commence. Thus, the research design assists researchers to understand how they are going to conduct the research and ensure that the evidence obtained enables participants to answer the research questions as unambiguously as possible. So it is a master plan of research that throws light on how the study is to be conducted. It shows how all the major parts of the research study work together in an attempt to address the research questions. The strategy for inquiry was phenomenology. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) clearly state that a phenomenological approach aims to understand and interpret the meaning that participants give to their everyday lives. The researcher was able to achieve this by entering the world of the participants through analysing conversations and close interactions with participants.

The main study was a case study as it allowed the researcher to focus on a particular group of parents and their views. A case study is one of several ways of conducting research because its aim is to understand human beings in a social context by interpreting their actions. For the purpose of the research, a case study was chosen since it entailed the collection of every extensive data in order to produce in-depth understanding of what could be learned from each case (Bhattacherjee, 2012). As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005, p.18), state it investigates present phenomenon within a real life context using multiple sources in order to produce a case description and case based themes (Creswell, 2007, p.73). In order for the researcher to better assist parents in their duties at school it was important that the researcher had a thorough understanding of the experiences and attitudes of parents in relation to their involvement in the education of their children with special needs.

The case study allowed the researcher to be flexible within the context to explore the topic in a naturalistic environment (Hancock et al., 2009), and capture a rich array of data as it provides more contextualised and authentic
interpretation of the phenomenon, and to know why some things happen and the way they do. However, it does not assume that participants’ accounts refer to some verifiable reality but it recognises that this involves a process of interpretation by the researcher. According to Creswell (2013, p.97), the purpose of the case study is to gain a better understanding of a social issue, to assist the researcher in gaining knowledge about social issues and also what might become important to look at more closely in future research.

3.4.1 Selection of case and participants

Breakwell et al., (2006), state that it is crucial to determine the exact population from which the researcher wishes to sample as it should be clear about the population to which inferences are being made. Researchers are never able to study all members of the population that interest them when they select a sample. Selecting a sample rather than studying the whole population was, therefore, convenient and inexpensive. The participants were chosen based on the researcher's knowledge of the participants and the purpose of the research (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p.139). Therefore, purposive sampling method was used. Creswell (2013, p.100) states that purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants to get a detailed understanding of a phenomenon. Berg (2009) adds that when researchers develop a purposive sample they use their specific knowledge to select the participants who are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena under study and from which the most could be learned.

The criterion for purposeful participation was that participants were required to be parents or legal guardians of a learner with special needs in high school. The sample size was not determined by resource considerations but rather by the extent to which the research questions demanded responses from a number of participants who could be said to be representative of a specific population in a particular context or setting. The participants were not vulnerable individuals as they were not children and not very old persons with mental health problems.

According to Breakwell et al., (2006), a small sample lends itself to more in-depth interview. For that reason, the participants were ten (10) Zulu speaking parents from different socio-economic backgrounds. Babbie (2013) advises that
the researcher needs to select only those participants who will yield a balanced
picture of the situation under study. The sample was small so to do justice to
each participant’s account and a detailed case by case analysis was time
consuming. It should be noted again that one of the aims of qualitative research
was to present the complex or information provided by each participant as it was
and avoid superficial perspectives.

De Vos et al., (2005) state that the researcher needs to obtain the permission to
enter the field to get the study started. All people who were directly involved in
the study were consulted. The permission of participating parents was sought
from them directly and not through third parties to enhance the voluntary nature
of their participation. The researcher informed participants of all aspects of the
research which might reasonably be expected to influence their willingness to
participate in the study. Since participants were parents, they were able to give
an informed consent. It was made it clear at the onset of the study that as
participants they had a right to withdraw from the research at any time,
irrespective of whether or not payment or other stimulus were to be made.

As the permission was requested, it was also granted at different levels, such
as, the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal (DoE KZN) (See Annexure
D), the chosen school (see Annexure F) and the parents (See Annexure B). The
school assisted with the database of parents with children who had special
needs.

The main data collection techniques used in the research, were literature
reviews, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and observations.

3.4.2 Interviews

According to Flick (2006), interviews are alternative method for data collection in
the qualitative case study. An interview is a conversation with a purpose. In this
case, to gather data or information about parental involvement in the education
of their children with special needs. Babbie (2013), also states that interviews
are an alternative method of collecting data where the researcher asks
questions orally and records participant’s answers. The participants were
introduced to the interview and were interviewed in a safe environment that was
convenient for them. This allowed them to be relaxed and express their views
freely. It was important that the researcher remained mindful that the encounter was entering the participants’ world and should be respectful of their space, culture and traditions. The researcher gave them information appropriate to them to be able to give informed consent (see attached: Annexure B).

The researcher ensured that the content of the informed consent letter did not compromise validity of participant’s subsequent answers to questions. To avoid that Breakwell et al., (2006), say the researcher should not explain the hypothesis or proposition he or she hopes to examine in the research to participants. The rationale behind the introduction was to encourage participation and confidence in the interview. Participants were requested and encouraged to give honest and full answers. In general terms, the researcher explained why the individual was chosen for an interview. The researcher also considered the demands the interviews made upon participants as a result appointments were made on time and each participant was requested to set aside a considerate amount of time for the interview.

The interviews were face to face and that allowed for non-verbal data to be captured. The interviews were participant’s lead, even though they were guided by the researcher and probed where necessary. This allowed the researcher to follow up on interesting (Davids, 2010, p.49), important and even on unexpected issues that emerged during the interview. Therefore, the questions were there to guide rather than to dictate the interview. The researcher was able to observe participants and ask questions at the same time. This gave advantage to the participants because if there was a question they did not clearly understand, the researcher could see that or they might request the researcher to clarify, thereby obtaining relevant responses. This required both interviewer and interviewee to be at ease.

The advantage of face to face interviews was that participants were willing to talk longer as opposed to having interviews over the phone. Interviews conducted over the phone were not considered because of the cost involved, as well as the fact that not all people had landlines or mobile phones. Another advantage of face to face interviews was that they were good at obtaining detailed information and few participants were required to gather rich and
detailed data. Above all, interviews allowed for the collection of data from participants who were unlikely to complete the questionnaire, such as those whose reading, writing and ability to express themselves was marginal.

The researcher used the semi-structured interviews to draw out the perception, attitude and experiences of parents in their parental involvement. Semi-structured questions involved a number of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wanted to cover (Breakwell et al., 2006, p.237). De Vos et al., (2005), urge researchers that when questions are asked each question should be formulated in words familiar to the participants being interviewed.

The researcher had a number of topics to cover in the specific questions and their order was not fixed. They allowed for a development as a result of the exchange with the participants. Breakwell et al., (2006), state that researchers that use semi-structured interviews treat participants as experiential experts of the topic under investigation. This point supported the researcher's reasoning as the idea was to elicit information in order to achieve the participant’s point of view and also to give participants an opportunity to best describe their experiences.

Creswell (2013) also says through this type of an interview, participants are allowed to create their responses without being forced into response possibilities. The questions that were asked took into account a number of things, such as, education and social level of participants, attitudes and emotions and cultural traits. Easier and non-threaten questions were at the beginning of the interview to allow for rapport and confidence to build before more serious questions were asked. The researcher was able to engage with the participants. All interviews were tape recorded. A tape recorder was placed in such a way that it did not distract the participants when answering questions. Using a tape recorder meant that the researcher could concentrate on how the interview was proceeding and where to go next. It also helped to counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by the researcher, and allowed for a more thorough examination of what participants said.
The researcher made use of field notes which contained comprehensive accounts of the participants, the actual discussions, the researcher’s observations of the participant’s non-verbal messages, areas of uncertainty which the researcher needed to discuss with her supervisor and the progress of the sessions. Field notes provided with a suitable means of keeping records of the researcher’s experiences over time, and allowed for critical brainstorming of the research process. However, it should be noted that the researcher did not use all the field note taken but only used those that were more relevant.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

An important aspect of data analysis in qualitative case study is the search for meaning through direct interpretation of what is experienced and reported by participants. Therefore, the point of departure for qualitative data analysis of this study was to discover meaning that parents of teenagers with special needs make to their social world and to understand the meaning of their social behaviour. De Vos et al., (2005, p.333) defines data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. In order to find out about the participant’s point of view, data was collected which captured this view, and as it was analysed, sensitivity was applied to extract only what was relevant. According to Creswell (2013, p.180), data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organising the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through the process of coding or condensation.

Raw data usually requires some sort of organising and processing before it can actually be analysed. Since the interviews were in IsiZulu, it was translated into English then transcribed so they could be more readable. In the study, participants were talking about their social reality and showed their feelings and thoughts. So there was already an interpreted reality from which the researcher had to make the interpretation of how they understood their involvement in the education of their children. This is different to post-positivism as it holds a belief that the researcher manipulates and observes in a dispassionate, objective manner (Lincoln & Guba, 2005, p.11).
The researcher concentrated on the whole data first and when there was no new data that was emerging the process of analysing was stopped. Collected data was broken down into manageable units, and a process with sequential steps was followed in assisting the researcher to develop general structural description. For that reason, Tesch’s method of data analysing (1990) was used.

**STEP 1: Getting the sense of the whole**
The researcher carefully reads and rereads the transcripts of the interviews more than once in order to familiarise with the content and become intimate with data. This would allow the researcher to reflect on the overall meaning.

**STEP 2: Data cleaning**
All the unwanted data is eliminated. The researcher only focuses on the data that is relevant and that which answers the research question(s).

**STEP 3: Developing the classification system and categories**
As the researcher is rereading the transcript, ideas of what participants were trying to say are recoded on the margin.

**STEP 4: Coding data material**
Participant’s responses are grouped together into categories that bring together similar ideas. The aim is to reduce the total list of categories by grouping those that relate to each other.

**STEP 5: Formulation of themes**
Themes are formulated from the topic within developed categories.

**STEP 6: Cut and paste**
Topics with similar ideas are cut, sorted and pasted together under relevant themes.

**STEP 7: Recording data on paper**

**STEP 8: Verification**

Figure 4: Tesch’s eight steps of data analysis (Tesch, 1990)
Due to the interpretive nature of the study, the researcher had a good overview of data obtained but needed to be immersed by working through the text. The researcher tried to get the sense of the whole data by reading and rereading the transcripts before breaking it into certain parts. As the researcher was reading through, notes of initial thoughts of emerging subthemes were taken.

In order to fully deal with the participants, the researcher ensured that the analysis was grounded in the data. This was illustrated by taking direct quotes from transcripts and linking them in a coherent description of themes. Creswell (2013) supports the researcher when he states that the researcher needs to make short phrases, ideas or key concepts that occur so as to identify major categories or sub-categories. Forming categories is the heart of the qualitative data analysis. Through forming categories, the researcher built a detailed description of what participants said, developed small manageable set of themes, and provide an interpretation in the light of the views of the research based on what was seen, as well as on the perspective of the literature. The themes needed to be related. Creswell (2013) also states interpretation may be based on insight and intuition or combination of personal views as constructed with social science idea.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are many different issues which need to be taken into account if a research is to achieve its intended goals. The fundamental principle which underpins all ethical codes relating to research is that the researcher should always consider the welfare of the participants who take part in the study, and must protect them from being physically or mentally harmed (Breakwell et al., 2009, p.39) by the research process. Marshall and Rossman (2011, p.49), state that ethics in research are principles of right or wrong that researchers accepts and adhere to. These ethics compel researchers to respect the rights and dignity of all participants (Flick, 2009, p.39) involved in their research taking into account their needs and interest. To show respect to participants and to individuals who will be reading the publication, the researcher ensured that data
was reported honestly, without changing the findings to satisfy certain interest groups.

All research raises ethical issues and it was for that reason that the researcher started by seeking ethical approval (Moriarty, 2011) from the research ethics committee of the institution enrolled at (University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee) which looked at the research design and methods before they could be applied. The committee granted the researcher with the permission to conduct research after her research proposal met all the ethical requirements. As a training Educational Psychologist, the researcher also adhered to the Board of Psychology Ethical Code of Conduct. The matters relating to research ethics were the following:

3.6.1 Informed consent

According to Berg (2009), informed consent means knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress or similar unfair incentive or influence. Consent was given both verbal and in written statements. Participants in a research were made aware that their participation in the study was voluntary (Flick, 2009, p.40), that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any unfavourable consequences (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p.137), and there would be no harm as a result of their participation or non-participation in the study (Moriarty, 2011). The researcher explained to the parents using the language they understood, best the purpose of the research as well as their required participation (De Vos et al., 2011, p.333). The researcher was aware of the position of influence as the researcher but that position was never used to coerce individuals to take part in the study, or to remain in the study. The participants were informed about the voluntary nature of the study (Babbie, 2013, p.34) and it was ensured that they understood the benefits and risks though there were no risks entailed in participation.

The informed consent document also provided the participants with how the interview data was to be used, who was to have access to the data, and whom they may contact for further questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It was also
explained to participants that should they feel uncomfortable during the research process, they were allowed to decline and there would not be subjected to personal agony. Once they agreed they were also requested to sign the informed consent form. As a rule, it was dated and signed (Berg, 2009, p.88). Bhattacherjee (2012) clearly states that all participants should receive and sign an informed consent that clearly describes their right to participate and right to withdraw, before their responses in the study can be recorded.

After each participant had agreed to be part of the study the researcher also signed a declaration form (See Annexure B). The rationale behind obtaining signed informed consent slips was to ensure that participants were knowingly participating in the study and doing so on their own free will. These slips were kept safe and securely so that anyone who was not meant to access them could not access them until the end of the study after which they were destroyed. This allowed the researcher to avoid keeping records and lists any longer than was absolutely necessary.

3.6.2 Anonymity and confidentiality
Bhattacherjee (2012, p.138) states that to protect participants’ interest and future well-being their identity should be protected and this could be done using the dual principle of anonymity and confidentiality (Creswell, 2007, p.141). Breakwell et al., (2006) also state that all information obtained about the participants should be kept confidential unless it has been agreed otherwise in advanced. Participants were reminded that anonymity and confidentiality was to be upheld throughout the study. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were used. Robson (2011) adds that confidentiality should extend beyond not naming participants to not revealing their personal details which might reveal a participant’s identity. Suggesting that those who have not taken part in the research may not be able to identify individual participants but other study participants may be able to do so, so to avoid that Moriarty (2011) says researchers need not make references to a specific event or experience.
3.6.3 Disclosure

Researchers have an obligation to provide some information to the participants about the broad areas of their enquiry (Moriarty, 2011, p.25) before data collection to help them decide whether or not they want to participate in the study (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p.139). This would reduce the likelihood of what is known as unintended disclosure" in which participants reveal something they had no intention of revealing. Creswell (2012), also says participants may disclose sensitive information and potentially distressing in the course of interview. The researcher was aware of such potential for the emotional turmoil, in processing interviews, thus debriefing was done (Babbie, 2013, p.39) to allow the researcher to come into terms with the information covered in interviews. To avoid this and to gain trust and support, participants were informed about who was conducting the research, for what purpose, and who will benefit from the results.

The researcher was cautious in maintaining the high ethical standards.

3.6.4 No harm to participants

Participants were protected from any form of any emotional or psychological harm. The principle of non-maleficence as refer to by Flick (2009, p.37) and Babbie (2013, p.320) was employed, which means no harm to participants. Moriarty (2011, p.24) states that researchers need to ensure that they do not exploit the experiences of participants for their own professional gain, thus the researcher adopted a sensitive attitude towards participants as they were telling their views and, had created a sense of mutual trust with the participants. However, the participants were made aware of the possible risks to them.

Since the topic was about parental involvement in the education of their high school children with special needs, to some participants it was going to be a sensitive topic as it was going to remind them of their old school career, especially if his or her experience was not pleasant as a result that might arouse feelings of distress. The researcher tried to guide against subtlest risks. In the interest of ensuring no harm to participants, the participants were debriefed to determine if they required any assistance.
As debriefing was done, areas of support were identified so counselling could be provided to avoid any lasting damage. Babbie (2013) says this should be done with care so as to ensure that participants are not left with bad feelings or doubt about themselves based on their responses during the interview. Breakwell et al., (2006) support the researcher when they state that, the researcher has a responsibility to ensure that, if any active intervention is required to negate the effects of the interviews upon participants, such intervention should be provided before the participant leaves.

3.6.5 Analysis and reporting

Babbie (2013, p.39) declares that in any study, the researcher should be familiar than anyone else with the study’s technical limitations and failures. To produce a more relevant and focused analysis, a description of data was provided on which conclusions were based and participants were given copies of conclusion to see if they made sense to them. Data collection strategies chosen in this research were used in accordance with the research ethics. The researcher maintained a reflective journal or field notes (De Vos et al., 2011, p.359) and engaged in regular discussions with the supervisor.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF DATA

Assessing the accuracy of qualitative findings is not always easy. Nonetheless, there are strategies and criteria that can be utilised to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings. Trustworthiness is he term used in qualitative research as a measure of quality of research (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). Lincoln and Guba (2005) state that ensuring credibility and objectivity is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. The process of triangulation was used to ensure validity (Creswell, 2007, p.251; Flick, 2009, p.443) and corroboration by means of multiple sources to shed light on themes developed. The research made use of supporting data from interviews and observations to help explain the attitudes and believes of the participants. Above all, a number of participants was used to see their viewpoint and their experiences were verified against each other, thus at the end a rich picture of their needs, attitudes and behaviour was constructed.
Breakwell et al., (2006) believe that the interview approach relies upon participants being able and willing to give accurate and complete answers to questions. Participants were encouraged to give their perspectives and experiences without fear of losing credibility in the eyes of educators. The researcher had compiled a set of questions for all participants which helped provide consistency across responses.

Creswell (2013) argues that researchers should have rich thick descriptions to allow readers to make decisions regarding transferability. Breakwell et al., (2006) add that a detailed description of the account can be an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated. Each person who was approached was given an opportunity to decline to be part of the research so as to ensure that data collected would only be of those who were genuinely willing to participate and be prepared to provide accurate information freely. To ensure trustworthiness, the supervisor of the researcher had an opportunity to scrutinise the research and its findings. The fresh perspective that such individual gave made it possible to challenge some assumptions which may have been made by the researcher, whose closeness to the research recurrently inhibits ability to view it with real detachment.

The processes within the study were reported in details thus enabling future researchers to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. This according to Mchunu (2012), allowed the readers to assess the extent to which research practice had been followed. To enhance the level of trustworthiness, the researcher asked some participants to check the accuracy of the account. This allowed participants to provide context and an alternative interpretation. Creswell (2009, p. 191) refers to this process as member checking. Loh (2013) supports this act and further says it needs to be done because participants are the one with actual experience studied and it is only ethical to allow the participants to have a look at their data and interpretations derived from it, and offer their views regarding it. De Vos et al., (2005) also add that giving participants a summary of the interviews for approval may increase credibility.
3.8 DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS

It is no value doing research unless the researcher let people know about it. All the participants were informed of the finding of the study. The researcher communicated the findings to her colleagues and peers and others interested in the study. The objective of disseminating was to make the most of the impact of the research by getting the message across to those who could benefit from the study or those who simply need to be informed. The researcher intended to publish a paper on the topic.

3.9 LIMITATIONS IN THE STUDY

Like any other self-report method, the interview approach relies upon participants being able and willing to give accurate and complete answers to questions asked no matter what their format (Breakwell et al., 2009, p. 247). This research gave participants a voice. However, they may have been motivated to lie, sabotage a research or even too embarrassed to tell their stories and end up relating what they thought the researcher wanted to hear even so the research relied on self-reports as related by participants.

Some parents who had initially agreed to be part of the study were not available due to personal commitments.

Parents who were interviewed were all Zulu speakers and the dissertation had to be presented in English which is the second language for both the researcher and the participants. The translation into English was done and consumed a lot of time.

Interviews were time consuming and required careful preparations.

Findings cannot be generalised to the whole population because the participants were from a small sample.
3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the aims of the research, the research questions as well as the research design which outlined the method of data collection using interviews as one of the research tools. It is self-evident that there are ethical considerations when one is carrying out a real world research involving people. The ethical considerations which were taken into account during this research have also been discussed.

Chapter four will be looking at research findings and data analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to explore parental involvement of parents in the education of their children with special needs. In chapter two, the researcher conducted a literature review regarding parental involvement in the education of their children. In this chapter, the researcher provides a detailed discussion of the results of data analysis, providing supporting evidence from transcribed interviews. The results are first presented then discussed as themes and sub-themes that have emerged. Supporting evidence is used extensively to provide a qualitative feel of the responses. No corrections were made to the words of the participants, and they were all allowed to talk about parental involvement from their own frame of reference. Epstein (2001) typology was not used as a frame of reference but to facilitate cross referencing to the literature.

4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Face-to-face interviews were conducted using the language best understood by the participants. Those interviews which were conducted in isiZulu were translated into English and all interviews were transcribed. All participants were parents or guardians of children with special needs in a high school. Participants were a combination of literate and illiterate parents or guardians. Their biographical information such as age, gender, qualifications is presented in a tabular form and then discussed separately. This information enabled the researcher to have a better understanding of the background of the participants. Their biographical information is as follows:
Table 4.1 Biographical information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Age of a parent</th>
<th>Relationship to child</th>
<th>Education attained</th>
<th>Size of the family</th>
<th>Grade of the child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>Below matric</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>Post matric</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Up to matric</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Post matric</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Up to matric</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Below matric</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Below matric</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Post matric</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Post matric</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Post matric</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants were a combination of females and males. The majority of them were females. Five of the participants, were married, four were single, while one was a widow. The oldest was a guardian and was a grandmother. She was 66 years old.

Table 4.2 Participants’ gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maternal Parent</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER</strong></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>07</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above show about 70% of participants were females and 30% were males. The reason for the low rate of participation among male parents could be that males are mostly away from home most of the time, females usually look after the children and would be more patient toward assisting children with special needs than male parents. This finding suggests a need for more male parents to be involved in the education of their children so that they can benefit from their participation and a change in the way many families function.
Table 4.3 Participants per age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Maternal Parent</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-35</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 and above</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 above, presents the distribution of age groups of parents and guardians of children with special needs in a high school. The largest component of parents was 50% around 36-45 years old and the second largest group was 30% between 20-35 years old and about 10% was between 45-55 years old. This suggested that the majority of parents were below the age of 45 which means they had more to offer in terms of energy and productivity, and were matured enough to be involved in the education of their children. It should, therefore, not be difficult for parents to take responsibilities for their children’s education whether they were encouraged or guided. About 10% of parents were above the age of 56. This might indicate that they might be old, unable to establish routine, fail to monitor school attendance and to provide for a healthy learning culture. Above all, they might even be unable to attend school meetings resulting in non-involvement in school issues.

Table 4.4 Academic qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALIFICATIONS</th>
<th>Maternal Parent</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below matric</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to matric</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post matric</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To obtain the educational level of participants was important to establish the nature and extent of academic support that they might be able to render to their schooling children. Table 4.4 above, indicates that about 50% of participants
were above matric which was the majority. This implied that they had the knowledge of their children’s abilities, educational knowledge and skills to assist when and where their children encountered difficulties in their learning, because these parents possess academic and professional qualifications.

These parents were able to realise the value of education especially to a person with special needs. However, the majority of these parents with post matric qualifications were males yet they constituted a small number in terms of being involved in the education of their children. As stated by Desforges and Lafaele, (2003), parents who are illiterate do not always realise the values of parental involvement in education. Therefore, the educational level of parents may impact on the nature and extent of environment in their children’s school related activities.

Table 4.5 Size of the family/ household

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<th>SIZE</th>
<th>Maternal Parent</th>
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<td>Other</td>
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The size of the family was important to determine its impact on the provision of basic educational needs and the support each member might contribute towards helping the child leaner. In table 4.5 above, the majority of the parents indicated that they lived with the extended family. These parents were working and while they were at work they were assisted by other members of the family.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THEMES

In the following section, the results of this study are discussed using Tesch’s (1990) method of data analysis. The researcher; first familiarised with the data and unwanted data that did not answer the research question was eliminated.
Similar responses were grouped together into themes, making four themes, and under each theme sub-themes were formulated (refer to table 4.6 below). The themes and sub-themes that emerged were from the analytic process. Supporting evidence was provided in the form of quotations which was an English translation.

Table 4.6 Themes and Sub-themes

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<th>SUB-THEMES</th>
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4.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The following is the discussion of the results of the study.

4.3.1 THEME 1: Parental involvement

Many learners are unable to bridge the gap that exists between home and school, as a result, they face many academic challenges. However, through the effective involvement of parents that gap can be closed. This theme looks at the meaning of parental involvement as understood by the parents.

4.3.1.1 Meaning of parental involvement

Parents ascribe different meaning to parental involvement. For example, some parents believe that is it about attending parent’s meetings and buying school uniform and stationery. Parent AA even said:

“I only attend school meetings.”

While Parent JJ indicated that:

I am involved by attending school meetings, buying her school uniform and other things which may be needed at school.”

While others viewed parental involvement as forming a bond of trust with educators which led into good relations that would make it easy to share information from one person to the other. Parent II said that:

“Coming to school to meet with teachers is not stressful because I know I am talking not only to a teacher but to a parent who understands my dreams about my son.”

Makgopa and Mokhelele (2013) concur with the parents as they state that parental involvement is the combination of supporting learner’s academic achievement and participating in school initiated activities. Through this research it came out that parents viewed parental involvement in two different ways. That is, the one that is done at home (home-based) through providing the environment conducive for a teenager to do his or her school work, and reduction of household chores that needed to be performed by a child. Parent BB supported this by saying:
"The only chores that he has on school days are school related. Like washing his school shirt and sock"

This enabled a child to have plenty of time to his or her schoolwork. Above all, parents indicated that they also assisted with the study plan. Parent DD said:

"I have assisted her in drawing the study time-table and give her time to study."

Parent HH also said:

"I encourage her to finish schoolwork before seating down for whatever in the evening… We have timetable which we follow every day."

By so doing parents were being involved in the education of their children at home and when it came to school they indicated that they would volunteer their services for free. Parent II said:

"I would like to be part of the policy review committee and parental involvement strategies committee."

However, this view was not shared by all parents as some indicated that they would not like to do more than what they were already doing. For example, parent AA said:

"None"

Parent BB stated:

"I am happy with the current model...because we all have full lives."

According to Epstein (1995), parental involvement is about schools assisting parents in creating an environment that support children as learners. Further suggests that schools should provide parents with support programmes and equip them with necessary skills to help their children at home. The results of the study showed that parents do involve themselves by attending parent-educator's meetings or workshops called by the school. Parent BB said
“Through parent-educator meetings, I have gained different ways on how to track the progress of my nephew”.

Some parents indicated that they were getting help but were not totally happy. Hence Parent FF said

“Well, if telling us to encourage our children to do homework is it, that means they do”.

As parents got involved at school were practising what was called school-based involvement.

4.3.1.2 Communication

The most important reason for communicating with parents in schools was to exchange information related to learner’s needs and performance. Coleman (2010), states that schools needed to communicate with parents their importance especially in attending parent-educator meetings. Schools have an obligation to communicate with parents on regular basis about the progress of a learner. Schools may communicate by means of information letters. Parent EE supported this argument and said:

“If they are to break early they do inform us through letters.”

Staple and Diliberto (2010) encourage educators to make use of daily communication. An exercise book could be used for back-to-back dialogue between parents and educators about a performance of a child on the day and homework. Parent JJ agreed and said:

“Her teachers attach notes to update me with her everyday progress.”

It is not all parents who held the same view or experience about communicating with the school. Some parents indicated that they were usually called at school if there was a problem. Communication between parents and educators should not only be about difficulties learners face at school but should also include in-depth, individualised meetings on the learner’s unique needs. Communication needs to extend into brainstorming solutions to solve problems that a learner might be experiencing. Parent CC said:
“Her teacher called me when she was experiencing difficulties with the school routine and we talked about what we were going to do. I also feel happy that the school is able to call me if there is a problem so I could know what is wrong and many times but that seems to be the only time they call me.”

Epstein and Dauber (1991) state that schools may even make phone calls to parents. Lavenda, (2011), also states that educators may only call parents to become involved if their child is in trouble. Parents stated that they did get communiqué from the school and that statement was supported by Parent JJ:

“The school do call us if there is emergency.”

Coleman, (2010), also supports the idea of communicating with parents and states that parents should be able to communicate with the school, and it is the responsibility of the school to establish enough opportunities for parents to communicate with educators. Other parents indicated that communication from the school was mostly when their child learner had done something wrong. Parent CC stated:

“I do and in most cases where she is not performing very well. For example, teachers complain that she does not participate in class…”

The school needs to have an open door policy so that parents could easily come and seek assistance. In the research, it came out that even though some parents enjoyed their visits to the school but they were restricted. Parent DD said:

“They always expect us to make appointments if we want to talk to them…”

4.3.1.3 Formation of partnerships

Since learners with special needs benefit from regular education, it is important that school policies reflect their inclusion. Afolabi et al., (2013), believe that
inclusive education requires a need to re-adjust policies and ideas to accommodate learners with special needs. This suggests that parents need to have a voice so that they can communicate their wishes and ideas about the education of their children. Decision making is the process of partnership. Parents need to have a say in school related matters which may directly or indirectly affect their children’s education. This follows a premise that parents are the experts when it comes to their children because they have been with them for long and understand their needs. However, since educators are experts of what is happening in classrooms, they also should assist parents. This relationship is maintained by means of constant feedback. If the work is monitored by both a parent and educator and there is a clear method of how to do that, the partnership will be strengthened. Parent HH said:

“We have a communication book in which her teacher writes on whatever he thinks needs to be done at home and her progress and I also do the same.”

Epstein (1995) argues that learners succeed at a high level when internal and external models of influences intersect and work together to promote learning and development of a child. This implies that there should be cohesion in the well-being of a learner for educational processes to be most effective. The (South African School’s Act, 84 of 1996) makes it clear that parents have a legal right to play an active role in the education of their children. Parents also indicated that they were aware of their rights. Hence, HH said:

“I am also an expert in understanding my child and deciding what is best for her. So we should work as an integral part to my daughter’s academic progress.”

Therefore, this suggests that parents should be visible in schools and be integral partners in developing inclusive systems. From the result, it is evident that some parents were able to communicate their ideas during the meetings. This was supported by Parent BB:

“Parents are made integral part of the school. Whenever there are issues to be discussed they call us and we talk
freely. Besides we have a School Governing Body that represents us in decision making or policy formulation.”

In as much as some parents felt they were made partners and their views were considered in decision making, there were those who felt that coming to attend general school meetings was not beneficial to them. They believed that individual needs could not be addressed or attended in a group meeting. Hence Parent GG said:

“Being told in the parents’ meeting is not the same as getting individual attention for the needs of your child.”

Yet at the same time there were parents who felt that they were not getting any assistance from school as a result preferred to keep quiet. Parent JJ said:

“No, I don’t want to be seen as if I think I am better than them. I let them do their thing after all they are the teachers and I am a parent.”

Parents need to collaborate with educators in helping their special need teenagers to be better able. Ruskus and Gerulaitis (2010) state that some parents whose teenagers have special needs found that collaboration was limited to informing the parent about the child’s performance during parent-teacher meetings or through entries in the child’s record book. As parents and educators focus on their shared responsibilities they contribute towards producing successful learners. Research such as Kannapathi (2012) indicated that partnerships are good in closing the gap especially for those learners who do not want to talk about school at home. Parent BB said:

“I try to find out from teachers how to deal with him and I also share a trick that he plays at home so they could prevent him from doing it at school.”

Learners who know that their parents are in partnership with the school and are interested in their school work experience emotional stability and security. This was supported by Parent DD and said:
“She no longer sees herself as someone with a special need but as someone unique with an ability to achieve great things.”

Some parents felt that the partnership should extend to the community at large and educators should try to form partnerships with the community. Griffin and Steen (2010), state that family-school-community relationships are important partnerships. Parent GG said:

“I think teachers need to understand the culture of our community so that it would be easy for them to work and encourage parental involvement.”

4.3.1.4 Monitoring of schoolwork

Some parents who participated in their children’s education help educators to monitor and manage learners’ educational process. Whatever is done at school should be applicable to real life so that there should be continuity from what is done at school to what happens at home. Results indicated that parents tried to bridge a gap between home and school by constantly interacting with the educators. Hence, Parent BB said:

“It is to be more hands on, like doing follow-up and finding out from the teachers on how to deal with him because I don’t want a break between school and home”.

According to DePlanty, Coulter-Kern and Duchane (2007), teenagers tend to be affected positive when their relationship is sustained between their home and school environment. For example, if parents at home discuss school activities and plan educational events with them that would not only improve their performance at school but would decrease or prevent teenagers from bunking classes. Parent GG believed that her involvement made it difficult for the child learner to miss school and said:

“He cannot dodge me or school because I am always here at home even though I am not educated but I can read a little so I always ask to see what they did at school each day.”
4.3.2 THEME 2: Influence on parental involvement

This theme shows the positive quality instilled by parents in their children that it can positively influence how the teenager view herself or himself, improves academic performance and behaviour.

4.3.2.1 Interpersonal relations

Dauber and Epstein (1993) contend that children are more successful at school if their parents participate in school activities and encourage education and learning at home. Motivated learners have more positive attitude towards school, better homework habits and have a lower drop-out rate. This is cultivated at home by parents through the interaction between themselves. If parents show interest and have certain expectations about their child, they are promoting an attitude forming the key to success. The interpersonal influence of parents is crucial for learners’ educational goals. According to Chabra and Kumari (2011), a positive parent-child relationship influences the academic achievement of a child significantly. In the research, parents indicated that they interacted with their children about school and the following quotation by Parent HH was the evidence of that:

“Every day we have catch-up moments where we tell each other about one’s day…She tells me about things that happened at school as well as problems she may have encountered and together we try to solve them.”

For parents to sit down with their children and talk about school work gives encouragement and help their children realise that if parents can spend time helping them in a constructive way, then homework really must be important. Anfara and Mertens (2008) argue that teenagers with parents who participate in their education are more likely to attend school more. Parent II also supported this argument:

“I had to make him understand that education is for his future and things can only get better in his life if he attends school regularly. If he finds problems at school, he must ask teachers to help him because they are there for him.”
Interpersonal relations should not only be between parents and their children but need to extend to educators as well. According to Okeke (2014), personalised relationships lead to social support which is an ingredient to build trust. Trust and support give parents a sense of belonging and contribute to a positive climate of learning. Furthermore, Bae-Suh (2012) states that the key factor of building and sustaining effective collaborations between parents and the school is communication built on trust, understanding, co-operation and shared responsibility. This is evident in the study where there were positive and clear lines of communication which led to personalised relationships between parents and educators. Parent HH said:

“When I go to school for visits or meetings, educators would have a friendly chat with me on different issues…which makes me feel at ease and it shows that they are not different from us. As a result, I go to parents’ meetings with an open mind.”

It should be noted that it is not all parents who experience this kind of relationship with the educators. Some parents felt that educators were making them feel that they were not educated. Parent GG said:

“Teachers in that school undermine us.”

Parents stated that relations with educators were far much better when their children where in the primary school. For example, Parent GG also said:

“They make you feel that you are not a teacher but when my son was in a primary school it was a different story. Teachers there would welcome us and made us feel at ease.”

For parents to be actively involved in the life of the school, they need to feel welcomed, valued and connected to the school and to what their children are doing. Absence of these may lead to parents staying away from school.
4.3.2.2 Change of attitude

Parents exercise by far the most powerful and lasting influence upon attitudes, behaviour and academic performance of their children. Altshut (2011) and Eccles (2005) state that learners with parents who are more involved in their education are likely to perform better in their academic work. Parent FF supported this point and said:

“*She completes her work on time and get to submit it on time as well so she does not get into trouble with the teachers.*”

As noted, the involvement of parents also helped boost teenager’s confidence and realise that there is support. Parent HH said:

“…she is older than other learners in her class so I always try to make not focus on that and not to give up no matter what they say. I have seen her lose confidence and I have seen her gain it back again.”

Through the involvement of parents in education, there has been a change in attitude by teenagers where they also try to facilitate the involvement. Coleman (2006) points out that home involvement of parents to their teenager’s schoolwork is mostly positive if it is an invitation by a child. This is supported by the Parent FF:

“She would ask me why I am not asking about school and tells me that she likes it whenever I help her with her schoolwork because I get to spend time with her.”

Through the involvement, many parents have seen a change in the way their children view education. Parent BB said:

“The improvement is observable because I can see a change in behaviour and in her attitude.”
### 4.3.2.3 Modelling the appropriate behaviour

According to Hoovey- Dempsey and Sandler (1997), parents influence their teenager's educational outcomes through modelling of pre-school related behaviour and attitudes. What normally happens at home would influence what happens at school. Parents influence their teenagers in direct and indirect way. The time a teenager spends on homework and in leisure television viewing or doing household chores is determined by the parents. This is evident as Parent JJ said:

“We have a time-table which she follows. Each day she has about one and a half hour of television and the rest is for school related activities. As she does her schoolwork I am also there to assist and support.”

Involving themselves in aspects of their teenager’s educational lives, parents behave in a way that show that activities related to schooling are worthy of adult interest and time. Parents demonstrate this by asking questions about their teenager’s school day, spending time helping with homework, coming to school events. This may also mean that parents regard school related activities as significant to their relationship with their teenagers.

Modelling appropriate behaviour means exposing teenagers to cognitively stimulating activities and material such as books. Learners who are exposed to reading at home exhibit that at school. Maphanga (2006, p.28) argues that parents who read, visit the library, and participate in school activities reinforce the values of education, and this brings home and school together and help the teenager practice skills that are useful for school. This was true as many parents believed that they need to be exemplary to their children so as to reinforce the love of school. Parent GG proclaimed by saying:

“I buy books and read to them here at home, and they enjoy it. I encourage them to read so they can increase their vocabulary.”

Non-the-less there were parents to whom it was clear that they did not set examples by reading for pleasure. For example, Parent FF said:
“I don’t have that time because I am always tired.”

Some parents believed that practice makes perfect thus encouraged their teenager learners to try harder each time till they understand what they are studying. This is supported by the Parent II.

“He cannot afford to give up. I tell him to push because if he allows failure now he will always be a failure.”

4.3.2.4 Parent’s level of education

The research showed a great difference that is made by the educational level of a parent. Chabri and Kumari (2011) argue that educated parents tend to be more involved in the education of their children and that influences their parental skills, values and knowledge of the educational systems. For example, Parent FF who is uneducated said:

“She wants to be a Doctor but she does not know how much money goes into being a Doctor. I don’t have that kind of money. I suggested that it would be better she become a teacher instead.”

This suggested that some parents saw money as more important thing than supporting the aspirations of their children and did not know that a child could get a scholarship so they could pursue their dreams. Another parent with post matric qualifications indicated that he would like his child to go as far as he could go. Parent II supported this:

“He can be anything he wants. Money is not an issue. I support his dreams and he knows that education is the only way to go.”

4.3.2.5 Support

Parents have the most information about their children’s background and educators may make use of that information in their intervention programmes. Parents also believe that they know more about their children and educators
know more about the content in class. This came out clearly with Parent JJ when she said:

“I know a lot about my child and teachers know a lot about learning so if we share information we will be able to move forward in a productive manner.”

Maphanga (2006) concurs with parents and states that support if correctly solicited parents would be willing to participate in school activities such as curriculum planning and policy formulation (Foster, Rude & Grannan, 2013). Parent EE attested to that:

“I would like to be involved in many matters, like helping with the study after school.”

Parent DD said:

“I would like to be part of the organising team especially for campaigns to educate the community about children with special needs…”

Al-Dababneh and Bataineh (2012), point out that parents of disabled children face many challenges as a result may develop high stress levels and lower levels of parenting satisfaction. However, being in the support group or with people, who understand your demise ease the frustration. It is, therefore, important that educators provide with necessary information to parents not only about their teenager’s performance at school but also about how to manage stress in their lives. The better able the parent is in dealing with her life demands will translate into them being better able to assist their teenagers. Support is more considered to be effective when it comes from formal resources. Brown (2007) emphasis that parents of children with special needs need support from professionals who understand and can support them. If these parents feel there is a lack of support or respect from educators would not want to have anything to do with the school. This is supported by Parent II as saying:

“I remember one time I came to school so frustrated because I did not what to do with him but his teacher told me to try and accept him as he is and give him love and support. She
It should be noted that any kind of stress could undermine parents’ ability to even provide a warm support and consistent environment for their teenagers, making it difficult for their children to engage in the learning provided by the school (Eccles, 2005).

McEvoy (2013) states that increasing parent’s knowledge and skills in areas of disability and different programmes available help develop parent’s self-efficacy. Platform for information sharing should be made possible to parents. Many parents felt a need to have a support group where they could share ideas, challenges and strategies to assist their children. Parent EE said:

“I wish the school could facilitate a support group for parents of children with special needs so we could be able to share our experiences and gain new knowledge from each other”.

Support groups could be utilised as platforms where schools provide relevant information to parents about how to help their children with homework and other curriculum related matters. This would mean schools are not only the light for the learners but for parents as well. Schools need to be centres of information on new educational policies and legislature for parents and community members. This idea was supported by Parent FF:

“They have given us information about the elections of the SGB and how they were to be conducted. They told us that the law says all parents are eligible to be members provided you have a child at the school.”

Non-the-less some parents, for example, Parent CC indicated that the school meetings enabled them to meet other parents:

“Knowing these other parents has brought relief in my life because I am not alone and I have other people who understand what I am going through. We encourage each other, talk about things that can help our families.”
A-Shammari and Yawkey (2010) stated that helping parents understand their children’s abilities and disabilities is crucial for improving child’s educational and life experiences. Parents indicated that educators have been very pro-active in giving them information about where else they could get extensive help about their children. Parent JJ indicated that:

“Her teacher gave me contact numbers of a lady who she said charges less and will be willing to work with my child because she works with children who are disabled.”

Bower (2011) states that through the involvement of some parents, the social networks are increased which are designed to leverage resources. Therefore, teenagers are able to access additional information or support beyond the school, in order to achieve academic success. Parent DD indicated that:

“I have learned that there is a centre that helps with the children like her so she attends there on Saturdays and holidays so to catch up with her work”

4.3.3 THEME 3: Barriers to parental involvement

This theme discusses barriers to parental involvement as reported by the parents.

4.3.3.1 Beliefs about schools

Parents’ beliefs about various issues can act as a barrier to their parental involvement. At the same time, both parents and educators may have different views on parental involvement. Parents may say they attend parent’s meetings yet educators expect parents to supervise their teenager’s homework time. About 80% of parents were working and indicated that they sometime found it difficult to assist their children with homework because they came home late and exhausted. For example, Parent FF indicated that:

“I don’t stay here. I live early for work and come home late at night. By the time I am home she is practically preparing for bed and I am also tired wanting to sleep.”
Some parents indicated that they believed that their teenagers were old enough so they did not need assistance. Yoder and Lopez (2013) advise that parents may assume that their children are at an appropriate age where they are capable of completing schoolwork on their own without being monitored. This was clear with Parent GG:

“I do help him but not always because he is older now.”

4.3.3.2 The role of parents

The way parents view their role in education of their teenagers is crucial. For example, parents who believe that their role is to buy stationery and uniform will not be willing to be actively involved in the school based activities. There are some parents who believed that they are not educated enough to help their teenagers. They do not feel competent and confident, thus may avoid contact with the school because they do not see their contribution as would produce positive results. Parent AA said:

“I only did standard six and I am old so what can I help with…”

As these parents were uneducated, they were not familiar with the system being used at school and they did not know their role in the process. Parents saw themselves as having a role at home to provide food and buy textbooks, expect educators to take a full responsibility at school as Parent JJ said:

“I make sure that she has books for school and teachers need to play their part.”

The research also indicated that other parents saw their roles as more than buying textbooks and stationery. Parent HH said:

“Is try to find out where she maybe struggling in terms of her work, how to help her so she can be better and also look at the cause of the problem at the same time teaching her problem solving skills.”

Research also revealed that parents base their involvement on the invitation and the age of the child. Deslandes and Bertrand (2005) argue that when teenagers
ask for help with homework, they are expressing explicit invitations and if they express their desire to work alone, parents respond by reducing their involvement. This was supported by Parent GG:

“I don’t usually get involved in his homework unless if he asks.”

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) point out that the issue of parental roles become more apparent as children progress through to high school and their schoolwork becomes more advanced. As many parents may not be familiar with the education system, not know what needs to be done and their roles, they may think that they are just parents. Thus, would live the educational matters to educators. That would result in parent and school constituting separate roles in the education process. This was evident in the study as some parents did not view themselves in partnership with the school. They expected educators to do more at school as experts. Parent CC said:

“Teachers are experts so they must teach her the way she should be taught and not tell me to help her with the homework. I have many things to do than to do school with her. Why they cannot see the reason I am sending her to school.”

Parents often do not feel welcome at school and do not communicate their thoughts (Stapler & Diliberto, 2010). They feel that what they may have to offer is unimportant or the knowledge they have might not be interesting for the school. Some parents indicated that they did not voice out their concerns for the fear that they did not know how they would be received. Maphanga (2006) states that educators may oppose parental involvement fearing that parents may be interfering in educational matters. It is not all schools which are welcoming and that may be a barrier to parental involvement. This was supported by Parent DD:

“Teachers like to think we are telling them about their jobs and how to do it yet we are only talking about our children.”
Blok et al., (2007) indicate that this usually happens when parents put pressure on educators for excellent results. Nojaja (2009) also states that educators may feel that their educational rights and freedom are being threatened by effective parental involvement. Parents felt that they were crossing the line. This point was supported by Parent JJ:

“I don’t communicate my thoughts because I don’t want teachers to think I am better.”

Parent EE said:

“…I don’t want to be seen as if I am forcing them into doing something they are not willing to do.”

Parent CC said:

“Whatever ideas I may have, it is difficult to communicate them because of the fights among teachers and how teachers may feel about my comments.”

4.3.3.3 Competence

Parents also indicated that they were reluctant to engage in school activities because they were not educated thus felt inferior before knowledgeable educators. Some parents indicated that they felt out of place as a result they distanced themselves from school activities. Parent AA said:

“No, I am not. I hear she talks about things I have never heard of so how I can even begin to help her… I cannot go to her school to turn myself into a joke.”

Parents who struggle academically do not have the basic skills necessary to assist their children with schoolwork. These parents according to Nojaja (2009) find it difficult to be involved when they have not had positive experience in the education realm. DePlanyt et al., (2007) hold the same view that parents would find it difficult and intimidating to be involved when they feel they are a limited resource to their teenager’s education. This was supported by Parent EE:
“I did not finish school. I left when I was in standard nine so how can I be expected to help anyone about schoolwork. The only thing I can do is to look for someone to help.”

The thinking that teenagers might be in need of independence might cause parents to decrease their level of involvement and the fact that a child had moved from a primary school to a high school proved to be a barrier for some parents because they were less informed in some of the learning areas offered in high schools. Parent FF said:

“No, I don’t think so. I did not finish high school. They are learning new things, more difficult things besides I have said I don’t stay here.”

4.3.4 THEME 4: Strategies to be utilised

This theme looks at the programmes and strategies that could be initiated by the parents, schools and communities to assist parents on what constitutes a home condition that supports learning so parents could be effectively involved in the education of their children.

4.3.4.1 The rearing practices

The performance of teenagers at school is determined to a large extent by rearing practices they are exposed to in their homes. Parental involvement and communication help to motivate and encourage child’s high aspirations, and sound development in socio-economic and cognitive domains (Bae-Suh, 2012, p. 22; Chabra & Kumari, 2011, p. 73). They further argue that the value that parents attach to education could affect teenager’s attitude towards school and their willingness to succeed in their school related activities, thus, reduce drop-out (Lemmer, 2007). Parent BB agreed with the statement:

“First as a parent you need to take a lead being reliable and show commitment in assisting a child to a place where he can stand on his own.”
Parents believed that this could be achieved through establishing achievable goals together with a child. Those goals would work as reassurance that the process was working so the child would not feel a sense that it was all permanent but at some point would be given autonomy. It is clear from the results that parents needed to lead by prioritising the education so as to be exemplary to their children and do constant follow-ups on what the child did at school. If they had a time-table for which a parent needed to assist the child. It would be appropriate for parents not to be present for sessions because that would be teaching a child that it is acceptable to make excuses and not honour his or words. The establishment of achievable goals start by parents having conversations with their children about school related activities (Kannapathi, 2012). Parent HH indicated that:

“At home we have daily chats with her about things of interest which may have happened at school.”

Parents indicated that even though some were not educated that should not stop them from getting involved in the education process. Hence, they believed that they can make use of external resources. For example, hiring a tutor would help. Parent GG said:

“I usually ask children from next-door who have completed their studies to help him with her schoolwork and they never disappoint.”

Parents who were illiterate were of the opinion that saying you were not educated should not be used as an excuse. However, parents could try to equip themselves through adult education so they could be exemplary to their children. Parent GG attested to improving her educational level.

“I did not get very far in terms of my education but I have started attending adults’ classes. This in a way shows him that education is important and age does not really matter.”

Other parents suggested that parents should be seen reading to their children or reading themselves to improve vocabulary and to know what other people in other places were doing. Blok et al., (2007), state that parents need to set example by reading for pleasure. Parent GG said:
“I like to read so I buy books and read them to him. I have been doing this ever since…”

Parent BB said:

“My nephew knows that I do a lot of research and reading. I also encourage him to read at least a newspaper each day and in that way we are able to have a dialogue about current affairs affecting the world.”

Parent II said:

“I am also studying which motivates him to do the same.”

Parents suggested that children should be given less household chores during the course of the week to accommodate for schoolwork. Parent JJ said:

“I also think children should be given less household chores especially if the child is a slow learner so s/he have more time to study or practice their work.”

4.3.4.2 Capacitating workshops

Parents need to be corrected of the idea that school is the domain for educators by being welcoming and encouraging them to come to school for help more often. The results of the study indicated that the majority of parents were aware of the importance of being involved in the education of their children even though they might have not been involved. There were several reasons which they mentioned, including not knowing what and how to be. They indicated that they needed workshops where they could be enlightened and capacitated on how to be meaningfully involved in their teenager’s education. In the words of Parent GG:

“I don’t think I am doing enough for my child at school but I don’t really know what else can I do and how to do it maybe if teachers can tell or teach us other ways of being involved. Say they call us to a meeting just to teach us not to tell us about money.”
This makes it clear that some parents needed help in order to help their teenagers. This point is supported by Haack (2007) that parents may not value education or have the necessary skills to assist their children in their schoolwork but the use of workshops organised by the school would aid them. Parent II indicated that:

“Holding workshops to simple indicate the value of education in a child and how parents can show commitment and consistence when it comes to their child’s education.”

Many parents indicated that they would like to be involved in the school but they are never encouraged or invited except when there is a problem. On the other hand, Epstein (2001) contends that parents do not have sufficient time to be involved in the education of their children. Parent HH said:

“I am a single working father. I find it difficult to meet with the teachers during school hours and I can’t skip work.”

Non-the-less parents would be interested in getting involved in a school that acknowledges their efforts. As educators would be organising these workshops or seminars for parents it would be important that they take the parent’s diverse circumstances into account. Bae-Suh (2012) states that as educators scheduled these events should be in multiple time-slots, including in the evening or during weekends so as to meet all types of parents’ schedules. Parents also suggested that they should be informed in time with frequent reminders, in order to make or arrange time and essential service ahead of time. Parent JJ was of the opinion and said:

“If teachers want to see us at least they should tell us in advanced so we could request our employers for an early leave or something.”

Bae-Suh (2012), points out that parents do not frequently participate in school related activities because they feel that their experience of being involved is not useful in their parenting. This argument is supported by Epstein (2002), Griffin and Steen (2010) that parental involvement must be supportive to parents’
parenting. Parents indicated that they would like to benefit from their visits to the school. Hence, Parent DD said:

“My attending of school meetings depends on what is to be discussed. I cannot go to school only to find that I am there to listen to their politics.”

Therefore, educators need to identify the needs of parents and how they can be involved prior to planning and implementing parental involvement programmes. Involving parents in a variety of activities should not be seasonal but throughout the school year, and that would send a message that the school and parents are members of a real team working together to create a nurturing learning environment for the teenagers. Stapler and Diliberto (2010) are of the view that parental involvement programmes should vary in frequency, time commitment, educational comfort and type. Educators may make use of interviews. Tekin (2011) posits that schools should be directed to provide training for parents and co-ordinate parental involvement activities with their school programmes. This was evident as Parent JJ said:

“Why can’t they ask us early what exactly would we like help in so we could see how going there benefits us.”

Eccles (2005) agrees with the parents that their training should influence their educational practices at home and the skills children have to model. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) also add that parents would gain a better understanding of the development of their teenagers and confidence about their parenting styles. Furthermore, through the meetings, parents should be encouraged to provide educators with specific and useful information about their teenagers, including abilities, feelings, needs and so forth. This would assist educators in designing effective educational programmes for the teenagers. Bae-Suh (2012) points out that educators should guard against the need to setting irrelevant and unrealistic expectations of parental involvement.

Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004) point out that capacitating workshops should not only focus on parents. Murray, Mereoiu and Handyside (2013) state that in order to establish parent-educator relationships higher institutions of learning for educators need to design a foundation course within it special education
programmes in which educators are expected to work in collaboration with parents of special needs children. These educators should be thought core aspects of partnerships and be provided with opportunities to practice collaboration skills necessary to encourage parental involvement in the educational process. Educators need to be trained on how to communicate both verbally and in writing in a manner that would not cause conflict or confrontation. Parent EE indicated her unhappiness about the way educators communicate their thoughts and said:

“Sometimes they fail to report on matter or reprimands her for what she does wrong but end up calling her names which I don’t like as a parent. You might feel that your child is being ill-treated and to be always complaining does not help because they might end up failing your child.”

Parent JJ said:

*I do not like it when teachers talk to us anyhow about our children. I agree to them they may just be another child that needs more attention but to us they are our children and we want the best for them, with their assistance, of course.*

Furthermore, Stapler and Diliberto (2010) state that successful parent-educator collaboration should include building rapport, developing communication system with a maintenance plan and creating special additional opportunities for parents to be involved.

### 4.3.4.3 Volunteering

The school needs to re-assure parents that it needs their support in order to achieve its goals and in order for that to happen, educators need to recognise parents. Educators need to be welcoming to parents and show a positive attitude toward their contribution. Parent JJ indicated:

“When visiting the school, teachers have a tendency to pass you by as if you are not even there and I think it got even worse if you did not make an appointment.”
Such attitudes of educators would make parents not to want to be part of the school. Bae-Suh (2012) states that parents need to be considered an asset to the school and their contribution should be valued and honoured. Therefore, parents need to be made to feel that they are respected, recognised by the school and are included in the process of educating their children. This would also mean that educators need to develop effective skills to communicate with parents. They would need to learn to be welcoming to parents and work toward building a partnership with them.

Parents indicated that they are aware that there are other tasks which they think they can participate in. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that parents know that their roles have extended to making decisions in hiring new educators, selecting the school curriculum suitable to their children’s development and progress (Bae-Suh, 2012).

Some parents stated that one strategy to increase parental involvement is through volunteering. They indicated that if they could be invited to participate in different parent-educator programmes. Parent JJ said:

“I sometimes see children on the street during school hours and others are rude and say to myself if I could be asked to be a member of the disciplinary committee I am sure I can make a difference.”

Some parents suggested that it would be beneficial to invite them to school in some capacity to help. In this way parents might feel appreciated and in control, and at the same time would provide them with insight into the way the school functions. They would feel that they were on the same side as educators in supporting their children. Hence, Parent CC said:

“I would like to help during sports or fun days.”

Parent FF also said:

There is an orphan’s programme, as a parent I would like to be a part of that programme so to help children.”
4.3.4.4 Community programmes

According to ecosystemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) the development of a child cannot be seen as affected by the factors within him/her but also the surrounding environment. Epstein (2001) states that children are found in school, home and communities and they link members of each group. For that reason, schools need to collaborate with the community. The community have essential resources that may be called upon to support parents and school health. It is therefore important that the school forge a strong communication link with the community it serves and that could be done through involving parents.

If there is a close communication between the school and its community, a shared goal could be established. Again, there would be public support for the school and commitment to assist the school to achieve its educational objectives. Parents indicated that the school might make use of community programmes to promote a healthy relationship between the school, parents, as well as community leaders who could help build a bridge as opposed to building a wall. Community programmes which are connected to the school are most likely to assist parents with their children (Sharon, 2014). Parent HH believed so as he said:

“If the school can work with the counsellor on teaching people about disability so that our children could be accepted in our community and not be bullied would help improve the lives of many.”

4.4 SUMMARY

Parental involvement is the most significant factor contributing to a child’s success at school. So for education to be successful parental involvement is of prime importance. The need for parents to be encouraged to be involved at a level that is comfortable for them is necessary, and schools can provide a variety of platforms for the exchange of information. However, it should not be forgotten that some parents have always been actively involved in enhancing their teenager’s development and educational progress. Parents make a valuable
contribution through their commitment to and knowledge of their teenagers' special needs.

As has been indicated, by most parents that they were involved in the education of their teenagers, mostly by providing support, attending school meetings but also by forming relationships with educators which led to partnerships. Therefore, schools must understand that lack of parental involvement does not necessarily mean parents are neglecting their responsibilities. They simply may not have time, resources or do not know how to be involved. It then becomes the responsibility of the school to equip parents with programmes and strategies on how they could be effective in their parental involvement. Those effective programmes would need to recognise the support that could be provided by the community organisations. The more actively involved parents are, the better their teenagers perform and stay in school.

The next chapter will draw conclusions and highlight some guidelines, limitations and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summarised steps used in the research from the previous four chapters before presenting the recommendations in the form of guidelines. Qualitative research was conducted to draw out participants’ account, perceptions and beliefs around parental involvement of parents in the education of their teenagers with special needs in a high school. The researcher utilised the descriptive and contextual research design. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants which the researcher thought would provide with rich descriptions of their beliefs.

Ten parents were interviewed, using the language they best understood. To better understand how they viewed parental involvement and what were the techniques they would like the school to employ to improve parental involvement. Twenty one (21) questions were asked which yielded data to answer the three research questions. Tesch’s (1990) method of data analysis was used to assist the researcher in reducing the massive data into relevant themes and sub-themes (refer to chapter three, 3.5).

5.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Ruskus and Gerulaitis (2010), the idea of parental involvement is a crucial component in the education of any child. Thus, the Education White Paper 1 (1995), states that parents have a primary responsibility for the education of their children and to take part in governance. Parent of the special needs children were likely to be more involved in the education process of their children because their teenagers may be more struggling socially, academically, physically and even emotionally. To find out whether parents know their primary
responsibility, how they become involved and how they would like further assistance the following research questions were formulated.

The research questions for the study were:

5.1.1 Was there parental satisfaction in the opportunities granted by the school for them to be involved in the education of their teenagers with special needs?

5.1.2 Did a learner achievement level improve through parental involvement for teenagers with special needs in high schools?

5.1.3 How did parents perceive their role in the special education process?

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The literature viewed pointed out the importance of parental involvement in the education of their school children. Schools also play a role in how they influence and support parental involvement through their practices. The study revealed parent’s views on parental involvement and how they would like to be assisted so they be more effectively involved. It was discovered that it is not all parents who shared a view on good relations with the educators. It was evident that respect and trust were the basis for the formation of a good relationship, making it easy for parents to interact with educators, and for educators not to feel threatened by the involvement of parents in educational matters. Parents indicated that they were aware of their involvement in the school related activities and that their children and school want them to be involved.

The notion of leaving education in the hands of professionals was clear. This view emerged from Al-Shammari and Yawkey (2008) who explain that this may have been due to parents not knowing their roles, what they want for their school children (Tekin, 2011) and the beliefs they hold about the school and education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Al-Shammari and Yawkey (2008), further state that
parents need to provide educators with information about the child’s strengths and needs at home to help in the development of that child’s educational programmes. Many parents work far from home. They live early for work and come back late at night as a result are unable to assist their children with homework. Many times they live it to the hands of the other members of the family or neighbours.

Parents revealed that assisting their teenagers with homework was sometimes difficult since they did not finish grade twelve and they believe that the content was different. They felt incompetent to assist and also believed that their teenagers knew better since were old enough, and should they encounter problems, believed that they were to indicate. De Planyt et al., (2007) state that some parents find it difficult and intimidated to be involved in the education of their children as they feel they have limited knowledge. The extent to which parents believed that they can have a positive influence on their teenager’s education was evident. Parents indicated that they were aware of how their involvement influenced the performance of their children. They saw a change in the self-esteem of their children which in turn influenced academic achievements. The study revealed that volunteers were hardly used and if ever they were used, they would not be used for classroom purposes but administrative purposes. If a parent comes to school, it would be because the child has done something wrong and that does not translate into parents being equal partners. Maphanga (2006) is of the opinion that if parents are correctly solicited they are usually more than willing to participate in school activities. They all agreed that time to study should be provided at home.

However, the parents needed more help and guidance on various ways they could employ to improve the academic performance and self-esteem of their teenagers.

Parents thought workshops or seminars should be organised by the schools so that they could be taught how to assist their children or identify areas of development. Haack (2007) believes that workshops organised by the school aid parents by providing them with necessary skills to assist their teenagers with school related activities. These workshops may serve as basis for the formation of support groups for parents. As Al-Dababneh and Bataineh (2012) point out
that parents of children with special needs are more likely to face challenges so being in a support group with people who understand their difficulties easy frustrations. Parents were of the view that schools needed to have policies in place that spoke to parental involvement of parents of children with special needs in high school. Epstein (2001) points out that schools should formulate policies which are explicit and which clarify the range of ways in which parents could be effectively involved in the education of their children.

Parents held a belief about what was important, necessary and permissible for them to do and on behalf of their children. They believed that it was crucial for them to attend school meetings. Parents pointed out that they would like to attend meetings organised by the school but indicated that due to time and work, they found themselves unable to attend most meetings. Thus, suggesting that support programmes should take into account their working hours. Schools need to be flexible in dealing with parents, in terms of time for the meetings or school visits. Supported by Bae-Suh (2012) parents indicated that schools should endeavour to support the involvement of parents who were already involved in the school related activities of their teenagers and at the same time tried to reach those parents who were less involved. Parental involvement was largely equated with attending meetings no programmes indicated by parents that was aiming at making their children fit within the community or to be better perceived by the community. The findings showed that school did not share partnership with the community as a result educators did not understand the culture of the community they were serving.

5.3 THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

To understand the role of parents in the education of their children a literature study on different ways of parental involvement was undertaken. The comparison was made between how developed countries and developing countries perceive and engage parents in the education process. Both these countries encourage and promote the parental involvement. However, in developing countries there is still a lack of parental involvement due to factors such as meaning parents ascribe to parental involvement (Makgopa &
Mokhelele, 2013), uneducated parents (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011), age of a child (Yoder & Lopez, 2013), personalised relationships between parents and school (Okeke, 2014), and limited time availability of parents (Bae-Suh, 2012). The laws and legislations that promote parental involvement were also looked at. Both developed and developing countries have special laws ensuring adequate involvement of parents. Developed countries usually make use of school psychologists to ensure that best practices are implemented in order to establish a healthy relationship between the school and parents but developing countries are still lagging behind as they face a shortage of such professionals.

Epstein theory of overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 1995), was discussed, emphasising that learners should be the focal point of all programmes to foster parental involvement and that learners succeed at a higher level when internal and external models of influence intersect and work together to promote learning. Furthermore, Epstein’s (ibid.) typology of parental involvement was discussed. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecosystemic theory showed that a strong family and school linkage for the academic and socio-emotional development of a child with special needs is important and should be sustained. Therefore, the literature in chapter two affirms the findings, as it shows that schools’ practices makes a difference in the parental involvement.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Education laws in South Africa mandate parental involvement. However, parental involvement is often thwarted by barriers. Parental involvement can be influenced by a number of things including, educators, learners and parents themselves. The following are the recommendations based on the views of participants on what all three parties namely the school, parents and communities need to do to promote learning.

➢ The mission statement of the school could highlight the importance of home-school relationship and that would mean the school was communicating it commitment to include parents as partners in the education of their children.
The point of departure for the school in addressing parental involvement, should be the identification of barriers and systematically address them. Barriers should not necessarily be seen as negatives, but as opportunities to change practices in a way that would increase perspective taking and understanding between the school and parents, and parents would understand their roles and responsibilities better.

There should be a paradigm shift on the side of educators. They need to know and understand that parents are not at school to scrutinise them but to play a role in the education process. To create such change in thinking, educators would need to work with parents to prevent and break down any barriers that disengage parents from being actively involved.

Schools’ climate could have a significant effect on parent-school relationship, so educators need to ensure that they create a welcoming climate that fosters trust between them and parents. A welcoming climate would set the context for positive involvement of parents. This climate could be established through invitations to engage with educators about their concerns in the language they best understand.

Good communication between the school and home is important to keep parents in touch with the child’s educational needs and success. Both the school and parents need to share information about the child’s interest, needs and progress, and inform each other about their expectations with respect to the child’s achievement, behaviour and discipline. Parents also need to be afforded with an opportunity to voice out their concerns in a more appropriate manner. They should be given chances to suggest how certain problems could be dealt with. An individualised method or strategy to communicate with parents may be established which could be through phone calls or personal notes.
Through this parents would be drawn to specific information about their children making it easy for parents to be involved because it would be structured strategy.

- Communication from the school should not be labelled as bad news. Labelling it as bad news would suggest that educators only communicate with parents when their children misbehave or face significant academic problems. Positive input or feedback to parents would be an indication that educators see the child, not just her or his weaknesses. The good feeling that parents get when they receive good news about their teenagers would build up to being more responsive and willing to listen to educators concerns and suggestions about their children.

- Through communication with parents, educators may request feedback from parents on the effectiveness of their strategies and calibrate their practices accordingly.

- Educators need to believe in the value of making decisions with the parents. They need to recognise and acknowledge parent’s expertise and seek input from them on regular basis, especially when addressing learner’s needs. In such a way, parents would feel they are a resource for addressing educational concerns and help deal with their efficacy.

- Educators should be trained on how to work with parents and their professional development should incorporate the importance of the role of parents in the life of learners with special need, harness parental power, as means of improving and sustaining parental involvement. Higher institutions of learning for educators, Department of Education and Unions alike should give parental involvement sufficient time in their developmental programmes. This would assist educators in better understanding the critical role played by parents in the education of their children.
➢ To have parent-educator workshops, could also assist in building and maintaining the relations between educators and parents. Murray and Curran (2008) conducted a study on educators’ course that included embedded parents as participants in all the course meetings and also parents as co-educators. Their study revealed that at the beginning educators viewed parents as uncaring and unknowledgeable partners. As the course neared the end, educators were able to recognise how their attitudes, beliefs and practices played a role in establishing effective partnerships with parents. Therefore, pairing parents with educators would assist educators appreciate the perspective of parents of children with special needs. The benefit for parents would be empowerment and confidence in their parenting skills, parents would not feel intimidated by the school or educators instead would realise that they are sensitive professionals. In turn, this would lead to the formation of trusting relationships. With regard to educators who are already in the teaching fraternity, workshops and seminars could be organised at school levels to achieve a comprehensive understanding of parental involvement and acquire skills to manage and deal with it. In turn, would assist educators to alter their bias on parental involvement and work together with parents in harmony.

➢ The school needs to have clear policies that speak to parental involvement and all stakeholders should be involved in the formulation of these policies. These policies would have to have clear guidelines and realistic expectations. If all parties knew, when and how to do, what was required of them, there would be less disharmony. These specific programmes should guide parents on how to help their teenagers at home and train them on effective communication and partnership skills. The school initiated activities can have a strong influence on learner’s school performance.
According to Epstein (2001), parents are mostly effectively involved when educators encourage their involvement. So schools need to be welcoming to parents and show parents that they value their involvement in any of school related matters. It would be crucial for the school personnel to encourage parents to work with educators in educational matters, but also to plan and implement field days, athletic festivals or dance performances. To better improve parents’ understanding of parental involvement it would be essential that there be workshops where the concept is explicated to the parents so that they fully comprehend what it means. The content of the workshops may also include matters such as focus activities to help parents understand some elements of the curriculum, advice about revision techniques, chores teenagers may be expected to perform before and after school, the need to forge positive relations between the school, parents and community.

If learners were given too much work before and after school what may prove to be strenuous for their mental functioning and fail to do their homework. If there are poor relations between educators and parents, that would impact negatively and parental involvement would be compromised. On the other hand, parents need to be pro-active to seek support from the school or other agencies so that they can best support their teenagers. This should also extend to them forming their own support networks and reference groups. Again, parents need to regard educators as caring and respectful, and educators need not to draw conclusions about parents instead strive to understand their perspectives and desires. They need not be judgemental to parents on the basis of their educational level or whatever information they may know about parents.

Both parties should adopt a win-win attitude in the presence of different opinions. Different opinions should be expected because
parents and educators observe learners in their respective settings. A learner does not always behave the same way at school and at home. The win-win approach would assist in avoiding the blame game when learners are having learning and behavioural problems at school.

Parents decrease their parental involvement as their children progress to high schools. Non-the-less, parents still need to be involved. Many parents are not aware of their opportunities to become involved than to wait for the school to invite them or buy uniform. Taken as a whole, findings suggested that parents of children with special needs were influenced by multiple, complex reasons when deciding to be involved in their children’s educational process.

- Parents need to model the value of learning, self-discipline and hard-work. Their children need to know and understand that achievement comes from working hard and by being disciplined. Therefore, parents need to motivate their children to reach higher heights through making them realise that they have the potential to achieve great things in life as long as they are determined, motivated and self-willed.

- Parents need to ensure that there is stimulating experience at home through reading of books, watching learning channels on television (TV) or reading for their children. Parents should also learn to read newspapers and be informative. This would help instil the love of reading and books to their children. Reading, writing and listening should be taught and encouraged. Parents could listen to their children read and then talk about what was read. Traditional games could be used to enhance reading and mathematics skills. Folklore could also be used to enhance reading and narrative skills and moral values, as well as idles to promote logical thinking. These activities would not only promote educational interactions between children and their parents but
would remove the feeling of efficacy by parents and increase family time.

➤ Parents need to show interest in their children’s schoolwork by maintaining a warm and supporting environment. They need to interact with their teenagers where they would have discussions about the value of education and possible career options for their children. The provision or establishment of a daily family routine that would ensure that there is quiet time and place to study and being firm about bedtime. This would translate to their children that homework is important and everything has its own time and place. By doing this, parents would be monitoring out of school activities. For example, setting limit to TV watching, arranging for another person preferably a tutor to help with schoolwork and checking up on the work that is being done.

➤ Parents need to have school visits more regularly because that would reinforce the view in their teenagers what school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family life.

➤ Children with special needs to be taught self-advocacy. This would allow them to have guided conversations with their parents about their practical experiences at school. This in turn, would assist parents who are encountering difficulties integrating within the educational environment.

The relationship that is between the school and community it serves should be grounded on the notion that schools are an extension of communities and the two are bound by economic conditions, concept of family, religion and politics (Bjork, Lewis, Browne, Ferrigno, & Donkor, 2012, p. 238). The schools need to practice, model democracy and re-establish symbolic relationships with the communities in which they function.
Positive things need to be said to the community as other people may hear about the school through the grapevine even long before they enrol their children. To promote this idea, the school can host special events. For example, group information sharing, cultural festivals and awareness campaigns. Among the community many organisations exist that could be used to influence the health, safety and learning potential of special need learners. Epstein (1995), states that schools need to identify resources and services within the communities they serve that are aimed at strengthening home-school-community relationships in which school programmes, family practices and learner development could be integral. Parents and community leaders should be used as vehicles for the school in the implementation of these programmes.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- To promote awareness of the factors that might hinder parental involvement in the education process of children with special needs.
- The results suggested the importance of educating educators not only on the importance of getting parents involved in their children’s education, but also educating them on the notion that parents are in fact able to help their teenagers do well in school.
- Results also highlighted the importance of using a strength based approach to problem solving by identifying the strengths of parents and of educators, in addition to strength of teenagers.
- To offer clear guidelines about parental involvement in the school and at home.
- To influence the formulation of policies that could clarify the range of ways in which parents could be involved.
5.6 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

- Parents’ perceptions were self-report.
- Participants were African parents with teenagers with special needs in high school and the study could not be generalised to other races.
- Again, findings cannot be generalised to the whole population because the participants were from a small sample since it looked at parents with learners in a single African school.
- Some parents who had initially agreed to be part of the study were not available due to personal commitments.
- Interviews were time consuming and required careful preparations.

5.7 FUTURE RESEARCH

- Conduct a research in former model C schools and in other African schools to determine how parents of children with special needs perceive parental involvement.
- Research is needed that examine the effect of interventions that are designed to alter the involvement of parents when invited by their children regardless of abilities and age.
- To examine the effectiveness of policies by the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal on parental involvement in high schools.
- To examine children’s perceptions of their parents’ educational practices.

5.8 CONCLUSION

Increased parental involvement has shown to increase learner achievement, improve self-esteem, increase parent-educator satisfaction, as well as good school climate. Schools can involve parents in a number of ways including, learning at home, forming partnerships with parents, inviting parents to offer their free services, and engaging with the community. Policies may be used to
encourage parents, communities to be actively involved in their school and become an integral part of the school improvement effort. Clearly, getting all parents or most parents involved could take a long time, but schools have an obligation to provide timely access information, by using effective communication tools that address various family structures and are in the language which is best understood by parents. Workshops that may be offered at school need to enhance learning at home.

It should be noted that schools cannot do this alone so parents would need to build on school's effort and work with educators in a positive way. School-parent-community partnerships should not be stand-alone projects or add on programmes, but should well be integrated with the school overall mission and goals. Again, outreach programmes should be developed to inform communities about school and parental involvement, policies and other programmes that may benefit the community.
6. REFERENCES


## ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate Number</th>
<th>UZREC 171110-030-RA Level 02 PGM 2014/143</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Title</td>
<td>Parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs from a Pinetown District High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Researcher/Investigator</td>
<td>NO Khumalo-Mbokazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor and Co-supervisor</td>
<td>Prof DR Nzima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Educational Psychology and Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Project</td>
<td>Honours/4th Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Zululand’s Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate.

**Special conditions:**

1. The Principal Researcher must report to the UZREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.
2. Documents marked “To be submitted” (see page 2) must be presented for ethical clearance before any data collection can commence.

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved.

**Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of**

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research
ANNEXURE B

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title: Parental Involvement in the Education of Teenagers with Special Needs from a High School in Pinetown District.

Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi from the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to ascertain whether parents are satisfied with the opportunities offered by the school for them to become involved in the education of their children, to determine whether teenagers’ performance improves as a result of active involvement of parents in their education, and to ascertain how parents perceive their role in the special education programmes.

2. The University has given ethical clearance to the research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.

3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards providing parents with and understanding that their involvement will benefit their teenagers in gaining academic success. The results of the study would contribute to the establishments of guidelines for the support of parents to equip them so they are able to deal with their teenagers with special needs. This would also assist in their psychological well-being. The educators would understand the perceptions of parents on the contribution being made by them (teachers) thus would lead to a more approachable method being adopted by educators. The study will also contribute in the development of effective programmes which could help foster parent’s awareness and parent training sessions which could introduce parents to their new roles in schools. Further, the Department of education would see their role of encouraging the active participation of parents through the use of School Governing Bodies (S.G.B).
4. I will participate in the project by providing necessary information that would be required through interviews that would take place.

5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

6. I will not be compensated for the participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

7. There are no risks associated with participation in the project.

8. The research intends publishing the research results in the form of a dissertation and article. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

9. I will receive feedback in the form of ...regarding the results obtained during the study.

10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi, contact no. +27 84 555 6198.

11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I........................................................................ have read the above information/confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document’s contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the abovementioned project.

_________________________   __________________
Participant’s signature          Date
**IMVUME ECHAZIWE YOMZALI/MGADI WENGANE**

**ISIFUNGO SEMVUME ESICHAZIWE**

(Umzali noma Umbeki wengane)

**Isihloko Somsebenzi:** Ukubandakanyeka kwabazali emfundweni yetsha yabo enezidingo ezikhethekile zasesifundeni sasePinetown ezisemabangeni aphakeme.

**Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi** osuka esikhungweni seZemfundo eNyuesi yaseZululand, ucele imvume yami ukuba ngibandakanyeke ocwaningweni olubalulwe ngenhla.

Isimo nenhloso yocwaningo, neyesifungo semvume echaziwe, ichaziwe kimina ngolimu engiluqondayo.

NgQtyaqonda ukuthi:

1. Inhloso yocwaningo ukuthola ukuthi kungabe abazala bayaneliseka yini mayelana namathuba abawanikezwa isikole okuba bazibandakanye emfundweni yezingane zabo, ukubheka ukuthi imiphumela yabantwana ibangcono yini emuva kokungenelele kwabazali emfundweni kanye nokuthola ukuthi abazali balibona linjani iqhaza labo emfundweni.
2. Inyuvesi yaseZululand inginikile imvume yalolucwaningo futhi ngisibonile isitifiketi semvume.
3. Ngokuzibandakanya kulolucwaningo, ngiphonsa esivivaneni ukukhombisa ukuthi ukuzibandakanya komzali emfundweni yengane kuyihlomulisa kanjani. Imiphumela yocwaningo izosisa ekwakheni inqubo mgomo ezosiza abazali banakekele itsa yabo enezidingo ezikhethekile kangcono, ekwakhiweni kwezindlela ezingcono zokusiza abazali nothisha, ukuqgeqgeshwa kwabazali kwindima okumele bayidlale emfundweni kanye nokuthi umnyango wezemfundo ubone isidingo sokuqguqguquzela abazali kusetshenziswa umkhandlu wabazali.
5. Ukubandakanyeka kwami kuwukuzikhethela nanoma yinini nxa sengifisa ukuyeka ukuqhubeka nokubandakanyeka, ngiyokwazi ukuyeka ngaphandle kwanoma yimiphi imiphumela emibi.
6. Akukho nkokhelo engizoyithola ngokubandakanyeka ocwaningweni.
7. Abukho ubungozi obupathelene nocwaningwo.
11. Ngokusayina lesisifungo semvume echaziwe ngiyavuma ukunikela ngamalungelo ami omthetho.
12. Ikhophi yalesisifungo semvumo echaziwe ngizoyinkezwa, bese ungqo wekhophi izogcinwa kumarekhodi.

Mina---------------------------------------------------ngifundile ulwazi olungenhla/
ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ulwazi olungenhla ngichazelwe ngolimu engiluqondayo
nanokuthi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe yilomqulu. Ngiyibuzile yonke imibuzo
ebengifisa ukuyibuza futhi iphendulwe ngokunelisekile. Ngikuqonda
ngokugcwele okulindeleke kimina ngesikhathi socwalingo.

Angifakelwanga ingcindezi nanoma ngayiphi indlela ukuvuma yingxenye
yocwalingo. Ngokusayina ngezansi, ngiyazvumela mina ukuba ingxenye
yocwalingo.
ANNEXURE C: RESEARCHER’S DECLARATION

RESEARCHER’S DECLARATION

I, Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi declare that:

I explained the information in this document to……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

- Requested him/her to ask questions if anything was unclear and I have answered them as best as I can.
- I am satisfied that s/he sufficient understands all aspects of the research so as to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate.
- The conversation took place in IsiZulu/ English
- I did not use an interpreter.

………………………
Research’s signature

……………………………
Date
The Research Unit, Resource Planning, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

Private Bag x 9137
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master’s student in Educational Psychology in the Department of Education and Special Needs at the University of Zululand. My supervisor is Prof. D.R. Nzima.

The proposed topic of my research is ‘parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs from a High school in Pinetown district’. The objectives of the study are:

(a) To ascertain whether parents are satisfied with the opportunities offered by the school for them to become involved in the education of their children.
(b) To determine whether teenagers’ performance improves as a result of active involvement of parents in their education.
(c) To ascertain how parents perceive their role in the special education programmes.

I am hereby seeking your consent to access participants so I could conduct research. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter:

(a) A copy of an ethical clearance certificate issued by the University
(b) A copy of the research instruments which I intend using in my research
Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

**Researcher’s contacts**
Nonhle Khumalo-Mbokazi  
+27 84 555 6198  
ntle@vodamail.co.za

**Supervisor’s contacts**
Prof. D.R. Nzima  
+27 71 253 0458  
NzimaD@unizulu.ac.za

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the dissertation.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

…………………………

Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi
The District Manager  
KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education  
Voortrekker Straad  
3610  
Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master’s student in Educational Psychology in the Department of Education and Special Needs at the University of Zululand. My supervisor is Prof. D.R. Nzima.

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University of Zululand  
P.O. Box X 1001  
Kwa-Dlangezwa  
3886  
15 July 2014
Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

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Nonhle Khumalo-Mbokazi  
+27 84 555 6198  
ntle@vodamail.co.za

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NzimaD@unizulu.ac.za

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Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

...........................................................

Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi
ANNEXURE F: SAMPLE ACCESS LETTER TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

University of Zululand
P.O. Box X 1001
Kwa-Dlangezwa
3886
15 July 2014

The Principal
Mathabela High School
Hillcrest
3000
Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master’s student in Educational Psychology in the Department of Education and Special Needs at the University of Zululand. My supervisor is Prof. D.R. Nzima.

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I am hereby seeking your consent to access participants so I could conduct research. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter:

(a) A copy of an ethical clearance certificate issued by the University
(b) A copy of the research instruments which I intend using in my research

132
Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher's contacts</th>
<th>Supervisor's contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonhle Khumalo-Mbokazi</td>
<td>Prof. D.R. Nzima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+27 84 555 6198</td>
<td>+27 71 253 0458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ntle@vodamail.co.za">ntle@vodamail.co.za</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:NzimaD@unizulu.ac.za">NzimaD@unizulu.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the dissertation.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi
ANNEXURE G: SAMPLE INTERVIEW SHEET/SCHEDULE

SAMPLE INTERVIEW INFORMATION

**Purpose of the study:** is to ascertain whether parents are satisfied with the opportunities offered by the school for them to become involved in the education of their children, to determine whether teenagers’ performance improves as a result of active involvement of parents in their education, and to ascertain how parents perceive their role in the special education programmes.

**What you will do in this research:** If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to participate in one interview. You will be asked several questions. Some of them will be about your involvement in your child’s education and others will be about things you would like to see happening to assist you with your child’s academic progress. With your permission, I will tape record the interviews so I do not have to make many notes. You will be asked to state your name on the recording.

**Time required:** The interview will take approximately 2 hours.

**Risks:** No risks are anticipated.

**Benefits:** This is a chance for you to tell your story about your involvement in the education of your child.

**Compensation:** There will be no cash payment.

**Confidentiality:** Your responses to research questions will be kept confidential. At no will your actual identity be revealed. You will be assigned a pseudonym. Anyone who helps me transcribe responses will only know you by your pseudonym. The records will be destroyed or erased when my dissertation has been accepted. The transcript, without your name will be kept until the research is complete.

**Participation and withdrawal:** Your participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You may withdraw by informing the researcher that you no longer wish to participate and
no questions will be asked. You may skip any question during the interview, but continue to participate in the rest of the study.

To contact the Researcher: If you have questions or concerned about this research, please contact Nonhle Olga Khumalo-Mbokazi, +27 84 555 6198, and email: ntle@vodamail.co.za. You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work: Prof D.R. Nzima, +27 71 253 0458, and email: NzimaD@unizulu.ac.za

For your rights in this research, questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints that are not being addressed by the research, or research-related harm: University of Zululand Research Ethics Committee [UZREC], Research & Innovation Office: +27 35 902 6887 or researcher’s Department/ supervisor.
ANNEXURE H: QUESTIONNAIRES TO DETERMINE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION OF A TEENAGER WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

NAME OF THE SCHOOL:..............................................

The aim of the questionnaire is to gather information on the extent of parental involvement in the education of teenagers with special needs in a high school. The information being sought by this questionnaire is for the research purposes only. Please provide as much accurate information as you can.

SECTION A

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Instructions to respondents: Indicate with an X in the appropriate box.

1. Your status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow/widower</td>
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2. Your gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

3. Your age

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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
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</table>
4. Your relationship to a learner

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>

5. Education attainment

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<td>Up to matric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post matric</td>
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6. What is the size of your household?

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<tr>
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<td>3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. What grade is your child?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>08</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION B

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT INFORMATION

1. How is your relationship between yourself and your child?
2. Tell me, what is your understanding of parental involvement in the education of teenager with special need?
3. Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?
4. In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child's education at school and at home?
5. What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?
6. Do you talk to your child about his school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.
7. What would you like your child to be by the end of his/her school career?
8. Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?
9. Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school?
10. Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?
11. What household chores that are performed by your child after school?
12. How do these activities influence your child’s general performance?
13. Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?
14. Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?
15. Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.
16. To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?
17. Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?
18. Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in his school work?
19. Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?
20. Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?
21. Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?
ANNEXURE I: IMIBUZO UKUTHOLA UKUZIBANDAKANYA KWABAZALI EMFUNDWENI YENTSHA YABO ENEZIDINGO EZIKHETHEKILE.

IGAMA LESIKOLE:…………………………………………………..

Inhloso yalemibuzo ukuthola ulwazi ngokuzibandakanya kwabazali betsha enezidingo ezikhethekileyo emabangeni emfundo aphakeme. Ulwazi oludingwa ilemibuzo lizosetshenziselwa ucwaningo kuphela. Uyacelwa ukuba unikezele ngolwazi oluyilo kangangoba ungakwazi.

ISIQEPHU A

IMININIGWANO NGOKOBUHLANGA

Imigomo yokuphendula: Faka u- X ebhokisini elifanele.

1. Isimo sakho som'shado

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2. Ubulili bakho

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3. Iminyaka yakho

   | 20-35          |          |
   | 36-45          |          |
4. Ubudlelwano bakho nomntwana

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<td>Umkhulu/Gogo</td>
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<td>Isihlobo</td>
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5. Izinga lemfundo

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<tr>
<td>Ngaphezu kukamatikuletsheni</td>
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</table>

6. Nibangaki ekhaya?

<table>
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<th>Age category</th>
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<td>3-4</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
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<td>7-8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7. Ukuliph iibanga umntwana wakho?

<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angazi</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ISIQEPHU B

UKWAZISWA UKUBANDAKANYEKA KOMZALI/MBEKI

1. Bunjani ubudlelwano phakathi kwakho nengane yakho?
2. Ngicela ungitshele, wazi kuyini ukuzibandakanya komzali emfundweni yolusha olunezidingo ezikhethekile?
3. Uma ucabanga, kungabe kukhona okungazuzeka ngokuzibandakanya komzali emfundweni?
5. Kungabe likhona yini iqgaza elibanjwe ingane yakho ukuze nawe ubandakanyeke emfundweni yayo?
6. Kungabe uye ukhulumle yini nomntwana wakho mayelana nomsebenzi wesikole kanye nezinye izinto ezimayelana nesikole?
7. Ungathanda umntwana wakho abe yini uma eseqede isikole?
8. Ngicela ungixocele ngezindlela noma ngamasu owasebenzisayo ukuqguqguzela umntwana wakho ukuthi akwazi ukufeza izifiso zakho ngaye?
9. Ngicela ungixocele ukuthi ukuzibandakanya kwakho emfundweni yakhe kungabe kumsiza kanjani esikoleni?
10. Ngicela ungitshele ngosuku lwenu kusukela ehamba ekuseni eya esikoleni kuze kube useyabuya esikoleni.
11. Kukhona yini imisebenzi yasekhaya ayenzayo uma esebuya esikoleni ntambama?
12. Kungabe leyomisebenzi imisiza kanjani?
13. Uma ubuka, ucabanga ukuthi usesimeni esilungile ukuthi unganikeza umntwana wakho usizo ngomsebenzi wesikole?
14. Kungabe isikole sikufake kangakanani emfundweni yengane?
16. Uye uzizwe wamukeleke kangakanani esikoleni somntwana wakho?
17. Iziphi ezinye izigxenye zesikole ongathanda ukuba uzbibandakanye kuzo?
18. Ngokubona kwakho, ucabanga ukuthi isikole sikunika ulwazi namakhono anele ukuthi ukwazi ukusiza umntwana wakho?
19. Kuye kwenzeke yini ubazise othisha ngemicabango yakho mayelana naloludaba?
20. Ngolwazi onalo, kungabe iziphi izinto ozibona zivimbela uzbibandakanya komzali emfundweni yomntwana kanti futhi zingavimjwa kanjani?
21. Ngicela ukwazi, ucabanga ukuthi yoluphi ulwazi olungasiza abazali abantulayo abangafundile ukuba balekelele kangcono emfundweni yezingane zabo?
ANNEXURE J:

PARTICIPANT’S RESPONSES

No. 1: Parent AA

Section A

Biographical Information

Status : Married
Gender : Female
Age : 66
Relationship : Grand-mother
Education : Std. 6 (Grade eight)
Size of Household : 08
Grade of your child : 09

Section B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

AA : The relationship is good and we talk a lot with each other. She has been receiving calls from her boyfriend since she is pregnant, the boyfriend wants her to come and visit all the times but I told her not to because they are not married and has not paid anything for the child.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

AA : She is a good child. I usually give her time to study after school. Though has to be done after doing her household chores. Nozwa also helps her other siblings with their homeworks.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?

AA : I don’t really know but I have seen her helping her siblings.
Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child's education at school and at home?

AA: I am involved by attending school meetings, buying her school uniform and other things which may be needed at school.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

AA: She normally tells me if there is anything needed at school and the school usually writes notes a letter. Even her sickness, I was informed by the school and her teacher even brought her home at some point.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

AA: It is up to her. She leaves about

Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

AA: It is up to her. She will have to choose for herself.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

AA: I give her isiwasho which helps her even with her mind. She uses it to drink and wash.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child's performance at school.

AA: Getting her things like isiwasho and talking to her really helps. I talk to her even about her love life as a way of guiding her.

Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?
AA: She wakes up and prepares water for tea, buy bread for breakfast, prepares water for all of them and all of them take a bath. She leaves about 6h40am because it is a distance. After school, she cleans the dishes, cook supper and dish, wash dishes then she does her school work.

Researcher: What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

AA: No clear response.

Researcher: How to these activities influence your child's general performance?

AA: It helps her to prepare for the future so she can know that there are other things in life then just going to school.

Researcher: Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

AA: No, I am not. I only did standard 6 and I am old. I hear she talks about things I have never heard of so how can I even begin to help. What is it that I know to even talk to teachers? I cannot go there to turn myself into joke. I try and sell Zulu beer to make a living since they do not have parents and I do not get foster grant. I would not know how to help them.

Researcher: Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?

AA: I only attend school meetings.

Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

AA: I am happy because I can see respect.

Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

AA: When I go to school, they allow me to talk and give me some ideas about Nozwa’s situation
Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

AA : None

Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?

AA : No.

Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

AA : No

Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

AA : It could be the fact that the mother is young and drinks a lot and doesn’t want to listen to others. Parents know that children go to school and that’s it. They do not check their school work.

Researcher: Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

AA : It is difficult to tell parents what to do because they will think you are better.
No. 2: Parent BB

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status : Single
Gender : Male
Age : 37
Relationship : Uncle
Education : Post Matric
Size of Household : 5
Grade of your child : 10

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

BB : Good. I did a lot of follow–up because he did not like school and would lie trying to get away with things.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

BB : My understanding would be more hands on like doing follow up, being a mentor because he needs more than ordinary child. I tried to find out from teachers on how to deal with him because I did not want a break from school to home. I shared the tricks that he played with me to the teachers so they could avoid it. I had to make him understand his responsibilities and not to feel different.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?

BB : Yes, there are benefits. A bond of trust and he gets to experience things first hands, e.g. responsibility. As a parent I am forced to look at his challenges. I am forced not to act different from what I teach him and the relationship had
to be of trust then authoritative. The improvement is also observable because I can see a change in his behaviour and in his attitude. I can tell if it was because of negligence or lack of involvement, I can also see the development of new habits. It gives me an opportunity to understand him or each other better.

Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

AA : I think there are number of ways. We have a communication book in which his teacher writes on whatever he thinks needs to be done at home and his progress and I also do the same. Through it I only do follow ups at home.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

AA : At first he tried to avoid me and get out of my involvement but I had to ensure he understands that if he wants to see less of me then he needs to perform better. But as we progressed he got into it. It provided him with an opportunity to spend time together and a share of my busy days.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

BB : Yes, I do. It helps that his teachers attach notes to update me with his progress every day.

Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

BB : I only expect that he learns to take charge of his life and become independent and self-reliant. I cannot prescribe his career choice.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?
BB: I don’t have specific expectations except that he thrives in his chosen path. My job is to motivates, coach and mentor him, and be a role model and show how taking responsibility for one’s action matters in shaping a future.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school.

BB: He has improved immensely and has learned to make time for his school work and learned to manage and opposition his time.

Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

BB: He wakes up at 6h00am, prepare for school, go to school to attend his classes, attend sports afterwards back home, finishes his homework, eat supper, prepares for the next day (clean shoes, iron and stuff) then watch television for like an hour and half after that goes back to his books until 10h00pm then go to sleep.

Researcher: What household chores that are performed by your child after school

BB: The only chores that he has on school days are school related. Things like washing his socks, cleaning his shoes, packing his sport gear when necessary and home of course.

Researcher: How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

BB: Teach him to be responsible.

Researcher: Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

BB: Yes, I think I am a competent as a parent. Where I find difficult I seek help.

Researcher: Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?
BB: The school has established a system of partnership with parents in the education of their children. Parents are made integral parts of the school. Whenever there are issues to be discussed, they call us and we talk freely besides we have a governing body that represent parents in decision making or policy making.

Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

BB: Absolutely!

Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

BB: I feel welcomed to voice my concerned and be heard.

Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

BB: I’m happy with the current model but we are also required to get involved with things like fundraising and organizing sport events and extra – mural activities. That for me is sufficient because we all have full lives.

Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?

BB: Yes, they do. Whenever I need information, they are always there to assist. Through parent-teacher meetings, I have given me ways to track the progress of my nephew. The progress report which they are using makes it much easier to see where he is going in term of his performance.

Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

BB: Yes, I do during parent meetings and even with members of the governing body.

Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

BB: Parents lack trust and commitment. First as a parent you need to take a lead in being reliable and show commitment in assisting a child to a place where
he can stand on his own. This can be done through establishing achievable goals, milestones together with the child, to show him or her that you are in this with him/her, those goals act as reassurance that the process is working so the child doesn't feel a sense that it’s all permanent.

A parent's needs to take a lead by prioritizing the study commitments so as to show leadership. If you don’t prioritize and miss sessions it teaches the child that it’s okay to make excuses and not honour your word. My take is that it is not much about teaching him/her life lessons through school work.

**Researcher:** Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

**BB:** Holding workshops to simply indicates to parents the value of education in a child and how parents can show commitment and consistence when it comes to their child’s education. Form partnership with the school through visiting the school for whatever they may need.
No. 3: Parent CC

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status : Single
Gender : Female
Age : 20 - 25
Relationship : Mother
Education : Up to Matric
Size of Household : 3
Grade of your child : 11

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

CC: We don’t seem to get along that much. She is not open to me. She cannot tell me her problems. We don’t have that good relationship between a mother and daughter.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

CC: It is when parents help their children in their education, by buying them things that they want for school and by helping in other ways. For example, trying to find where the child maybe struggling in terms of her studies, how to help her so she can be better and also look at the cause of the problem so I could be able to help her and at the same time teaching problem solving.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?
CC: Yah, I can say there is something. As a parent and my child would see that my parent cares for my education and be encouraged to work not to disappoint the parent.

Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

CC: I attend meetings at school, look at her school performance. When she comes home, I check her exercise books to see if she goes to school, she does school work. Her teacher calls me when she experiences difficulties with the school routine and we talked about what we were going to do. I also feel happy that the school is able to call me if there is a problem so I could know what is wrong and many times but that seems to be the only time they call me.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

CC: There is nothing that she does.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

CC: Yah, I do ask about her school day. Normally she responds by giving me a single word answer and you could tell that she does not want to talk about school. She usually says bekuraythi “it was alright”.

Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

CC: I am not really sure what is it that she would like to be but I would like her to finish school and train for whichever job she likes.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

CC: In most of the times I speak to her and try to show her the good side of life and bad side of it. I tell her if she wants to succeed even though
she may not be performing very well at school she needs to do what and what.

**Researcher:** Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school.

**CC:** While she was in a primary school, I was never that involved as I did not attend any school meetings but since she started in grade 10, I then started to attend more so because I could see that she might after all finish school. I even show her that I care about her school work. Somehow her school work is better than before even though it is not good.

**Researcher:** Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

**CC:** As she wakes up, she doesn’t like to talk. She gets ready for school and then leaves. Once she is back from school, it will all be the same. She would look happy in some days and sad in some. In the evening she doesn’t like to eat. I never see her study and she doesn’t like to be told what to do. I don’t always ask her about her moods and school because I know she doesn’t like to talk about school. I do give her time to study but she never utilizes efficiently and there is no little that I can do to help her.

**Researcher:** What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

**CC:** Basically, she does nothing. Maybe on this and that day she washes the dishes.

**Researcher:** How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

**CC:** I would say they do, and in her mind I would like to believe that she knows that at this time I should be doing household chores and at this time I should be studying. In a way it helps her to manage her time well
even though she doesn’t care. It makes her to know that she should be
doing something else except what is meant for that time.

**Researcher:** Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her
homework?

**CC** : Well, sometimes I think I am and sometime I don’t think I am. She is
doing some of the subjects which I don’t know and never studied.
Besides even though I did matric I never passed it.

**Researcher:** Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your
child?

**CC** : Yes, I do and in most cases where she is not performing very well.
For example, teachers complain that she does not participate in class
activities such as debate and keeps to herself. If they see that there is
a problem, they usually call me to come to school.

**Researcher:** Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

**CC** : Yes, I am happy. If I compare her form the time she was in primary
there is a difference. I can see that she has improved. The environment
seems to be friendly and has never said she is being bullied.

**Researcher:** To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

**CC** : I feel welcomed even though they always expect us to make
appointments when we want to talk to them unless if they are the ones
who called us.

**Researcher:** Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be
involved in?

**CC** : My coming to school, they welcome me and always give me
feedbacks through text messages, telephone calls or through letters if
there is anything they need.

**Researcher:** Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to
assist your child in her school work?
CC: Maybe assisting during meetings not that I would really love too but teachers are experts so they must teach her the she should be taught and not tell me to help her with homework. I have many things on my plate.

**Researcher:** Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

CC: Not really. Whatever ideas I may have, it is difficult to communicate them because of the fights among teachers and how teachers might feel about my comments. They only thing they do for me is to tell me how my child is performing and her behaviour, either than that here is nothing they are helping me with.

**Researcher:** Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

CC: Yes, I do. I have asked them about her behaviour and communication. As for the skills, I have tried but they said I must try speaking to her, so she would say where she needs help.

**Researcher:** Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

CC: I don’t have all the time in the world because I am the working mother. I get tired from work thus fail to give her the attention I think she needs.
No. 4: Parent DD

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status : Married
Gender : Female
Age : 20 - 35
Relationship : Parent
Education : Post matric
Size of Household : 05
Grade of your child : 09

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

DD : Our relationship is good. We talk about almost anything.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

DD : My understanding is that parents should participate in the education of their children not only by buying textbooks or pen but by also attending school meetings, offering their services to the school and be part of decision makers.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?

DD : I think there are. For example, as a parent if you help the child with her work, you are spending time with her, you begin to understand her shortfalls at the same time you learn to be patient because you know that your child is not sharp in class. As for the child I think will know that you care enough about his or her education so much that you dedicate certain time to her.
Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

DD: Besides buying her all her school needs, I attend school meetings regularly, check her school work and try to find out from teachers if there is anything I need to focus on at home. As for at home, I have assisted her by drawing the study time table and give her time to study. There are subjects which she struggles with. I have organized a tutor to come at our house twice a week to help her.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

DD: She always try to tell me about her day at school. Providing an ear means you are interested. The problems she encountered and how she solved them, ask questions about her homework. I am always to listen even if I am tired.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

DD: Yes, I do. Since she is an albino and many other children like to make fun of her. It is my duty to build that esteem in her so she is able to face the world. I try to tell her that she is not much different from other children but she is special because she is my child. I tell her that no matter what people say about her she should never feel less of the person she is and know that through education she can be whatever she wants to be.

Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

DD: I cannot say I want her to be what in terms of career but that is the decision she has to make on her own and I trust she will make the correct one. Whichever career she chooses I will support and provide all the financial and emotional support needed.
Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

DD: As for expectations I know she has some limitations but I always try to make her not to focus on them instead focus in what she is good at. I always tell her that she has to work hard for her success and failing doesn’t necessary means you are stupid but it means you were careless as a result you overlooked other things. I try to encourage her to have a vision and always walk towards her vision. Some decisions in the house we talk as a family so she can understand that we all need each other and some things are done as a team.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school.

DD: It has boosted her self confidence and self-esteem as she is no longer shy as she was when she started high school. Through the help of the tutor she has improved her grades and that helped a lot. She no longer sees herself as someone with a special need but as someone unique with an ability to achieve great things.

Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

DD: Our mornings are hectic, waking up at 5h00, prepare her bed and head for the bathroom, dress up and then prepares her lunch box then off to the bus stop where she is picked up by her staff car at 06h00. The school starts at 07h30 (Assembly but first lesson is at 07h45). At 14h45 the school is out and she be on her way to home. At home she is expected to wash her socks and have a small meal. She has free time until 17h00 to 18h00 then school work, for an hour, 19h00 we all watch news together but at 19h30 school work resumes up until 20h30 where she needs to prepare to sleep. 17h00 and 18h00 it’s out catch up time which we spend in the kitchen.
Researcher: What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

DD: Besides washing her socks, she helps put together the ingredients while I am preparing supper.

Researcher: How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

DD: I think it’s about time management.

Researcher: Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

DD: Competent… I think I am. I know my child better than anyone besides where I feel I am not good I seek the help of expects that’s why I hired a tutor.

Researcher: Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?

DD: My child is not a trouble maker as other parents are called to school whenever their children has done something wrong, so I only get to be involved through attending parent’s meetings or when we have parent-teacher meeting to discuss her performance. My attending of school meetings depends on what to be discussed. I cannot go to school only to find that I am there to listen to their politics.

Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

DD: So far, I think I am happy and she is also happy.

Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

DD: I think I feel welcomed. Teachers are always warm and willing to listen. However, they always expect us to make appointments if we want to talk to teachers but once one is at school they try not to keep us waiting very long.
Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

DD: I would like to be part of the organizing team esp. for campaigns to educate the community about children with special needs so they could understand what it means to be a child with special needs. If our communities accept our children it would even be emotionally better for them when they are at school.

Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?

DD: Whatever they have given me I don’t really think it is enough since they are teachers and experts.

Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

DD: No, I don’t want to be seen as if I think I am better than them. I let them do their thing after all they are the teachers and I am the parent. If you have many suggestions I do not think that would be good. Teachers like to think that we are telling them about their jobs and how to do it, yet, we are only talking about our children.

Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

DD: Whuuu; teachers like to give our children lots of homework. A child comes home with almost all the subject home works and as a parent you are expected to assist. It becomes difficult since I am the only parent who helps with their homework and I do not have sufficient time. If teachers could decide which subject to have more homework than the others so that there would not be too much to do at home. Some teachers may be done at school or extra classes for homework like they did in primary when they had “Day care”. Another problem is that since other subjects I do not know I can’t help my child so I need to get someone to help. To get that person means I must have money. This means I need to allocate a certain amount of money for her tutor and
that is expensive for me even though it helps her. I am a working mom, sometimes I get home tired I just want to be left alone but I can't because I need to listen to her school day stories and help with the homework. I really think teachers need to help us in this regard.

**Researcher:** Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

**DD:** First of all, parents need to be responsible for the education of their children regardless. If one does not know how teachers could teach on the basics. For example, to check if your child does school work, attends classes. Parent can visit schools on regular basics just to ask about their children. Parents should not only be seen in school when there is a problem. Schools can also provide to parents with people or places where parents could go to get help in terms of tutors and stuff. Schools need to invite parents for training on certain areas of school development.
No. 5: Parent EE

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status : Married
Gender : Female
Age : 35 - 45
Relationship : Guardian
Education : Up to matric
Size of Household : 6
Grade of your child : 09

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

EE : I can say it is good because we talk and she can listen to me but she has those times in which she is moody. She sometimes does not sleep at home but in many cases she does. If she has done something wrong at school she does not tell me. I would see her not going to school for days and if I ask she would then tell me that the school sent for parent.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

EE : It is when you communicate with your child and if you can’t you won’t go anywhere. When you are called at schools you can hear what teachers are saying then try encouraging the child by taking her to the library. As for her I was not fully involved because I thought her mother would until it was late then I realized I needed to help. I do go to school and check her work. Teachers tell me she like to joke and is not serious about her school work.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?
EE: I think there are but for her I think it is too late because many things have gone wrong already. Talking to her when she is old does not help. I feel her mother failed her for not being around and for not checking up on her in terms of her school performance. From what I see I think she needs her mother or someone who understands her condition but we all don't know who that person is.

Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

EE: I do go to school to check her school work whenever I am called and ask if there are any problems. Even with her, I do ask her but she never gives any direct responses. Usually when checking her work, I could see that work is not done. There are lots of gaps and I am sure teachers don’t really know how to deal with her. When I ask why the work was not done she would simple say ‘Eiy, I would do it some other time’ and that would be it.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

EE: No, there is nothing she does. Like I said she does not have time for school. I even ask her other sister who says will take her to another school how was she going to cope there away from everybody if she fails to do her work in front of us.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

EE: She has many secrets. If you ask her how was school she would simple say it was alright. At times you may find that she did not even go to school. You would hear other children say she did not go to school and there would be nothing from the school. She normally says she does not like to wear school uniform because she is way older than other children in her class.

Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?
EE: I wish she could be a social worker. She likes to talk with people. She speaks sense and tell her siblings not to do anything wrong and the results of misbehaving but you would never see her do anything right for herself. At times it feels as if she has experience a lot as a child. She feels old and discouraged.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

EE: I always talk to her and ask her what is it that she wants or like to be one day. She would just keep quite or ignores me. I usually think she is all for boys.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school.

EE: No, it does not help at all. When I speak to her she pretends as if she is listening to what you are saying. Like now she is not here and she might not even come back and only see her in the morning. When she arrives she would not bother to say where she was. She does not like to be shouted at and changes face if you do that. Besides, she knows I am not her mother and she does not care.

Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

EE: She usually wakes up at 06h00, make her bed and prepare for school then leaves. I have a rooster. She does her part. She enjoys cooking and she is good. She does not have time for homeworks, though it is allocated in the rooster.

Researcher: What household chores that are performed by your child after school

EE: She cooks and she likes it a lot.
Researcher: How do these activities influence your child's general performance?

EE: It think it does because she is doing something that makes her forget about her difficult life and smoking. Her biggest problem are friends. Once they call her she forgets about what you said to her.

Researcher: Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

EE: Yes, but not in everything. In those areas I find complicated I call for someone else to help. She does not know how to study even if you give her time she would say she knows everything.

Researcher: Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?

EE: Yes, it does. The school do call us as parents if there is something happening. If they are to break early they do inform us through letters. If your child has done something wrong, they would explain everything and try to find out from the parent what could be the root of the problem. When it is time to issue reports, they call us and show us where it went wrong and what we need to do for her to better her grades. Teachers forget that I did not finish school. I left when I was in standard nine (grade eleven) so how can I be expected to help anyone about schoolwork. The only thing I can do is to look for someone to help.

Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

EE: Yes, I am happy. I know that she is the problem not the teachers and teachers only help someone who want to be helped.

Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child's school?

EE: I feel happy that the school is able to call me if there are problems so I could know what is happening with my child but there is not much which is school related that they tell me about except when it is time to issue reports.
Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

EE: There is an orphanage group, as a parent I would like to be a part of that programme so to help children and may be organize a concert because they do sing so they can show others what they do. I would also like to be involved in many matters, for example, helping with the study after school.

Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?

EE: I don’t really think they do because if your child is lagging behind they tell you where you can take your child for extra lessons meaning they can’t help you with anything. Extra lessons cost more money and I expect them as teachers to be better able to handle a child like mine. In their school they don’t have sports. How can a child be without physical education? They need to refresh so they could be ready and motivated to go to school. There are children with special needs who are talented who I believe can benefit from sports.

Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

EE: No, I don’t. They should know and I don’t want to be seen as if I am forcing them into doing something they are not willing to do.

Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

EE: Nothing that come to mind because as a parent you need to encourage your child, try to do what she is doing. If she is going to the library, check if she is really going to the library and is really studying. You need to support your child. As a parent you should have a better understanding of your child and instead you should work with the teachers in helping each other. I wish a school could facilitate a support group for parents of children with special needs so we could be able to share our experiences and gain new knowledge from each other.
Researcher: Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

EE: Yes, there are parents who say they cannot participate in their child’s education because they are not educated. In that school, grade twelve start early till late. If the parent is willing to be involved why not go to school and request to be part of what is happening so you could be able to help your child or even remind your child of what the teacher said. Parents should try to be teachers at home and encourage their children. You can let your child form a group with other learners so s/he could be used to be with other people either than family and learn a responsibility. In that way the child has time to study. Find out every day what they were doing at school. Let her teach you as a way of practicing. I think the fact that the child can see that you are interested in her school work will be motivated to work hard. I also think children should be given less household chores especially if the child is slow so could have more time to study or practice their work. There should be less TV time. Parents should do constant follow-up on what the child is doing at school because education is not only taking place at school but also at home. Parents should learn the value of attending school meetings but again it will depend on the teachers on what they say during those parent’s meetings. Parents should also stay away from school politics and accept the management of the school as it is but instead help teachers understand the culture of our area so they would see how important it is to educate parents on how to help their children because we want a better community and no one should be left out because has a particular condition.
No. 6: Parent FF

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status : Single
Gender : Female
Age : 34
Relationship : Mother
Education : Below matric
Size of Household : 07
Grade of your child : 08

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

FF : It is good and we talk about a lot of stuff even things that happen at school.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

FF : It is when a parent forms a bond with her child and help her with homework. Making sure that she has books for school and other stuff.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?

FF : It does help because she gets to be with me.

Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

FF : At school I am not involved but here at home I do help whenever I find time. I listen to her stories about school and what the teacher said.
Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

FF: By asking me questions about things she does not know and ask me to be involved. When she comes to my room while I am sleeping I know then that she wants to talk about school.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

FF: At times I forget to ask about school and she would remind me and ask me why I am not asking about school. She does not understand that I get tired from work.

Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

FF: Starting from grade 2, she had always wanted to be a medical doctor. I always ask her if she knows the costs associated with being a medical doctor and she would say she likes it.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

FF: I tell her to study hard, do all her homeworks whether I am around or not and if there are areas she does not understand she must ask a teacher or her sister.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child's performance at school.

FF: As for her homework, she completes it on time and get to submit it on time so she does not get in bad records with her teacher. I also ask if she ever give answers in class and she says yes, so I see my involvement helps. She trusts me as a result that gives her confidence and believes she is clever.
Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

FF: I don’t spend the whole day with her because I am working. I leave home at 05h45 am and at that time she has to be up preparing for school. I only come back after 19h00. I never see her when she leaves for school or when she comes home after school. From what I gather, she has to wash her shirt and vest after school and her sister helps her with homework.

Researcher: What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

FF: She cleans her grand-father’s bedroom and wash her vest and shirt.

Researcher: How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

FF: She needs constant monitoring but I think it is teaching to wash and to be responsible. After all, she is a girl.

Researcher: Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

FF: No, I don’t think so. I did not finish high school. They are learning new things, more difficult besides I have said I don’t stay here. I live early for work and come back late at night. By the time I am home she is practically preparing for bed. I do not have that time and I am also tired. The only thing I manage to do is to talk for few minutes than dose off. I rely mostly on her sister, at least she is doing higher grades and would like to believe that the school would let me know if there was something wrong with her school work.

Researcher: Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?

FF: We have meetings. For example, we just had one for a school governing Body. They gave us information about the elections of the
governing body and how they were going to be conducted. They told us that the law says all parents are eligible to the members provided one has a child in the school.

**Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.**

**FF:** I am happy because I can see she is broad in her thinking and at times she asks me things you would not expect from a child or her for that matter. She does not complain about being different like before I guess she is used to it by now and the school is doing its best to let other children accept her. She is confident and the fact that she is doing well in class also helps.

**Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?**

**FF:** I feel I am welcomed. I never sense any division. They treat us as if we are the same. Parents of other children also talk to use and give use what they think may help us.

**Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?**

**FF:** I would like to help during sports and fun days but because of time I don’t think I would be of much help to anyone. I work even on weekends.

**Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?**

**FF:** Well, if telling us to encourage our children to do homework is it that means they do.

**Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?**

**FF:** No response

**Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?**

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FF : No!

Researcher: Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

FF : I would say education is important even if your child has a disability. S/He needs to stand on her own one day. As parents of children with disabilities we need to unit and help each other.

No. 7: Parent GG

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status : Married
Gender : Female
Age group : 36-40
Relationship : Mother
Education : Below matric
Size of Household : 05
Grade of your child : 10

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

GG : It is good. I am able to talk to him and he listens.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?
GG: My understanding, is to get involved in the child’s education by with the teachers not that the teacher is all by herself with your child. As a parent, you should know what the child did at school. Check his exercise books to find out what was done on the day. If the work has not been marked by the teacher you tell your child to request the teacher to mark it. You can also go to school to meet with the teachers. Let say you have something you don’t understand I think they can help you. Making sure that your child has all what he needs for school is also important.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?

GG: A lot because when we interact with teachers there is continuity and when there are gaps I am able to relate with the teachers and teachers do the same as well.

Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

GG: At home, I encourage him with his school work and school activities, and at school I write letters to communicate with his teachers and at times I go there myself.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

GG: Well, if he gets a total mark, I would hear about it or if he wants a pocket money. He tells me about other things as well but these two are his favourites.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

GG: Even if I did not ask, he volunteers on his own. He tells me about the problems he encounters at school during break. Like when older boys don’t want them to use toilets because they want to smoke or something.
Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

GG: I would like him to be a something as a parent. Something better than me. So he can live a happy life and do all the things he wants to do with his money and maybe can even afford to buy himself a better artificial leg.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

GG: What I normally do is to talk to him and even make examples by people in our community who have done good and those who have not. I always tell him that I wish nothing but the best for him and that he must study so he can get the job that will make him earn more money. But that can only happen when he listens to what I tell him not to his friends. His friends do what they are told in their homes and he needs to forget about girls or wanting to do things that are done by adults.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school.

GG: I let him know that he is different and will always have to try harder to get what he wants and the fact that people will never stop looking at him but what he needs to do is to be strong and be proud of who he is because there are many other people who are considered normal but are failing to do all the things that he does. All that boost his confidence and thrive.

Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

GG: He likes playing tennis and is very clean. When not going to school he wakes up, prepares his water for bathing, eat his food and off he goes. When there are movies or something interesting on TV he would ask to go watch it next door. If it is a school day, he wakes up and prepare for
school then lives. After school he washes his shirt and socks then his homework. I don’t tell him to do his homework. I taught him while he was young that he must do his homework. Besides, he cannot dodge me or school because I am always here at home even though I am not educated but I can read a little. If I do not understand what is happening I always ask to see what they did at school.

**Researcher:** What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

**GG:** He does not have household chores but if ever I assign him something to do he is usually lazy to do it unless I follow him. It does help him. I teach him to cook and to wash the dishes.

**Researcher:** How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

**GG:** I think they kind of prepare him for the future because I may not always be around and he should fit in the community and not always rely on others to do things for him. I know one day he will have to live alone or go to university so he should be able to do chores on his own. This helps him to be independent and responsible.

**Researcher:** Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

**GG:** I am not educated so his father when at home he helps him. What I usually do is to ask children from next door who have completed their studies to help if his father is not available and they never disappoint. I also buy books and read them here at home, and they enjoy it. I encourage them to read to increase their vocabulary.

**Researcher:** Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?

**GG:** If there to be a parent’s meeting, trips, school closes early, they then write to us and inform us.
Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

GG : Yes, I am partially happy. I think children who pass in that school are those who work hard. Teachers don’t go an extra mile so it is up to me as a parent to push my child.

Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

GG : Aiy, I don’t know what to say because what is important is to listen to what you are being told by the principal and if you have questions you may ask. But then again, teachers in that school undermines us. They make you feel that you are not a teacher but when my son was in a primary school it was a different story. I used to feel welcomed and at ease all the times.

Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

GG : There is nothing I would like to do there. I can’t see what I can do because even those who are cooking are being paid. Maybe in former Model C it may happen but not in our school. Besides, those who are there may think you want their jobs or you think you are better.

Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?

GG : The school does tell us during parent’s meetings even though it is not much. Being told in the parent’s meeting is not the same as getting individual attention for the needs of your child. As parents, our children have different needs which cannot always be addressed in a general meeting.

Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

GG : Whatever ideas I may have it is difficult to communicate because of the fight among teachers and how other people may feel about my comments. So it is always best to keep my comments to myself.
Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

GG: It is not that much except for my level of education which sometimes prevents me from helping and if his father is not at home it becomes a real problem. His father works very far from home and he is not always home for homeworks.

Researcher: Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

GG: Aiy, I do not think I am doing enough for my child either but I do not really know what else I can do and how can I do it. I am sure there are other many parents who are going through what I am experiencing. Maybe if teachers can tell us or teach us other ways of being involved. For example, if they could call us to come to school to teach us about certain things then to tell us about money problems. If you are an uneducated poor parent, I don’t necessary think you need to use that as a barrier because you can request other people to help. This also says as a parent you need to have good relations with your neighbours so your child could get assistance from them. You may encourage children to make use of the library. I know that there is someone there who is helping people. I like to read so I buy books and read them to him. I have been doing this ever since so to develop the love of books and reading. As I indicated that I did not go very far in terms of my education but I have started attending adult classes. This is to show him as well how important education is and age does not matter. Other parents may also do the same and not just say they are uneducated.
Biographical Information

Status: Single
Gender: Male
Age: 44
Relationship: Father
Education: Post matric
Size of Household: 03
Grade of your child: 09

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

HH: The relationship between myself and my daughter is excellent. I am not only playing my role as a parent but I would like to believe that I am also a friend, role model and a guiding light.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

HH: My understanding of parental involvement in the education of our children especially special needs involves different levels. Firstly, it is very paramount to the parent to know and understand the child’s psychological condition. If as a parent, I fully understand my child it becomes easy to help her. This therefore suggests that I work with a school psychologist in this case a school counsellor and her teachers, working as a team to provide for her special needs. It is important that I keep myself abreast with new information on how to help her. I also make use of internet to obtain useful information. Because there are other parents I know who I am now close to we share information and tips but I must say it is not easy to be a single parent of a special need girl.
Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?

HH: I strongly do think there are benefits to parental involvement. This may help to monitor the child’s progress and identify any weaknesses and underlying issues. Working together with her boosts her self confidence levels. She gets to ask me questions about school which she may have been scared to ask in class. Through my involvement I am able to identify which subjects she is good at and which ones she is lagging behind. This then provides me with the platform to talk about her future goals in terms of her career and at the end of the day I am able to guide her according to her performance at school and personality. Working together with her I believe I am able to instil a culture of learning and cement the notion of how important education is for her.

Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

HH: As a parent, there are different ways I am involved with my child’s education both at school and home. At the school level, I work together with the teachers. We have meetings on the child’s progress or challenges. We work together more on the child’s weak points and then come up with how we can best improve the current adverse situation. Where she excels, we offer very good remarks, words of encouragement and gestures of encouragement like giving her stars. This relationship with teachers is not always smooth. I mean she is not the only child at school who needs extra help. I also work so we could eat. I am a single parent with little help from others. I find it difficult to meet with the teachers during school hours. I can’t skip work so in that case we use a communication book. We have a communication book in which her teacher writes on whatever he thinks needs to be done at home and her progress, and I also do the same. Like I said she is not the only child in her class even teachers struggle to keep up but they try. At home, I have daily chats with her about things of interest which may have happened at school. We go through topics which she finds
too difficult to understand. I encourage her to finish school work before setting down for whatever in the evening. I also ensure that there is routine. We have a time-table which we follow every day. Sometimes I come home late but at least I do not work very far from home and her other sibling is helpful.

**Researcher:** What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

**HH:** She plays a vital role in facilitating my involvement. She enjoys or loves school so doing homework is an extension of her life at school and we do it together. I try to make it feel like a play game by being casual. When it's time to do homework or school projects she does not forget to remind me. I guess she value my input and understands that she is not that clever.

**Researcher:** Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

**HH:** Every day I talk to her about school. We discuss topics that were covered at school, problems she encountered and how she resolved them and things that are needed. In this way, she gets to revise her work and help her with techniques that may help her understand concepts better or easier. I allow her to regurgitate the information to me. This enables me to spot or identify any deficiencies. Sometimes I come up with easy ways of how to solve problems like in mathematics.

**Researcher:** What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

**HH:** I would like to support all her good wishes. If she wants to pursue a particular profession I will fully support her. I think as long as she has a tertiary education, she will be fine. I am not planning on forcing her to do something she does not like or good at. The only thing I can do would be guide her and support her decisions. She can take any profession she may feel comfortable with.

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Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

HH: I encourage her in various ways. One of the best ways I employ to encourage her is by offering rewards. For example, if I know that she likes a pair of shoes, I tell her that if she works hard and behave at school she might get them. I also show my child role models especially those who have been in the same dilemma or situation as her. I tell her that those people are professionals today but their background is similar to her own. I also tell her that if they can do it she can also do it.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child's performance at school.

HH: My involvement as a parent has really reaped rewards. Considering that she is older than the class that she is supposed to be in because of her condition I always encourage her not to give up. I have seen her lose confidence and I have seen her gain it back. Her school work is satisfactory and I am happy about that. Through my involvement I have installed discipline, hard-work morals and planning for the day ahead. With those tools, she is able to work independently in problem solving and knows she needs more time to do one and the same thing. It bothers her sometimes but what can we do because she has to be at school. I try to make the job easier for the teachers so that they would not feel like she is abandon to them.

Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

HH: Every day in the morning I try and make sure that she has everything that she needs for the day. It is always easy with in the morning chaos and all but I try my best. Before she lives I usually encourage to do a quick check so to make sure she is not forgetting anything. The small book which the teacher uses to communicate with me also help. In that way I am able to track her performance and behaviour at school and
ask anything or help from the teachers. Before we part ways, I always wish her good-luck for the day and ask her to focus in class.

**Researcher:** What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

**HH:** She does perform some chores after school but don’t interfere with her homework time-table. For, example, she helps with the dishes after our evening meal and if it is her day to cook she knows and do what is necessary.

**Researcher:** How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

**HH:** These household chores/ activities do help my child to have a sense of responsibility and independency. I have noticed that she is good with her hands. She likes cooking maybe one day will be a great chef. Doing these chores, I think they are a form of exercise which is good not only for the body but also for the mind. It is also a form of break from school.

**Researcher:** Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her home-work?

**HH:** As an educated parent, I think I am competent enough to assist my child with her school work. Besides, I think I know her better than her teacher. In areas I find difficult I usually ask people I know who have children with similar problems. Even though my child is slow in understanding things but that does not make her a fool. All what she needs is to practice. I have patience for her and I have tried to show and encourage her to try harder each time, and make her understand that her learning is not the same as others but she does not have to give up.

**Researcher:** Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?
HH: The school does involve me by hosting regular meetings. I meet with the teacher and a school counsellor. We discuss about the child’s progress, any issues or problems. The school also reassures me and encourage me to contact them if I have any concerns. The school makes me feel like I am part of the family and I feel welcome.

Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

HH: I am happy and I am very satisfied about the way my child is taught. Of course there is always a room for improvement. Judging by the way things are progressing I can safely say, yes, I am happy and my child has confessed to me that she is happy at school. The school does also receive good reviews from other parents I know. It is recommended.

Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

HH: I always feel welcomed at my child’s school. Whenever I go there for visit/meetings, teachers would have a friendly chat with me on different issues not only about my child’s progress and school matters but sometimes we chat about football which to me is an indication that they don’t view themselves different from us and that makes me feel at ease knowing that my child is with people I can relate too.

Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

HH: Ideally, I would love to be involved in many school matters but obviously due to the nature of my work schedule that is not going to happen. I would like to be a member of the School Governing Body. I would also love to help during sport/fun day.

Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist our child in her school work?

HH: I do think the school provides me with enough skills/ equipment to help my child with her school work but in the previous year it was not always the case. I guess it depends on the teacher. Her teacher
usually tells me on how to help her with her work and I find information useful.

**Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?**

**HH**: I do communicate my thoughts around this matter to teachers. It is usually by the way of writing letters or during the school visits. I have noticed that teachers are not very keen on giving their telephone numbers and I respect that.

**Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?**

**HH**: In my context of experience, I think the barriers to parental involvement are by far outweighed by the benefits. Parental involvement might put the child under stress/pressure but that stress could be easily overcome by reassurance and a good relationship between a child and her parent. Some cultural beliefs may also play a role. The belief we hold as parents may impact on the child’s participation in education. If as a parent I do not see the value of education especially educating a girl child, she would definitely not like school. If I think teachers are the ones who need to teach my child may see that I am not interested in her school performance and that may cause problems in the long run. In as much as teachers are expected to provide academic instructions and guidance, I am also an expert in understanding my child and deciding what is best for her. So we should work as an integral part to my daughter’s academic progress. A parent may place a higher value on hard work and family and less on education. Parents who are not educated may fail to understand the responsibility that comes with school. You would understand that many parents think it is a waste of time to educate a special need’s child. As a result, they are left behind at home. Some cultural beliefs state that a child should be independent especially if is a teen as a step towards adulthood and work hard without the need to help from a parent.
Researcher: Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

HH: Uneducated poor parents could still play a role in helping their children with school work. For example, they may not understand the language or content of the work but they can offer encouragements, preach discipline and good work ethics. Creating opportunities for their children to learn like giving them time to do their homework or ask a neighbour to check if the child has done what is supposed to have done. If at an early age, you instil the value of education it becomes easy to do school work as the child grows because will understand that it is for her own benefit. If the school can work with the councillor on educating people about disability so that our children can be accepted in our community and not be bullied that would help improve the lives of many.
No. 9: Parent II

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status: Married
Gender: Male
Age: 43
Relationship: Father
Education: Post matric
Size of Household: 03
Grade of your child: 10

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?

II: Modest, not everything is discussed but the critical elements of trust and dependency exist. It’s more of a brother – brother relationship. We share a lot

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental of involvement in the education of teenager with special need?

II: It should be based on understanding the basics by the parent and thus knowing the areas of support. All that is critical is the psychological support and readiness to listen to the teenager and highlight the challenges that life brings.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?

II: Yes, shaping the teenager’s moral values and ethics, hence shaping the child’s belief system and future lifestyle approaches.
Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

II: Attend sessions with teachers and leave an open communication with the teachers in case of anything they observe, be it good or bad. View their workbooks on a diarised manner to establish if there is work done frequently.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

II: They would probe on a list of their daily encounters and whatever the child finds complex for them including real life and school work.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

II: Yes, like how was your school day? What was good on the day and what was bad. This offers me the opportunity to demystify what could potential affect his schooling negatively.

Researcher: What would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

II: I don’t really care, as long as it makes him happy and is able to earn his own living. He can be anything that he likes. Money is not an issue. I support his dreams and he knows that education is the only way to go. I sense a Doctor and a Comedian in 1.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

II: I wake him up every day and I remind him of the importance of being punctual, focussed and be able to assess your progress. I take him with me to work at times to observe the industry systems in operation.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school.
II: I assume; he’s keen on learning. One other factor is that am also studying, which then motivates him to do the same. At times I do tag him along to varsity when I have to do assignments and other education related tasks.

**Researcher:** Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

II: I drop him off at school, we leave the house together. When I drop him off we make a promise to have a successful day ahead. It keeps us going and importance to kick start the report back in the afternoon.

**Researcher:** What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

II: Cleaning the yard and his bedroom

**Researcher:** How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

II: They are about self-love and accuracy. They encourage to be thorough on the first attempt to avoid repeats and to ease the future assignments.

**Researcher:** Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

II: Partly, there are subject that need technical knowhow but I somewhat provide the support in the form of internet for us to investigate the content.

**Researcher:** Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?

II: They advise me what I must do on both the good and the bad, and I also seek advises on the school activities.

**Researcher:** Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

II: Yes, interactive and allowing the child to discover some of the concept through investigative ways of teaching.

**Researcher:** To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

II: 100%, either I phone or visit the school, I always get well received except that the receptionist does not always convey my messages to the Principal in cases where I could not find him. Coming to school to meet with teachers is
not stressful because I know I am talking not only to a teacher but to a parent who understands my dreams about my son. Coming to school to meet with teachers is not stressful because I know I am not talking to teachers but to a parents who understand my dreams about my son.

**Researcher:** Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

**II:** I would like to be part of the policy review committee and parental involvement strategies.

**Researcher:** Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?

**II:** To a certain extent, but technical subjects are a challenge for every parent not in that area but generally yes.

**Researcher:** Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

**II:** Yes, I always advise teachers of what I think should be done and how it can be.

**Researcher:** Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

**II:** Some teachers are either not confident enough to outline their plans to parents or just not willing to interface. The reporting to parents on the learner’s overall activism and progress by every subject/task facilitator should be mandatory.

**Researcher:** Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

**II:** The role of the education system is to encourage parents in their individual capacities to play role in the education of their children. The teacher-parent feedback on the overall performance of the child will enhance the interest levels of the poor and uneducated parents too. Holding workshops to simple indicate the value of education in a child and how parents can show commitment and consistency when it comes to their child’s education. Events
such as parents-teacher sports days will further bring solidify the parent-parent as well as parent to teacher relations. Thus parent may even be able to ask their neighbours to assist their children but also child to child.

No. 10: Parent JJ

SECTION A

Biographical Information

Status : Single
Gender : Female
Age : 44
Relationship : Mother
Education : Post Matric
Size of Household : 03
Grade of your child : 10

SECTION B

Researcher: How is your relationship between yourself and your child?
JJ : It has its ups and downs but we are trying.

Researcher: Tell me, what is your understanding of parental involvement in the education of teenager with special need?
JJ : Parents need to be involved in the education of their children. It could be through buying textbooks, attending school meetings if there are any and assisting with fundraising activities.

Researcher: Do you think there are some benefits of parental involvement?
JJ: I believe they are. You get to see if your child does go to school or not, her performance and how she deals with pressure.

Researcher: In what ways are you as a parent involved in your child’s education at school and at home?

JJ: I am involved by attending school meetings, buying her school uniform and other things which may be needed at school. I try to check her work. Her teacher attaches note to update me with her school progress and very now and then.

Researcher: What role does your child play in facilitating parental involvement?

JJ: She shows me her schoolwork and tell me about her day.

Researcher: Do you talk to your child about her school day and other school related issues? Elaborate.

JJ: We have a time-table which she follows. Each day, she has about one half an hour of television and the rest is for school related activities. As she does her schoolwork, I am also there to assist and provide support.

Researcher: would you like your child to be by the end of her school career?

JJ: She wants to be a teacher and help other children with special needs. I support that.

Researcher: Could you share the ways in which you encourage, model, reinforce and instruct your child to meet your aspirations or expectations?

JJ: I tell her how important education is, especially for a girl.

Researcher: Could you tell me, how your involvement influences your child’s performance at school.

JJ: Although I am not totally happy about her performance but it is better than nothing. She knows she cannot give up and if those times come I am always there to support.
Researcher: Kindly describe to me how you typically part with your child in the morning when s/he goes to school and in the afternoon/evening when s/he returns home from school?

JJ: I live home early before she lives. From what I know she should be at school by 07h30 and I have never been told that she was absent for reasons unbeknown to me.

Researcher: What household chores that are performed by your child after school?

JJ: She does not do much expect her bed and washing school uniform. I think children should be given less household chores especially if the child is a slow learner so he or she has more time to study.

Researcher: How to these activities influence your child’s general performance?

JJ: They teach her to be responsible.

Researcher: Do you think you are competent to help your child with his/her homework?

JJ: I am competent except in mathematics.

Researcher: Tell me, how does the school involve you in the education of your child?

JJ: The school do call us if there is an emergency but if we want to see them they always expect us to make appointments. The notes that we send to and fro, help me to be updated.

Researcher: Are you happy about the way your child is taught? Explain.

JJ: I can say I am somehow happy but I don’t like it when teachers talk to us anyhow about our children. To them they may just be children with special needs but to us they are children and we want the best for them, with their assistance off course. Maybe if teachers could try to be normal and be understanding it would make it easier for us to seek help in times of need.
Researcher: To what extent do you feel welcomed at your child’s school?

JJ: When visiting there, teachers have a tendency to pass you by as if you are not there and I think it got worse if you do not have an appointment. I think it is unfair because they get their salaries because of how children and they need to respect us.

Researcher: Which areas or aspects of the school would you like to be involved in?

JJ: I sometimes see children on the street during school hours and others are rude and I say to myself if I could be asked to be a member of the disciplinary committee, I am sure I can make a difference.

Researcher: Do you think the school equips you with necessary skills to assist your child in her school work?

JJ: Equip, I am not sure maybe they do.

Researcher: Do you communicate your thoughts around this matter to teachers and how?

JJ: No, I do not want to be seen as if I think I am better than them. I just let it be.

Researcher: Kindly tell me about barriers to parental involvement in the context of your experience and how they can be overcome?

JJ: I think we should be called to something relevant to us. If teachers want to see us at least they should tell us in advanced so we could request our employers for an early leave or something. On a second thought why they cannot ask us early what exactly would we

Researcher: Could you tell me, what you think could be done to help uneducated, poor parents learn how best they can help their children with their education?

JJ: Telling us about why we need to come to their meetings and once there, they need to be accommodating. I think schools need to remember that we are not always around so making other options
should not be a problem. Why do we always have to make appointments? It is not like we say we will stay with them the whole day or something. Those parents who are really struggling I think they need more help and be directed to other people who might help them. The government can make sources of information available so we can go there if teachers are not willing to help.