

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: REVIEWING RELATED LITERATURE

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Abstract

This study reviews the literature related to parental involvement in the education of children with special needs and its impact on children's development. The results show that active parental involvement contributes significantly to the academic progress and social-emotional development of children with special needs. It also improves the overall quality of family life through a better understanding of children's needs and the creation of a supportive learning environment. However, there are several barriers that hinder parental involvement, such as lack of information and resources, and financial burden. Therefore, support from the government, schools and communities is needed to optimise parental participation in the education of children with special needs.

Keywords: Involvement, Parents, Education of Children with Special Needs.

Introduction

Education is the basic right of every child, including children with special needs. Children with special needs are children who require special attention, teaching and support in their learning process because they have physical, emotional or cognitive conditions that are different from children in general. Inclusive education is present as an effort to ensure that children with special needs get equal and equal opportunities in obtaining education (Sitopu et al., 2024); (Iksal et al., 2024); (Fawait et al., 2024).

Inclusive education is an educational approach that seeks to ensure that all students, including those with special needs, are welcomed and supported within the same school environment. The key principle of inclusive education is equity and the full involvement of all students in the teaching-learning process, without discrimination (Hong, 2021). This means that schools should adapt the learning environment, curriculum and teaching methods to suit the individual needs of each student, with the aim of providing equal learning opportunities and supporting the academic and social development of all learners, so that they can feel valued and recognised within their school community (Burke et al., 2020).

Inclusive education is important because it creates a fair and equal learning environment for all students, including those with special needs. By implementing inclusive education, schools can ensure that every child gets equal opportunities to develop academically, socially and emotionally (Thomas & Loxley, 2022). Inclusive education also helps to build a more inclusive and tolerant society, where differences are valued and individuals feel accepted. In addition, inclusive education can improve

learning outcomes for all students by encouraging more creative and adaptive teaching methods that benefit all learners (Tan et al., 2022) .

Parents play an important role in children's lives, including in the education of children with special needs. Parental involvement in children's education has a significant impact on their academic, social and emotional development. This includes various forms of involvement, ranging from emotional support, assistance with schoolwork, to participating in the relationship between school and family (Aslan, 2019) ; (Shintia et al., 2024) .

Studies have shown that parental involvement in the education of children with special needs can improve learning outcomes and emotional well-being. However, this involvement is not always easy and is often faced with various challenges. Parents of children with special needs may face barriers such as lack of knowledge and resources, emotional challenges and lack of support from educational institutions (Mieghem et al., 2020) .

In response to this challenge, it is important to examine what forms of parental involvement are effective and the strategies that can be used to increase their involvement in supporting the education of children with special needs. This study aims to review the literature on parental involvement in the education of children with special needs, analyse the factors that influence it and summarise the key findings that can be used as a basis for recommendations on education policy and practice.

By reviewing the existing literature, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the importance of parents' role in the education of children with special needs and effective strategies to increase their involvement can be obtained, so as to support the development and success of children with special needs in education.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is an approach used to collect, review, and analyse pre-existing information in the form of books, journal articles, research reports, and other academic sources. The main purpose of this method is to understand the existing research landscape, identify gaps or deficiencies in current knowledge, and formulate more specific research questions (Alaslan ;, 2022) (Suyitno, 2021) . Literature research involves a systematic process of searching related literature, evaluating the credibility and relevance of sources, and synthesising findings to gain a comprehensive view of the topic under study. Using this method, researchers can build a strong theoretical foundation, inform further research design, and avoid duplication in research efforts (Adlini et al., 2022) .

Results and Research

The role of parents in the education of children with special needs

The role of parents in the education of children with special needs is crucial, given that they are the ones who know and understand their children's needs, strengths and weaknesses best. Parents act as the main advocates for access to appropriate education for their children (Sue & Okazaki, 2022) . They should understand their child's rights in the education system, be actively involved in individualised education planning (IEP) and ensure that the school provides the necessary support. This involvement is important to ensure that any interventions and learning strategies implemented are appropriate to the child's needs and support the achievement of their full potential (Briggs, 2020) .

In addition, parents also serve as the main emotional support for children with special needs. Children with special needs often face greater challenges than their peers, both academically and socially. Parents can help overcome feelings of frustration, low self-esteem or anxiety that children may experience by providing encouragement, positive reinforcement and building their confidence. This emotional support is important for children's healthy mental and emotional development, allowing them to feel valued and able to face challenges (Reay, 2023) .

When it comes to academics, parents can also play the role of educators at home. They can help children with schoolwork, explain subject matter, and practice skills that may require repetition or additional practice. By understanding the curriculum and teaching methods used at school, parents can make learning activities at home more relevant and useful. They can also coordinate with teachers to provide useful feedback in adjusting teaching methods according to children's development (McGee, 2021) .

The role of parents is also important in developing the social skills of children with special needs. They can help children learn to interact with others, understand and apply social etiquette, and develop friends. This can be done through simulating social situations at home, supporting participation in extracurricular activities, or creating play opportunities with peers (Minkos & Gelbar, 2021) . The ability to interact effectively with others is an important aspect of children's lives and determines how they function in society as adults (Mphahlele, 2020) .

Finally, parents should constantly update their knowledge about their child's special needs and various effective educational strategies. Attending trainings, seminars and joining support groups can help parents get the latest information and share experiences with other parents facing similar situations (Latzer et al., 2021) . By becoming more informed and empowered, parents can not only help their children more effectively but can also play an active role in influencing education policies and services for children with special needs in their communities. These efforts are essential to creating an education system that is more inclusive and responsive to the unique needs of each child (Garbe et al., 2020) .

As such, the role of parents in the education of children with special needs is significant and multi-faceted. Not only do they act as advocates who ensure the child has access to appropriate education, but also as emotional supporters who help the child overcome emotional and social challenges. Parents also serve as educators at home, supporting their child's academic learning and social skills. By continuously actualising their knowledge of special needs and educational strategies, parents can be more effective in supporting children's development and influencing more inclusive education policies. Comprehensive and continuous support from parents enables children with special needs to reach their full potential and function well in society.

Effective strategies to increase parental involvement in children with special needs

The first effective strategy to increase parental involvement is through proper education and training. Parents need to be equipped with specialised knowledge and skills on how to educate children with special needs. This can be in the form of seminars, workshops or online courses that provide information on different types of special needs, appropriate learning methods and behaviour management techniques. By better understanding their child's condition, parents will feel more confident and ready to support their child in various aspects of life (Doyle, 2020).

Building a community or support group for parents of children with special needs can be a very effective strategy. This community can serve as a place to share experiences, tips and strategies that have been successfully implemented by other parents. In addition, community members can provide each other with emotional support, which is an important aspect in dealing with the challenges that often arise. With social support, parents do not feel alone and are more motivated to be actively involved in educating their children (Thomas & Loxley, 2022).

Collaboration between parents, teachers and other professionals such as therapists or psychologists is essential in providing a conducive learning environment for children with special needs. Regular meetings between parents and teachers to discuss the child's development, challenges faced, and strategies that can be implemented at home and at school is one effective way to ensure continuity in the child's education (Rhodes et al., 2020). This way, the child receives consistent support from the various parties involved.

To increase parental involvement, it is important for schools or other relevant institutions to provide a range of resources that are easily accessible to parents. This could be additional learning materials, guidance on special needs or access to educational technology tools. The resources should be easy to understand and practical to implement at home. With access to these resources, parents can be more active and effective in supporting their children's education (Kirksey et al., 2024).

Finally, creating a favourable environment for parental involvement is also an important strategy. This can start with school policies that encourage active

participation of parents in teaching and learning activities and extracurricular activities. For example, organising special events for parents, discussion rooms and communication forums between parents and the school. When schools open up and provide space for parents to be involved, parents will feel more valued and motivated to participate in their children's education (Parmigiani et al., 2021).

By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that parental involvement in the education of children with special needs can be significantly increased, which in turn will have a positive impact on the child's development and well-being.

Conclusion

Parental involvement in the education of children with special needs plays a very important role and has a positive impact on both their academic and social-emotional development. The literature shows that children with special needs who receive active support from their parents tend to have better academic performance, as well as more optimal social and emotional skills development than those who do not receive such support. Involved parents often provide a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, and work with teachers and educators to develop educational strategies that work best for their child.

Moreover, parental involvement also plays a role in improving the quality of life for the whole family. Parents who are active in the education of their children with special needs usually have a better understanding of their children's needs and abilities and are therefore able to plan more effective interventions and support. In addition, this involvement also creates better communication between home and school, which in turn increases the child's confidence and sense of belonging to their educational environment. Emotional and motivational support provided by parents helps children with special needs to cope with daily learning challenges.

However, several barriers still exist that hinder parents' full involvement in the education of children with special needs. These include a lack of information, support and resources available to parents, as well as significant financial and emotional burdens. It is therefore important for governments, schools and communities to provide adequate programmes, training and resources to support parental involvement. This will not only help children with special needs reach their full potential, but also strengthen the social support network around the family and society at large.

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