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Reflections and perspectives on parental involvement in children's school activity

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Abstract. This paper aims to look at the family as a living, unique organism that evolves, transforms, and adapts according to certain conditions. With the birth of children come challenges and responsibilities that each family understands and directs differently. Assuming the parental role, translating it into desirable behaviors, family relationships, and identifying the parents' attitude towards education in general are prerequisites of how they will get involved in their child's school activities. Research results have shown that the more and more effective parents are involved, the better their children's cognitive development, academic achievement, and self-confidence increase. On the other hand, children in families with poor parental relationships will experience lower academic achievement and less confidence in their ability to cope with school tasks. Differences have also been reported between the involvement of mothers and fathers respectively, as well as some of the effects of parental absence on children.

Keywords. family; parental involvement; family relationships; educational attitude.

1. Introduction

The family is a universal institution, performing the same functions everywhere in the world: "transmitting the biological and cultural heritage, providing material and emotional protection for descendants, forming a climate for the development of the personality of all its members" (Voinea, 2005, p. 21).

Berge (1977) believes that every child needs a family, but "not just any kind of family" (p.10), but one that is an affectionate, heterogeneous, nurturing environment. Affectivity, parental affection, is the "vitamin" necessary for life.

Investing in children's human capital has important implications for both individual well-being and economic growth. The roles of the family and family policies in shaping children's human capital, particularly through schooling, have therefore been the subject of much research in both developed and developing countries. Glick et al. (2011) investigated the importance of family environment characteristics, educational attainment, and material status of parents on the one hand, and school factors such as cost, distance, and quality on the other. The studies concluded that children whose mothers have at least 10 years of schooling perform better in school than children whose mothers have a low level of education. In contrast, fathers' educational attainment appears to have less of an impact on children's educational outcomes. Concerning family background, it was found that family material resources can be positive

factors impacting educational outcomes. In the case of younger pupils, better academic results were positively associated with the parents' material situation, whereas for older pupils the parents' educational example was more important.

While in the 1970s the family was seen as a sphere of social reproduction capable of resisting change, from the 1980s to the present day the family is seen as a basic social group and institution. It is no longer just a form of cultural survival but demonstrates a new and autonomous dynamism. The family "is increasingly becoming an institution of stability, of evolution in society, with an irreplaceable educational role in dealing with new generations" (Telleri, 2003, p. 11).

2. Roles and relationships in the family

Traditionally, mothers and fathers are engaged in different types of interactions with their children from the moment of birth. Fathers tend to focus more on stimulation, exploration, and physical play, while mothers focus more on emotional support and emotional warmth (Lamb & Levis, 2010).

The arrival of children in the marital family can affect the couple's relationship and the way the couple behaves. Thus, some spouses are extremely concerned only with their love for each other, and the appearance of children is perceived as a disturbing, disturbing element of the marital relationship. In other situations, the spouses go on with their lives, totally neglecting the children, and depriving them of any help, control, or guidance. Another situation is that of childish, socio-emotionally immature parents who provide their children with an inappropriate, inappropriate role model. At the other extreme are conflictual parents, who not only set a negative example but also steer their children towards deviant behavior (R. Vincent, quoted by Voinea, 2005).

The interest and concern of parents for the harmonious development of children, and how parents assume their responsibilities are manifested in certain behaviors of parents towards their children (Voinea, 2005).

The contribution of a parent's involvement to each child is of great importance, as students benefit greatly if school and home complement each other in their education and socialization (Rao, 1991).

It is important to take a closer look at forms of power in different family relationships and how they affect children. Punch (2005) discussed how children perceive child-parent relationships in comparison to sibling relationships about giving and receiving power in the home. In child-parent relationships, children do not have the power of authority, a power that derives from adult status (Punch, 2005). Compliance and obedience on the part of the child have been considered the normal and acceptable response to the disciplinary demands demanded by parents (Sevón, 2015). Absolute parental power can result in a situation where the child's personality is not seen or overlooked, and the child's voice is not heard. Children's responses to parental authority vary: they may understand that their parents are well-meaning and therefore accept and comply, or they may be capable of resistance or negotiation (Punch, 2005; Sevón, 2015).

Sibling relationships are ambivalent, based on birth order, age, and struggles of identification, identity, and difference. Children have a clear understanding of stereotypical expectations, roles, and power hierarchies related to siblings, relationships, and birth order, but recognize and demonstrate that in practice roles and power hierarchies can be negotiated and transformed (McIntosh & Punch, 2009). Moreover, siblings do not have legitimate authority, nor do they control household resources to the same extent as parents (Punch, 2005).

A sense of safety, comfort, and well-being develop positive attitudes toward life and those around the child, so that the child becomes more resilient to stressors, can manage emotions more easily, and will have an accurate view of self and others. Effective parent-child communication will help the child feel understood, protected, and have a sense of belonging (Arsene and Constantin, 2013).

The family is also the gateway to the outside world where young people will demonstrate and exercise the value judgments developed in the home (White & Matawie, 2004).

Matheis and Adams (2004) found a direct relationship between family environment and personal style in that identity development was associated with relationships within the family. Relationships between parents and adolescents are closely related to the family environment. The individualization of parent-adolescent relationships is associated with families that are highly expressive, close-knit, and highly non-confrontational. The researchers also found that students who are more inclined to study do not necessarily come from parents who put study first but from families where there are close parent-child relationships.

A study by Hofer et al. (2006) showed the beneficial influence of a positive family climate on children's identity formation. As children's self-image increases, interest in school should increase.

Although the intergenerational transmission of fathers' behavior has not been as well studied as that of mothers, several publications nevertheless speak of the potential risk of young people, once they reach adulthood, showing an obvious inheritance of their parent's behavior (Belsky et al., 2006; Smith & Farrington, 2004).

3. Educational attitudes of parents

Human nature is very complex and multidimensional. Attitudes are general elements of human nature and represent the specific mental state of an individual towards something according to which his behavior towards it is shaped. During life, each of us develops many kinds of attitudes. Attitudes can be towards a profession, people, or philosophy of life. Attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's liking or disliking of a thing, being, idea, or event. Attitudes are a person's positive, negative, or natural views, basically expressing a person's behavior. In short, attitudes can be directly observed and can be inferred from behavior through verbal and non-verbal responses (Dhiman, 2015).

The term *attitude* refers to a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction to something or someone exhibited in desired beliefs, feelings, or behavior. It is a social orientation - an underlying inclination to respond to something either favorably or unfavorably. Parents' attitudes towards education influence their involvement in education issues. Parental involvement in education is parents' participation in regular meaningful communication involving students' academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their children's learning at home and school (Starkey & Kleir, 2000).

The literature distinguishes several categories of attitudes, most of them seen from a dichotomous, antithetical perspective: positive/negative, progressive/regressive, favorable/unfavorable, tolerant/intolerant, constructive/destructive, accepting/rejecting, simple/multidimensional, central/peripheral, dominant/subordinate. In addition to these classifications, there may be value attitudes, intellectual attitudes, or attitudes related to the object of reference: moral, religious, aesthetic, political, ethical, or cultural attitudes (Jude, 2002).

Attitudes are considered products of learning and training and are the most important outcome of the child's experience. Attitude can be described as an emotional predisposition towards objects or ideas and represents the somewhat enduring generalization of experiences (Dhiman, 2015).

Parental attitudes can be negative or positive, and the influences of each will be different. Negative parental attitudes towards education and schooling, and minimal support for children in schoolwork can result in low motivation, low self-esteem of children, and hindrances in receiving education. Parents' positive attitudes can be beneficial for their children in many cases and can be reflected in improved classroom performance, creating interest in learning among children and higher scores on reading and writing activities (Samal, 2012).

Parental attitude is a measure or index of parental involvement. A child brought up with affection and care in a less restrictive environment might cope better with the outside world. The family, therefore, shapes the child's social integration more than a formal school. Turnbull (1983) identified four basic parental roles: parents as educational decision-makers; parents as parents; parents as teachers; and parents as advocates. However, a true parent exerts a major influence on the child's development from birth to adulthood. The attitude of parents is very important, as children need confirmation of it both in schoolwork and at home (Dhiman, 2015).

According to Stavrianos et al. (2009), parental neglect is the failure to meet children's basic and psychological needs. The result of parental ignorance is impaired mental development. On the other hand, if parents do not fulfill their needs, such as providing food, shelter, clothing, safety, and medical treatment, then parents are uncaring and neglectful.

The term *educational attitude* is often used to mean *educational value* because it answers the same three questions: "what do I think is right/wrong?" – the evaluative value, "do I like/don't I like it?" – affective value and "do I want/don't want to do this?" – conative value. Both values and educational attitudes can constitute goals, objectives, contents, and educational principles (Stănciulescu, 1997).

The family environment can significantly influence the student's affective state through the cultural level of the parents, their ambitions and expectations regarding school, the gender of the more educated or more intelligent parent, the parent's attitude towards the child's interests and concerns, the family's educational attitudes or the family's disruptive structure (Radulian, 1967; Rodriguez et al., 2009).

4. Parental behavior

Two main dimensions underlie parenting behavior: responsiveness and demandingness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Stănciulescu, 1997). Parental responsiveness, also referred to as warmth, support, or acceptance, refers to parents' actions of intentionally promoting children's individuality, self-regulation, and self-affirmation by adapting and supporting them following children's special needs and requirements (Baumrind, 1971). Classifying parents according to high or low levels of responsiveness or demandingness creates a cadence of parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, and neglectful (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

The role of parents in a child's emotional and social development is a topic of great interest. Several studies have found that parenting style or parenting behavior is in a statistically significant relationship with developmental outcomes such as achievement, achievement strategies, self-regulated learning, achievement goals, self-efficacy, and student well-being (Besharat et al., 2011; Revers et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2009).

Parents have a huge impact on a person's life. The parenting process combines all the activities of parents who want to support the well-being of their children. One of the most

studied approaches to understanding parental influences on human development is the concept of parenting style (Baumrind, 1967). Baumrind proposed parenting styles correlated with children's socialization. Then, many researchers recognized the importance of researching the role of parenting style in child development (Kordi, 2010; Schaffer et al., 2009; Lim & Lim, 2003). Many of the studies followed the three parenting styles originally proposed by Baumrind namely authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting, although, in 1971, Baumrind added the category of neglectful parenting. These parenting styles were delineated according to parenting patterns based on interviews with parents and children. For grouping parents into different styles, Maccoby and Martin (1983) suggested a conceptual framework; they viewed parenting styles as combinations of different levels of parental demandingness and warmth. Styles are thus determined by measures of parental warmth and demandingness.

Authoritative parents exercise firm and consistent control, monitor, and convey clear standards for children's behavior, prioritize children's needs and abilities, adapt to their level of maturity, encourage independence, and attention, cultivate autonomy and forgiveness and provide a democratic climate. Permissive parents frequently express warmth and affection, enforce rules and authority at a low level, have a high degree of acceptance, take on the role of a friend rather than a parent, allow children to make their own choices, and punish very little. Authoritarian parents are firm in their control of children, expect full, strict, and unconditional obedience from their children, are not opened to accepting children's individuality, treat disobedience with force and disciplinary punishment, frequently neglect children's needs, and have low levels of communication with them. Neglectful parents behave inattentively, neglect their children, interact very little with them, do not impose limits, and do not demand performance from them (Baumrind, 1971).

Parenting behavior is profoundly influenced by culture. Culture decides the boundaries of behavior be controlled and praised. Existing conceptualizations of parenting behavior have been largely based on studies of white, middle-class populations with average cultural values and parenting expectations (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

5. Effects of parental involvement in children's school activity

If the parents do not satisfy the child's need for attachment, if they are abusive, if they behave inconsistently or deviant, the child will develop a disorganized attachment, will be insecure, and have low self-confidence. There are, according to Siegel and Hartzell (2017), certain attachment patterns: secure - where the parent is available, responsive, and sensitive to the child's needs; insecure-avoidant - where the parent is distant and emotionally unavailable, unreceptive; insecure-ambivalent - where the parent is partially available, inconsistent; insecure-disorganized - where the parent behaves confusingly, frighteningly. For each of these attachment patterns, the child develops specific coping patterns, and as an adult will exhibit different behaviors, ranging from feelings of well-being and security to disengagement, and anxiety, to inflexibility, to insufficient emotional development, to unresolved trauma or loss.

Parental involvement is supposed to be an active, dynamic link that is created between the family's social class and students' academic achievement and adjustment. In this process, involvement is assumed to be influenced by material deprivation and parental aspirations. The lower the family's material situation, the more difficult it is assumed to support a child's educational development. The latter, parental aspiration, is in turn influenced by the child's evident achievement. The more the child achieves, the higher the parental expectation. The

family is an influencing factor through the four intervening variables: parental involvement, material deprivation, parental aspirations, and school structure (Sacker et al., 2002).

In general, it is considered that pupils' school results depend to a large extent on the degree of parental involvement in their schoolwork. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) believe that parents become involved for three major reasons: because of their understanding of parenting, because of their understanding of school effectiveness and achievement, and in response to opportunities and situations created by children or the school.

Parents can influence the child's development both physically and intellectually, and in terms of personality: aptitudes, character, motivation, affectivity, will (Bonchiş & Bonchiş, in Bonchiş, 2002). Understanding the impact of different forms of spontaneous parental involvement on academic achievement leads to recognition of all the factors that affect school outcomes (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

The effect of parental involvement in providing a home learning environment for cognitive achievement and development has been explored in some studies of preschoolers. Sylva et al. (1999) conducted a longitudinal study to assess the acquisition and development of children aged three to seven years. Over three thousand children were sampled, and numerous methods were used to explore the effects of the home educational environment on children's performance and adjustment. The idea of a home learning environment was designed to describe a range of services related to learning at home and included reading, library visits, playing with letters and numbers, painting and drawing, learning (through play) the letters of the alphabet, playing with numbers and shapes, teaching rhymes, and singing. Melhuish et al. (2001) concluded that a supportive home learning environment was associated with increased levels of cooperation and adjustment, increased sociability, and confidence. The effect of the environment was stronger than that of socioeconomic status or mothers' qualifications.

Some researchers have questioned whether there are differences between parental involvement at home and school. It is generally considered that parental involvement in children's schoolwork could have both a 'private' and a 'public' benefit. The direct beneficiary of parental involvement could be the child him/herself. This benefit could arise from the parent's involvement in the child's schoolwork or by focusing the teacher's attention on the child. In addition, the parent gains satisfaction and self-fulfillment from involvement in these activities, which is a 'private' benefit directly involving the participating parents and their children. On the other hand, a 'public' benefit occurs when parents are involved in classroom activities, school activities and functions, as well as leadership and counseling, and all children in the school benefit. Parental involvement at this level could properly be considered a 'school contribution' (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Williams et al. (2002) surveyed parents of children aged 5-16 in schools in England to determine their level of involvement in their children's education. In 2019 they used a telephone interview survey to establish levels of parental help in school activities, their relationship with their child's teachers, and parental involvement in homework. 29% of parents felt very involved - more so in primary school than in secondary school. Mothers felt more involved than fathers. 35% strongly agreed that they wanted to be more involved, while about three-quarters of parents wanted to be at least somewhat more involved. 94% felt the school was "welcoming" and 84% reported that the school was willing to involve them. Despite this level of satisfaction, 16% felt they could be seen as troublemakers if they talked too much. Parents who described themselves as "very involved" reported offering more practical help at school than other parents and were most willing to be more involved. 21% of parents claimed to have helped in class at some point and 9% claimed to do so at every opportunity. When it came to homework, parents were much

more involved in the early years of schooling. 71% of parents of first graders claimed they helped their children with every homework assignment. This fell to 5% among parents with children in grade 11. As their children got older, parents lost confidence in their ability to help. 58% of parents claimed that they regularly talk to their child's teacher, mainly about progress, but not infrequently about behavior (27%).

Kohl et al. (2000) reported on a study of three family factors that can jeopardize parental involvement: level of parenting education, maternal depression, and single parenting status on overall involvement. It was argued that parents' views of their role as a teacher and their comfort level in communicating with teachers may be in part a reflection of their own educational experience. Poor or limited personal education could leave the parent lacking vision, confidence, or competence in supporting their child. Single parenthood may place limits, particularly in terms of the time available to support the child's education. Maternal depression has been explored as a risk factor because depression is associated with a general lack of motivation, energy, and confidence, and depressed individuals also elicit negative responses from others (Kohl et al., 2000). Accordingly, they assessed the level of parent-teacher interaction, the degree of parent involvement in school, the quality of the parent-teacher relationship, the teacher's perception of the parent, the degree of parent involvement at home, and the parent's attachment to school.

Parental involvement was assessed using specially designed, separate instruments for teachers and parents. The relationships between the three risk factors mentioned above and the six forms of parental involvement defined by Epstein were explored. The three risk factors interacted differently according to the forms of involvement. Maternal depression was negatively correlated with any form of parental involvement except direct parent-teacher contact. Researchers argue that a depressed mother may contain her energy in simple contact with her child's teacher, but if a problem arises, she may not have the energy to stay involved. Parenting was positively correlated with parent-teacher contact: the more educated the parent, the greater their involvement in the child's education. Lack of extensive personal educational experience meant that some parents did not have relevant skills or adequate conception of parents as co-educators. Single-parent status was negatively correlated with parent involvement in school activities, teachers' perceptions of the parent, and the quality of the parent-teacher relationship. In particular, single parents seem to focus their energies on activities at home. Because of this, they feel involved in their children's lives and have high expectations of their children's school performance, but as they are not sufficiently present in their children's school life, they tend to attract negative perceptions from teachers (Kohl et al., 2000).

Hountenville and Conway (2008) researched the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement. The results showed that parental involvement in education has a strong positive effect on student achievement. The researchers used national data from more than 10,000 public and private school eighth graders, their parents, teachers, and school administrations. They were particularly interested in how often parents discussed activities or events of special interest to their child, discussed course or program selection at school, attended school meetings, and volunteered for their child's school programs. Hountenville and Conway (2008) noted that higher academic achievement among students is due to parents spending more time talking with their children during mealtimes to understand their worries and fears. Research has shown that the most effective forms of parent involvement are those that involve parents working directly with their children in learning activities at home. Decades of research by Hountenville and Conway (2008) have shown that when parents are fully involved in the education process, students achieve higher grades, graduation rates are high, better schooling is

achieved, increased student motivation for self-directed academic guidance is achieved, students have higher self-esteem, lower rates of expulsion are evident, drug and alcohol use is reduced, and there are fewer instances of violent behavior.

Much of the research on parental involvement in children's outcomes has emphasized the relationship between specific parental involvement behaviors and children's achievement. Parental involvement at school (e.g., with school activities, direct communication with teachers and administrators) is associated with higher achievement in math and reading. Higher levels of parental involvement in their children's educational experiences at home (e.g., supervision and monitoring, daily conversations about school) have been associated with higher children's achievement in reading and writing as well as higher grades (Epstein, 1991; Keith et al., 1998, in Samal, 2012).

When parents fail to be involved in their children's education to specified levels, the law considers this to be parental neglect. According to Stavrianos et al. (2009), parental neglect is the failure of a parent to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs that could result in serious harm to the child's health or development. Researchers argue that if a parent fails to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, and protection for a child from physical harm, danger, or access to appropriate medical care or treatment, then that parent has neglected his or her duty. A parent should be able to meet the educational, emotional, psychological, physical, material, social, and spiritual needs of the child in their care.

There are three primary mechanisms of parental influence on student academic achievement: modeling, reinforcement, and direct instruction. These mechanisms are established in the context of the understanding that parental involvement behavior as a whole is one of the many sources of influence on children's educational outcomes. Shaping refers to parents' behavior to get involved in school matters, talking to teachers, supervising, checking homework, and attending school events. According to modeling theory, the more involved parents are, the better their children's school results will be. Reinforcement is very important because it helps to obtain and maintain the essential behaviors for school success. Although parents motivate and encourage children, this mechanism is not enough as it is only an extrinsic motivation. In the case of direct instruction, parents can ask children direct questions, demand answers put them in situations that require them to think critically. In this case, children will be helped to achieve complex cognitive levels and a high degree of understanding of situations and problems (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Much research on parental involvement in children's school life has been based on the work of Epstein et al. (2002), who developed a typology of forms of parental involvement. This typology is not based on empirical evidence of what parents do to support their children but is rather a reflection of the general kinds of things that parents would like to or could do. The first type of involvement is parenting and relates to providing for children's basic needs: housing, health care, feeding, providing safety and requires certain skills of parents in interacting with children, providing conditions at home to support learning at each age and grade level. The second type of involvement is at the level of communication and involves two-way communication between school and family and communication with the child about school activities. Involving families in voluntary activities organized in school is the third type of parental involvement. The fourth type, home learning, refers to parental involvement in academic learning at home, homework supervision, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Decision-making, the fifth type, is the inclusion of families as decision-makers at the school level, in school councils, parent committees, and other parent organizations that defend children's academic interests. The sixth type of parental involvement is community

collaboration, where parents can work with the community, cultural and business groups, agencies, colleges, or universities to enhance and diversify academic opportunities.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) suggested that specific variables create patterns of influence at critical points in the parental involvement process. Their model includes parents' choices in forms of involvement, major mechanisms by which parental involvement influences educational and developmental outcomes for children, major mediating variables that increase or decrease the influence of involvement, and major outcomes for children's learning. Although this model of the involvement process suggests that the process is composed of multiple levels of constructs that operate between parents' initial choice to become involved (Level 1) and the beneficial influence of that involvement on student outcomes (Level 5), this review focuses on the first level of the model, which seeks to explain parents' underlying decision about involvement. The explanation at this level is based on constructs that focus primarily on the person – the individual parent.

The model of the parent involvement process reviewed by Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995) suggests that parental involvement decisions and choices are based on several constructs drawn from their ideas and experiences, as well as others arising from environmental demands and opportunities. At the first level, the model suggests that the fundamental decision of most parents to become involved in their children's education is a function primarily of three constructs: (a) the parent's conception of his or her role in the child's life, (b) the parent's understanding of the effectiveness of his or her intervention in helping the child succeed in school, and (c) the general invitations, demands, and opportunities for parental involvement presented by both the child and the child's school. Consideration of the research in each of these three areas suggests that these constructs are each composed of specific sets of beliefs, experiences, and behaviors that help parents find their answers to questions about the necessity, importance, and manner of their involvement in their child's education.

Expectations for appropriate parental involvement behaviors can be quite varied depending on the groups to which parents belong. There are situations where parents experience conflict about appropriate role behaviors or lack consensus about parenting behaviors. Such a conflict may arise, for example, when the family or school expects parents to be involved, but they are unable to supervise their children in homework or learning activities because they are engaged in job-specific activities at those times. Parental role expectations may transcend gender (e.g. parents of both sexes are generally expected to protect children from harm, for example on the way to or from school) or can be specified for one gender or another; for example, mothers often experience stronger role expectations than fathers concerning day-to-day involvement in children's school, such as helping with homework or signing checklists for project completion, whereas fathers may experience stronger expectations of involvement in children's sports activities or "big" decisions involving major disciplinary issues (Eccles & Harold, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1995).

6. Conclusions

Numerous researchers have confirmed through their research that the family environment, the affective-emotional climate, the educational style of the parents, and the degree of their involvement in the children's lives have an overwhelming influence on their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Regardless of the geographical area, and the age segment on which the studies were carried out, the results were similar, in the sense of having a statistically significant relationship between the parental style/ family climate and how the child behaves in restricted or extended social groups.

The family plays a very important role in the formation of a young personality and is one of the decisive factors in a child's development. It is the primary social environment in which most children spend their childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. The family is the first social group to which the child belongs, in which he or she acquires his or her first experiences, develops his or her potential, and forms attitudes. Relationships in the family influence the formation of personality traits such as emotional stability, individual maturity, personal integrity development, and readiness to accept social roles. For this reason, the positive development of children depends largely on the environment created within the family (Đurišić, 2018).

School, family, and community can form a partnership. Collaborative relationships established between school staff and family, community members, and organizations to implement programs and activities will help students to succeed (Smith et al., 2007).

In conclusion, the emotional context in which the child lives, the relationships established between family members, the presence or absence of a parent, the way or degree to which each parent is involved in the child's school life, all have profound effects on children's cognitive abilities as well as their attitudes towards school and learning.

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