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Research Article

Proposed General Framework for Successful Involvement of Parents and Teachers in Inclusive Education in Laurel Elementary School in San Mateo, California

Carmela S. Gregorio, Fahad Gote*

Department of Special Education, College of Professional and Graduate Studies, De La Salle University, Philippines

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*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

carmelagregorio18@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of inclusion teachers and parents in supporting children with disabilities in an inclusive school setting. Guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the principles of inclusive education, the research examined their roles, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies they used. It also analyzed how their involvement influenced students' development to create a framework aimed to support collaboration.

A qualitative approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed. Purposive sampling techniques were used in the selection of inclusion teachers and actively involved parents. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed through coding, theme clustering and triangulation to ensure the credibility of the data.

The findings revealed that inclusion is viewed as a shared responsibility in which teachers serve as advocates, facilitators and collaborators, while parents are bridges between home and school, academic supporters and providers of learning strategies. Teachers and parents faced interconnected systemic barriers, including communication gaps, parental denial, limited resources, time constraints and difficulties in understanding schoolwork. Effective practices included instructional differentiation, social-emotional learning (SEL) routines, home-school strategy alignment, multidisciplinary collaboration and multi-platform communication. Strong parent-teacher involvement was associated with students' academic performance, independence, emotional regulation and social skills. A five-part Inclusive Home-School Collaboration Framework was developed.

A five-part Inclusive Home-School Collaboration Framework was developed. The study concludes that sustainable inclusive education depends on coordinated home-school partnerships supported by adequate institutional resources. The proposed framework is intended for contextual adaptation rather than universal adoption

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and requires further validation across larger and more diverse educational settings.

Keywords: *Family-School Partnerships, Home-School Collaboration, Parent Engagement, Teacher Collaboration*

Introduction

Inclusive education promotes equal access to learning by accommodating students with diverse abilities within a supportive classroom environment. It emphasizes equity, diversity and the right of every learner to participate in meaningful educational experiences. The fundamental principle of this approach is to make children with disabilities feel welcomed and supported in mainstream educational settings by fostering a sense of belonging and providing instruction in general education classrooms. The success of this model relies not only on curriculum design, instructional techniques and strategies but also on the strength of collaboration and involvement between two of the most influential figures in a child's academic life and progress—the parents and teachers.

In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that parents are involved in educational planning and that students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are placed in appropriate learning environments. This law promotes the placement of students in settings that provide the necessary support while allowing them to interact with their peers to the greatest extent possible. As a result, inclusive education, often referred to as mainstreaming, is widely practiced in public schools. Students with IEPs may include those with conditions such as Down syndrome, autism, speech impairments, or learning disabilities, each requiring different levels of support (Current Research on Early Intervention Services for Autistic Children, 2023).

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students with disabilities have the legal right to receive

education in general education classrooms if they can achieve success with or without support from special education teachers or aides. This framework ensures that students are placed in the least restrictive educational environment while receiving the support they need. However, when students' needs cannot be adequately addressed in a general education classroom, they may receive specialized support through resource room sessions or pull-out programs, while some may be placed in special education classrooms. Inclusive learning has been shown to improve the academic and developmental outcomes of children with disabilities despite ongoing discussions regarding the effectiveness of inclusive instruction.

The academic and developmental progress of children is associated with parent-teacher involvement, particularly when working with students who require special education services. Educators must establish collaborative relationships with the families of children with disabilities to promote academic achievement, reduce problem behaviors and enhance emotional well-being (Paccaud et al., 2021). Students perform better when they receive appropriate special education services while being included in general education settings. Effective communication and collaboration between teachers and parents play a critical role in the success of inclusive educational practices (Adams et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, despite the advocacies that promote strong home-school partnership the meaningful collaboration between stakeholders remains inconsistent. There are literatures that show benefits of their involvement but there is still a gap in understanding how collaboration can be built and sustained in practical, real-world contexts.

Although IDEA provides clear guidelines for parental participation in educational planning, gaps remain between policy requirements and actual home-school collaboration. At the time of the study, the researcher was enrolled as a graduate student at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas while working as a special education teacher in California. Her experiences teaching at Laurel elementary in San Mateo, California provided direct familiarity with the daily realities of parent-teacher collaboration in inclusive elementary classrooms in the United States. Through this experience, she observed that the consistency and effectiveness of parent-teacher involvement remained limited in some inclusive educational settings.

According to Hyassat et al. (2024), common obstacles to effective school-based parental involvement identified by teachers include a lack of awareness regarding its significance, failure to recognize parents as equal collaborators, and the omission of parents from important meetings. With this, parents also face numerous challenges that affect their participation in their children's education. Moreover, negative experiences that occur during parent-teacher interactions often hinder parental involvement. These difficulties weaken partnerships between parents and teachers when educators are unaware of the emotional, logistical and practical challenges the families experience. This lack of understanding also prevents parents and teachers from developing a shared understanding of the individual needs of every child.

Another research gap identified concerns the lack of a universal framework that lets inclusive elementary education to adapt freely, specifically for the U.S. Most existing models and frameworks address parent engagement in education in a generalized manner rather than focusing on the unique demands and dynamics of inclusive education. Consequently, these frameworks do not fully capture the lived experiences of both teachers and actively involved parents, nor do they adequately

address the daily barriers that hinder effective collaboration in special education settings. Research suggests that family-school partnerships are often limited to one-way communication and do not fully promote equitable collaboration between parents and educators (Garbacz et al., 2020). This highlights the need for a proposed general framework that reflects the insights, challenges, and expectations of both groups while providing flexible and evidence-based approaches.

The purpose of this study is to construct a framework informed by firsthand experiences from inclusion teachers, general education teachers and special education teachers operating within inclusive classroom settings, as well as parents who play an active role in supporting the education and well-being of children with special needs (Estrada, 2024). Their insights will be used to identify experiences, common challenges and barriers, effective strategies and practices, and the influence of parent and teacher involvement on the academic and social development of children in inclusive education. By bringing these issues to light and giving both groups a voice, the study seeks to strengthen partnerships and involvement between parents and teachers. The proposed framework aims to provide practical recommendations that schools can adopt and adapt to strengthen parent-teacher relationships.

Ultimately, this study aims not only to provide teachers with better experience and understanding of the challenges parents face, but also to use these insights into stronger parent-teacher collaboration. This approach keeps the child at the center of the educational process, acknowledging that success in inclusive education thrives in shared commitment, empathy and communication.

Research Framework

This study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which explains how child development results from the interaction of interconnected environmental systems. A

child's experiences, behaviors, and outcomes develop through multiple systems that exist at varying levels of proximity to the individual. According to Tong (2024), this theory explains how children with disabilities succeed through the examination of interpersonal relationships and environmental influences within inclusive learning contexts. In Bronfenbrenner's model, the microsystem and mesosystem are relevant to this study.

The microsystem consists of the child's closest relationships such as the home and the classroom. Children experience their daily learning activities primarily through the direct influence of their parents and teachers who work together to support their learning. The relationship between students with disabilities and their teachers may significantly influence learning outcomes. When home and school environments foster support, encourage open communication and demonstrate responsiveness, children demonstrate improved academic performance, stronger emotional regulation and better social integration.

This study considers inclusion teachers as academic guides who collaborate with parents to create supportive learning strategies. The involvement of parents in school activities, communication and decision-making are the center of this system. A child's educational journey is positively influenced when parents and teachers work together with commitment, mutual support and shared understanding towards common goals.

The interconnection between parents and teachers creates meaningful interaction within inclusive education that strongly affects the implementation and sustainability of inclusive practices. Key attributes of a well-functioning mesosystem include open communication, shared goals, mutual respect and collaborative problem-solving. These elements serve as essential factors in successful parent-teacher collaboration.

A strong alignment between home and school support systems may contribute to a consistent and holistic developmental experience for the child. Conversely, when alignment between home and school breaks down due to communication gaps, role

ambiguity, or lack of trust, children may receive fragmented support that can hinder their academic and social development.

This study emphasizes that parent-teacher relationships should be recognized as fundamental to achieving inclusive educational success. It examines the experiences, successes, and challenges of inclusion teachers and the feedback of actively involved parents to identify key factors affecting the mesosystem. The findings will inform the development of a proposed general framework aimed at strengthening parent-teacher collaboration in inclusive educational settings.

Within Bronfenbrenner's theory, this study adopts a holistic perspective of inclusive education, recognizing that successful inclusion is not solely determined by classroom practices but also by the interaction between home and school environments. Thus, children with disabilities benefit most from inclusive educational experiences when parents and teachers actively collaborate both inside and outside the school setting.

The proposed framework will be developed as a mesosystem-strengthening model based on data collected from participants within the microsystem context. The framework aims to enhance communication channels, clarify role expectations, establish trust between parents and teachers, and promote shared responsibility. Through this approach, the study seeks to align policy intentions with lived collaborative practices to better address the needs of each child.

Problem Statement

This research aimed to examine the experiences of inclusion teachers and actively involved parents, identify the obstacles they encounter, and propose a general framework to support effective involvement that enhances student outcomes and the overall effectiveness of inclusive teaching practices. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of inclusion teachers and actively involved parents regarding their roles and involvement in supporting children with disabilities?

2. What challenges and barriers do both parents and teachers encounter in establishing effective involvement in inclusive education?
3. What strategies and practices do parents and teachers perceive as effective in building strong and consistent involvement in inclusive education?
4. How does parent and teacher involvement influence the academic and social development of children in inclusive education?
5. What general framework may be proposed to improve parent and teacher involvement based on the insights of parents and teachers?

Methods

The study utilized a qualitative approach, specifically Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2022), to explore the lived experiences of inclusion teachers and hands-on parents in supporting children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. IPA is a qualitative research method that aims to understand and describe participants' perceptions, emotions, challenges, and the meanings they assign to their roles in fostering inclusive practices.

Phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography are the three theoretical foundations of IPA. Phenomenology is based on the study of lived experiences and aims to understand individuals' perceptions and experiences of a phenomenon from their point of view. This study used phenomenology to gain insights into how inclusion teachers and parents described their personal experiences with collaboration, involvement, and support provided to a child with a disability in an inclusive classroom. The researcher's goal was to gain insight into how participants' roles were perceived and how these experiences influenced their understanding of inclusive education. Phenomenological research is grounded in lived experiences in order to better understand how people interpret and make meaning of these experiences (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

The second foundation of IPA is hermeneutics, or the theory of interpretation. This acknowledges that individuals naturally

interpret their own experiences, and researchers also interpret participants' interpretations during analysis. The researcher used this interpretative process to gain insight into the meanings that inclusion teachers and hands-on parents expressed regarding their responsibilities, relationships, and challenges in supporting children with disabilities. IPA recognizes that interpretation is an active and reflective process; therefore, the researcher consistently reflected on personal assumptions and interpretations during data analysis.

The third important feature of IPA is idiography, which refers to the detailed examination of individual experiences before identifying patterns across participants. Therefore, the study was limited to collecting rich and meaningful narratives from a small sample of carefully selected participants who had direct experience relevant to inclusive education. Using this idiographic approach, the researchers explored each participant's experiences and then identified experiential themes that emerged across participants.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected inclusion teachers and hands-on parents who were actively involved in the education of children enrolled in the inclusion program. The interviews focused on their experiences, perceptions of collaborative involvement, barriers to involvement, and strategies they believed would improve collaboration.

Triangulation was also used to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Triangulation means using more than one perspective, source, or method to check that qualitative research findings are accurate (Moon et al., 2016). In this study, this was done by comparing what parents and inclusion teachers experienced and thought through shared experiences. This helped the researchers see where the two groups agreed, where they differed, and what common themes came up in the data, which made the findings stronger and more trustworthy.

The data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a method that looks at how people make sense of their own experiences. This aided the study in finding related problems, useful practices and gaps in how parent-teacher

collaboration works and what it affects. These findings were then used to build the proposed framework for improving parent-teacher involvement in inclusive education.

Population and Sampling

This study employed purposive sampling, meaning participants were chosen because they met certain requirements. The participants were seven inclusion teachers at Laurel elementary in San Mateo, California and the four parents who were closely involved in their child's education, all connected to an inclusive education program at a U.S.-based elementary school. These parents took an active role in their child's learning — attending meetings, helping make decisions and supporting learning at home. The number of teacher and parent participants was determined based on data saturation and the emergence of themes during interviews.

The research design utilized purposive sampling since this non-probability technique is widely used in qualitative research to obtain rich and relevant data. Purposive sampling allows researchers to gather in-depth insights from individuals who have significant experience related to the research questions, resulting in a more nuanced and contextually rich understanding of the phenomenon under study (Bisht, 2025).

Respondents/Participants/Subjects of the Study

The participants in this study belonged to two main groups: teachers working in the field of inclusive education, and parents actively involved in supporting their children's learning at Laurel Elementary School in San Mateo, California. The general education teachers included in the study were those with direct involvement in students in inclusive classrooms, while only hands-on parents qualified for participation. The study selected parents who actively participated in school meetings, supported home-based learning, and engaged in various school activities for their children.

Parents whose children were placed solely in self-contained Special Day Classes, without regular participation in general education

settings, were excluded from the study, as were teachers without experience in inclusive classrooms. This selection process ensured that participants had direct, firsthand experience with parent-teacher collaboration in inclusive education, allowing the study to gather data to provide rich information on parent-teacher collaboration.

Research Setting and Data Collection Procedure

The researcher was a graduate student at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas in the Philippines, while residing and working as a special education teacher in California during the data collection period. Participants were recruited from Laurel Elementary School in San Mateo, California that met the study's selection criteria. Interviews were conducted in person or online following the necessary permissions and informed consent from all participants.

This setting gave the researcher direct access to the study site and people with firsthand experience with how inclusive education is implemented in the U.S. To help address potential bias from her position as an insider, the researcher maintained participant confidentiality, used pen names to keep participant anonymity, followed the approved interview guide and reflected on her own hypotheses throughout data collection and analysis.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researcher to investigate the experiences, challenges and perspectives of inclusion teachers and actively involved parents. The guide was created solely by the researcher rather than adapted from an existing tool, but it was aligned with established theoretical frameworks and the study's research questions, particularly Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

The interview guide contained open-ended questions that gave way to participants to share their experiences and perspectives based on their own words, supporting resources and in-depth responses that collected rich amounts of qualitative data. Questions were reviewed

for clarity and written in accessible, jargon-free language so that both teachers and parents from different backgrounds could understand and respond comfortably. The guide also focused on observable practices and real experiences related to parent-teacher collaboration and inclusive education, in line with the study's research questions.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the seven-step process of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), as outlined by Jonathan A. Smith, Paul Flowers, and Michael Larkin (2022). This method was utilized to examine how participants made sense of their personal and shared experiences, offering a detailed look into the lived experiences of inclusion teachers and actively involved parents. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to preserve the accuracy of participants' accounts. Through a systematic, interpretative process, the researcher identified recurring patterns and themes across participants' narratives.

Step 1: Reading and Re-reading Each Case. To become well acquainted with the participants' experiences, feelings, and thoughts on inclusive education and collaborative involvement, each interview transcript was read and re-read several times. The audio recordings were also repeatedly reviewed to ensure transcript accuracy and to capture the meaning of participants' responses.

Step 2: Making Exploratory Notes. This involved exploratory noting, recording detailed observations on participants' experiences after familiarity with the data. This included descriptive notes on the items of participants' experiences, word choice, tone and emotional expression and conceptual notes on the underlying meaning of participants' statements. Through this process, the researcher picked out notable experiences, emotional responses, recurring ideas and key insights tied to teamwork, dialogue, support structures and difficulties faced within inclusive classrooms.

Step 3: Making Experiential Statements. Once done with the exploratory notes, experiential statements were drawn from key portions of the narratives. These statements

distilled the main results, meanings and interpretations that was concluded from the participants' descriptions of their lived experiences and their role in inclusive education.

Step 4: Making Connections across Experiential Statements. The researcher then examined how the experiential statements related to one another. The similar meanings and recurring ideas were congested to uncover conceptual ideas within each participant's account to sort the data into meaningful categories based on shared threads in participants' experiences with parent-teacher interaction in inclusive settings.

Step 5: Naming and Organizing Personal Experiential Themes (PETs). The structured Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) were identified based on the most notable patterns in each participant's individual account. These themes were labeled and arranged in a thematic table to highlight key meanings and interpretations within each case.

Step 6: Continuing the Individual Analysis for Other Cases. To keep the interpretation consistent and thorough across the dataset, the same analytical steps were applied to every remaining participant. Each account was reviewed on its own and in detail, following the same IPA procedure.

Step 7: Developing Group Experiential Themes (GETs) Across Cases. Once the individual reviews were complete, a comparison was carried out to surface patterns, overlaps, and shared meaning across participants' accounts. From this, broader Group Experiential Themes (GETs) were built out of the individual Personal Experiential Themes found in each case. These Group Experiential Themes captured the collective outlook of inclusion teachers and engaged parents on working together within inclusive education. They pointed to shared struggles, emotional responses, barriers to dialogue, support structures, and practices that helped children participate more fully in inclusive classrooms.

The study also used triangulation, cross-checking participant responses as a way to confirm the accuracy of the findings and reinforce their reliability. This was done by weighing and comparing what inclusion

teachers and actively involved parents each reported. Throughout data interpretation, the researcher applied double hermeneutics by examining participants' meanings of their experiences while maintaining awareness of potential researcher bias.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the profile of the teacher participants. It includes their age, gender, grade

level taught, marital status, teaching experience and the types of disabilities of the students they are handling. These backgrounds of the participants offer insights about their professional experiences in inclusive education, which may influence their perspectives on parent-teacher involvement and collaboration in supporting learners with disabilities.

Table 1. Profile of Teachers

Teacher Participant	Age	Gender	Grade level	Marital Status	Teaching Experience	Students' Disabilities
1. Jean	37 years old	F	TK	Married	5 years	Autism, ADHD, Speech Impairment
2. Anne	58 years old	F	Kindergarten	Married	30 years	Autism, ADHD, Learning Disability,
3. Maria	39 years old	F	Kindergarten	Married	6 years	Autism, ADHD
4. John	33 years old	M	1st grade	Single	5 years	Autism, Learning Disability
5. Helen	35 years old	F	1st grade	Single	6 years	Autism, Learning Disability, Speech Impairment
6. Fanny	46 years old	F	3rd grade	Married	19 years	ADHD, Learning Disability
7. Jane	55 years old	F	3rd grade	Married	25 years	ADHD, Autism, Learning Disability

Profile 1: Jean. Jean is a 37-year-old female teacher who currently teaches Transitional Kindergarten (TK). She has five years of teaching experience. In her classroom, she teaches students diagnosed with Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Speech Impairment. She performs multifaceted roles, as she believes that teachers must provide academic support as well as emotional support and individualized strategies that address the diverse needs of students, while also managing behavior and monitoring student progress.

Profile 2: Anne. Anne is a 58-year-old female teacher teaching Kindergarten. She has 30 years of experience in the teaching profession and has extensive experience teaching children with Autism, ADHD, and Learning Disabilities. Throughout her career, she emphasized that collaboration with professionals such as

resource teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, and counselors can support students with special needs.

Profile 3: Maria. Maria is a 39-year-old female teacher with six years of teaching experience. She teaches students diagnosed with Autism and ADHD. Her experience in inclusive education made her realize the importance of identifying students' strengths and learning styles and designing appropriate instructional materials for them. Based on her experience, differentiating instruction and providing clear guidelines aligned with students' needs help increase motivation and participation in classroom activities.

Profile 4: John. John is a 33-year-old male teacher who teaches Grade 1 students. He has five years of teaching experience. His classroom includes students diagnosed with Autism and Learning Disabilities. He believes

that his role is that of a learning facilitator, providing strategies that enable students to become independent and problem-solvers. He also believes that teachers must closely observe students to understand their needs and provide appropriate accommodations that support classroom participation.

Profile 5: Helen. Helen is a 35-year-old female teacher of Grade 1 students. She has six years of teaching experience. Most of her students have Autism, Learning Disabilities, and Speech Impairment. Based on her experience, she observed the need for instructional adjustments so that students with communication or learning difficulties can effectively participate in classroom activities. She emphasized the importance of flexibility as an inclusion teacher. She also highlighted the importance of regular communication with parents to collaboratively support student learning at home.

Profile 6: Fanny. Fanny is a 46-year-old female teacher currently teaching Grade 3 with 19 years of teaching experience. She works with students with ADHD and Learning Disabilities. She emphasized the importance of developing students' self-advocacy and active participation in their learning process. Her

teaching strategies include modifying instructional materials, providing small group instruction, and collaborating with parents and support staff to ensure that students receive appropriate support.

Profile 7: Jane. Jane is a 55-year-old female teacher of Grade 3. She has 25 years of teaching experience. She teaches students with ADHD, Autism, and Learning Disorders. She emphasized the importance of patience and flexibility in inclusive education. She also believes that collaboration with parents and specialists supports student development. Based on her experience, when teachers and parents work together to support students with disabilities, learners develop academically, socially, and emotionally.

Table 2 presents the profile of the parent participants. The information includes their age, gender, marital status, the grade level of their children, the number of years their children have been enrolled in the school and their type of disability. These characteristics provide important information about the parents and help in understanding their experiences, perspectives and level of involvement in supporting their children's education within an inclusive school setting.

Table 2. Profile of Parents

Participant /Parents	Age	Gender	Grade level of their kids	Marital Status	Years at school	Kids Disability
1. Joseph	32 years old	M	1st grade	Married	4 years	Autism, Learning Disability
2. Elizabeth	36 years old	F	3rd grade	Married	3 years	Autism,
3. Hannah	29 years old	F	3rd grade	Divorce	4 years	Autism, Speech Impairment
4. Sarah	35 years old	F	3rd grade	Married	4 years	Autism, Speech Impairment

Profile 1: Joseph. Joseph is a 32-year-old married father whose child is currently in Grade 1. His child has been diagnosed with Autism and a Learning Disability. As a parent, he defines his role as an active supporter of his child's learning in both home and school settings. He emphasized that maintaining communication with the teacher and monitoring his child's needs can support learning and academic progress.

He shared that he assists his child in practicing reading and other learning activities

at home and encourages the child to follow teacher instructions in completing school tasks. He also noted that learning strategies such as flashcards and visual learning tools have helped enhance his child's confidence and, gradually, academic performance. However, he also mentioned that work responsibilities sometimes reduce the amount of time he can dedicate to supporting his child's school activities. Despite these challenges, he believes that effective communication with teachers and active parental support help children

become more confident and willing to participate in classroom activities.

Profile 2: Elizabeth. Elizabeth is a 36-year-old married mother whose child is in Grade 3. Her child has been diagnosed with Autism. Based on her observations, her role is to maintain open communication with teachers and continue her child's learning at home. She supports her child in reading and mathematics activities and applies learning strategies recommended by the teacher.

She explained that one effective strategy used in supporting her child's development is the use of flashcards. According to her, this has helped improve her child's comprehension of lessons and participation in academic tasks. However, she also shared that limited time and difficulty understanding some school tasks sometimes make it challenging to consistently support her child's assignments. Despite these challenges, she emphasized that strong cooperation between parents and teachers is essential for improving children's academic achievement and self-confidence.

Profile 3: Hannah. Hannah is a 29-year-old divorced mother whose child is currently in Grade 3 and has been enrolled in the school for four years. Her child has been diagnosed with Autism and Speech Impairment. She emphasized that her role as a parent is to communicate with teachers and share strategies that support her child's learning and classroom behavior.

She also supported her child at home through reading and writing activities and also

noted that it is important for teachers to implement effective strategies such as visual schedules, as these can improve a child's ability to stay engaged in classroom activities. However, work responsibilities sometimes limit her time for school involvement. Despite this challenge, she is convinced that cooperation between parents and teachers plays a key role in helping children feel supported and in improving their emotional and academic development.

Profile 4: Sarah. Sarah is a 35-year-old married mother whose child is in Grade 3. Her child has been diagnosed with Autism and Speech Impairment. She explained that her role is to be actively involved in her child's educational journey by maintaining communication with teachers and attending school meetings and discussions regarding her child's progress.

She considered herself a bridge between home and school and ensured that strategies used in school are also practiced at home. She regularly assists her child with homework and reinforces learning strategies recommended by teachers. Based on her experience, maintaining open communication with teachers helps both home and school address challenges more effectively to make child feels supported, included and confident in the classroom environment.

Lived Experiences of Inclusion Teachers and Hands-On Parents Regarding Their Roles and Involvement in Supporting Children with Disabilities

Table 3. Lived Experiences of Inclusion: Teachers' Perspectives

Group Experiential Themes (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Definition	Exemplars
Get 1. Inclusive Roles as Shared Responsibilities	1.1 Teachers as Advocates, Facilitators and Multi-role Professionals	Teachers facilitate learning, advocate for students and adapt instruction to diverse needs.	"As a teacher, I wear many hats. I help facilitate, I create different activities to support individual needs, and I also advocate for them."
	1.2 Working With Specialists	Teachers collaborate with specialists to	"We need experts, it is not just the classroom teacher;

Group Experiential Themes (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Definition	Exemplars
		coordinate appropriate support.	it's the whole support team... RSP, speech, psychologists."
	1.3 Teachers as Voices and Protectors of Children	Teachers advocate for services, protection, and equitable opportunities.	"Sometimes we have to speak up for the student to make sure they get the services they need."

GET 1: Inclusive Roles as Shared Responsibilities

The lived experiences of both inclusion teachers and hands-on parents reflect a shared sense of responsibility grounded in advocacy, emotional commitment and collaborative support. Both teachers and parents demonstrate a relational understanding of inclusion aligned with the principles of equity, collaboration and empowerment in inclusive education literature (Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2021; Princeton Review, 2025). The shared responsibility is also reflected in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, particularly at the mesosystem level because there are interactions between home and school environments that can shape the child's learning and development.

Sub-theme 1.1: Teachers as Advocates, Facilitators and Multi-role Professionals.

Teachers reported assuming a wide range of academic, behavioral and emotional responsibilities. Their experiences reflect the demands of inclusive practice, where teachers function as advocates, facilitators, and multi-role professionals. This aligns with Arun et al. (2018), about inclusive education that requires simultaneous modification of content, pedagogy and support systems to address diverse learner needs. Jean shared: "As a teacher, I wear many hats. I help facilitate, I create different activities to support individual needs, and I also advocate for them."

Similarly, a shared sense of being advocates, facilitators and multi-role professionals was evident in the narratives of Anne and Maria. Anne explained: "Our job is to support the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally—so they can succeed in the classroom." Maria further emphasized: "I try to adjust my teaching strategies so that every

student can understand the lesson in a way that works for them."

These statements illustrate the intersection of instructional, affective and advocacy roles, where teachers design activities and instructional materials that address individual learner needs. This reflects the microsystem, where teachers directly influence students' academic and emotional development through daily interactions. This also supports Abrol (2023), who emphasized that inclusive educators must function as multi-role professionals balancing academic, behavioral and social development needs.

Sub-theme 1.2: Working with Specialists

Teachers emphasized that inclusive education is strengthened through collaboration. They rely on Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, and paraeducators, reflecting the shared responsibility model of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as discussed by Sharma (2024). Fanny expressed this reliance: "We need experts, it is not just the classroom teacher; it's the whole support team... RSP, speech, psychologists." Similarly, Anne noted: "I don't think a classroom teacher can fully include a student on their own... without a team of experts." Jean added: "Classroom teachers have experience with all kinds of kids, but they're not the specialist... they're not the expert."

This is also supported by Shekh (2024), who emphasized the importance of collaboration with community organizations and parents to reduce barriers to learning. In addition, inclusive education requires a coordinated system of expertise rather than isolated classroom efforts (Glendale India, 2025). This collaboration reflects the

mesosystem, where interactions among multiple support systems influence the implementation of inclusive practices.

Sub-theme 1.3 Teachers as Voices and Protectors of Children

Teachers also indicated that they serve as voices and protectors of children through their advocacies. They believe that they must actively, support, defend, and promote the rights, needs and interests of these children. Jane summed up this identity that her role is to be their advocate and voice. Meanwhile, teachers' involvement in supporting child is also evident in Anne's statement, "I think all teachers have to be involved... if your goal is to support and educate the whole child." Teachers also described that to ensure students' safety in the classroom, they must advocate for appropriate services which extends into the

mesosystem through coordination with parents and support services.. As Fanny shared, "Sometimes we have to speak up for the student to make sure they get the services they need," highlighting the linkage between classroom practices and broader support systems (mesosystem).

According to Grendale India (2025) that parents' open line communication with teachers can create support systems for children that was also mentioned by Mann et al. (2024), and Solone et al. (2020) where they emphasize that teacher advocacy is important in ensuring that the needs of children with disabilities will be provided and be part of the decision-making process of the IEP and the planning of instruction demonstrating how advocacy operates across the mesosystem and is influenced by broader educational expectations within the macrosystem.

Table 4. Lived Experiences of Hands-on Parents: Parents' Perspectives

Group Experiential Themes (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Definition	Exemplars
Get 1. Inclusive Roles as Shared Responsibilities	1.4 Parents as Bridges Between Home and School	Parents connect home and school through communication and reinforcement of learning.	"I see myself as a bridge between home and school."
	1.5 Home-Based Academic Support	Parents support learning at home through academic assistance and daily routines.	"I help my child at home with reading, writing, and following routines."
	1.6 Parents as Strategy Sharers	Parents share behavioral and instructional strategies that address their child's needs.	"I told the teacher about using a visual schedule."

Sub-theme 1.4: Parents as the Bridges between Home and School

Parents consistently defined themselves as the bridge between school expectations and home routines. They emphasized that active parental engagement provides academic, emotional and motivational support that can enhance academic achievement. Elizabeth stated: *"I see myself as a bridge between home and school."* Parents of children in inclusive education further highlighted the importance of communication, trust and comfort in home-school partnerships. This aligns with Epstein's Home-School Partnership Theory (Gahwaji,

2019) about the critical role of parents in reinforcing school values within the home context. Hannah described how children may exhibit different behaviors across settings, stating: *"Parents see children in a different environment than school... behaviors and attitudes can be very different at home."*

Moreover, Sen (2023) and Priya (2024) also emphasize that parents are active contributors to their children's educational development. Since parents possess intimate knowledge of their child's strengths and needs, they are also important in providing

individualized support that complements school-based interventions.

Sub-theme 1.5: Home Based Academic Support from Parents

Parents demonstrated strong commitment to support learning at home by reinforcing foundational skills and assisting their children in their academic tasks. For instance, Joseph stated: *"I help my child at home with reading, writing and following routines."* This means that parents value the reinforcement of academic skills beyond the classroom because it also contributes to social and emotional development.

Hannah and Sarah described similar practices. Hannah noted: *"At home I help my child review the lessons and practice reading and writing."* Likewise, Sarah shared: *"Sometimes we go over the schoolwork together so my child can learn it better."* These statements reflect parents' active role in reviewing academic content and strengthening learning outcomes. They illustrate how important the supportive role of parents in helping children accomplish academic tasks. This home-based support is consistent with Jigyel et al. (2019), who found that parents across socioeconomic backgrounds engage in academic scaffolding to enhance students' school performance.

Sub-theme 1.6: Parents as Strategy Sharers

Beyond academic support, parents also contributed behavioral and instructional strategies to teachers by sharing insights into their child's strengths, interests and learning styles. This reflects how parents value collaborative partnership to improve instructional effectiveness. Hannah stated: *"I told the teacher about using an initial schedule to use."* This indicates that parents were practical about their strategies that can support children's ability to follow classroom expectations. Similarly, Sarah noted the effectiveness of instructional supports: *"Using visuals, gestures... repeating what the person before them said."* This also suggests that parents also observe and identify strategies that can enhance comprehension and communicate these to teachers to inform instructional planning that can help their

children. This aligns with Priya (2024), who emphasized that parents contribute to teaching and learning by sharing critical insights that help improve educational experiences for students.

Overall, the combined narratives of teachers and parents demonstrate that inclusion is fundamentally an interdependent process. Teachers' roles in advocacy, instruction, emotional support and collaboration align with Arun et al. (2018) that there is a need for structural, methodological and pedagogical adjustments to accommodate diverse learners in inclusive settings. Similarly, Rapp and Corral-Granados (2021) describe inclusive education as requiring holistic system-wide adaptation, reflecting the multi-role expectations placed on teachers.

Parents' descriptions of themselves as bridges, supporters and co-advocates reflect their essential role in supporting children's development. This is supported by Sen (2023) and Mann et al. (2024), who identify parents as key decision-makers and partners in Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes. Priya (2024) further emphasizes that parents' deep knowledge of their children enables more effective individualized support, which is evident in their shared strategies with teachers.

Collectively, these findings support the principles of inclusive education outlined by The Princeton Review (2025)—equity, collaboration, participation and empowerment. However, the data suggest that these principles are not merely theoretical constructs but are actively reflected in lived experiences. The findings further indicate that inclusive education depends on complementary home-school roles, reinforcing the view that successful inclusion is grounded in aligned responsibilities and sustained relational partnerships between parents and teachers.

Challenges and Barriers in Establishing Effective Parent-Teacher Involvement in Inclusive Education

GET 2: Interrelated Barriers Which Limit Effective Involvement

The findings show the mutual barrier both teachers and parents encounter arising from

emotional, linguistic, systemic, and contextual factors. Although the sources of difficulty may vary across different groups, these obstacles interact to form a network of interconnected barriers across ecological systems. These align with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, where emotional challenges are situated within the microsystem, while

communication difficulties fall within the mesosystem, particularly in the interaction between home and school systems. This suggests that challenges in inclusive education are not isolated but are interconnected and multidimensional, consistent with existing literature (Paramansyah & Parojai, 2024; Zabeli & Gjelaj, 2020).

Table 5. Challenges and Barriers of Teachers in Establishing Effective Involvement in Inclusive Education: Teachers' Perspectives

Group Experiential Themes (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Definition	Exemplars
Get 2. Interrelated Barriers Which Limit Effective Involvement	2.1 Parents' Denial, Stigma, and Emotional Resistance	This refers to challenges when parents have difficulty accepting their child's disability.	"One parent didn't want the services even if the child really needed them... it was a challenge."
	2.2 Communication Gaps and Language Barriers	This pertains to language differences and literacy issues that hinder communication between parents and teachers.	"Parents do not respond and most of them only speak in Spanish."
	2.3 System-Level Resource Constraints	This pertains to teachers' lack of sufficient staffing, specialists, and support systems needed to implement inclusive education effectively.	"There are more children who need intervention... and not enough people or programs to support their needs."

Sub-theme 2.1: Parents Denial, Stigma, and Emotional Resistance

Teachers frequently experienced situations in which parents had difficulty accepting evaluations, assessments, or recommended services during the initial stages of identifying learning or developmental needs. Maria explained this tension as: "The first thing is denial." Some parents may struggle to accept the possibility that their child requires special education services. John also described an instance in which a parent declined intervention services despite evident need: "One parent didn't want the services even if the child really needed them... it was a challenge." This indicates that denial may delay access to specialized support that can also complicate collaboration between teachers and parents.

This is supported by Lehman (2018) and Smith and Kreig (2022), who found that denial,

shame, fear, and guilt are common emotional reactions when parents first confront their child's disability. Dagen (2021) further states that emotional barriers hinder communication and are associated with reduced collaboration in IEP processes.

Sub-theme 2.2: Communication Gaps and Language Barriers

Teachers also expressed frustration regarding inconsistent communication, as well as language barriers and unfamiliarity with the educational system, which hinder meaningful parental involvement. These factors contribute to misunderstandings, lack of clarity and weakened relationships, which may reduce collaboration and overall effectiveness. Jane reported: "Parents do not respond and most of them only speak in Spanish." This suggests that language differences significantly affect

communication between teachers and parents. She further noted that this made it difficult to share students' needs and progress.

Teachers also agreed that parents' unfamiliarity with the school system limits effective engagement with school programs. Anne explained: "Many parents were educated in a different country... they don't understand how schools work here." This highlights how differences in educational background and cultural context influence parents' understanding of school systems.

According to Pang et al. (2019), linguistic barriers are a significant constraint to parental engagement and may lead to misunderstandings of school expectations. Similarly, Lehman (2018) noted that when parents are unable to understand school documents or technical terminology, they are less able to engage effectively, even when willing to support their children.

Sub-theme 2.3: System-Level Resource Constraints

Teachers also identified a lack of adequate staffing and support structures as a significant barrier. These constraints reduce service quality and are associated with weak policy implementation and limited support services when not properly addressed. Fanny stated: "We need more RSP teachers and more inclusive education teachers." This indicates a need for additional specialized personnel to support learners with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Teachers also acknowledged that the demand for intervention services exceeds

available school resources. Anne noted: "There are more children who need intervention... and not enough people or programs to support their needs." This reflects systemic limitations that hinder effective implementation of inclusive education practices.

These findings align with studies by Zgaga (2019), Materechera (2020), and Madarang and Martin (2022), which identified insufficient resources, personnel, materials, and facilities as barriers to effective inclusive education implementation. Such systemic shortages are associated with teacher burnout, reduced instructional quality, and delays in service provision for students with disabilities. Furthermore, Koskela and Sinkkonen (2025) emphasize the importance of strengthening collaboration and interactional competencies among school personnel and parents to build reciprocal trust and improve inclusive education practices.

Sub-theme 2.4: Work Constraints Limiting Parent Involvement

Parents reported that their work conflict with children schooling times making it harder to stay consistently involved in their education. They agreed that this cuts down on chances for supervision and regular parent-child interaction around academic support. Joseph stated: "Sometimes I don't have time. I need to work." This reflects how job responsibilities limit attendance at meetings and participation in school-related activities.

Table 6. Challenges and Barriers of Parents in Establishing Effective Involvement in Inclusive Education: Parents' Perspectives

Group Experiential Theme (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Description	Exemplars
Get 2. Interrelated Barriers Which Limit Effective Involvement	2.4 Work Constraints Limiting Parent Involvement	This pertains to parents' struggles to consistently participate in their child's school activities and meetings due to work schedules.	"Sometimes I don't have time. I need to work."
	2.5 Inability to Understand Schoolwork	This refers to parents' difficulty in assisting their children academically because they do not fully	"Sometimes the schoolwork is difficult for me to

Group Experiential Theme (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Description	Exemplars
		understand the schoolwork or teaching methods used in school.	explain to my child."
	2.6 Communication Opportunity Structure Needs	This refers to parents' need for more structured and consistent communication opportunities with teachers and schools.	"We need consistent and comprehensive transition meetings."

Elizabeth comparably observed that work-related demands were hindering parents' ability to communicate effectively with teachers regarding the support needed by their children: *"It's hard for parents because of economics... they are working many jobs... they can't find time."* Hannah expressed a similar concern: *"Work makes it difficult sometimes to be very involved at school."* This portrays that even when parents want to support their children, work-related problems arise and work demands can limit their participation in school activities. This finding aligns with Jigyel et al. (2019), who found that working parents often struggle to attend meetings and take part in school-based involvement.

Sub- theme 2.5: Inability to Understand Schoolwork

Parents also reported difficulties in supporting their children academically due to limited communication with the school, lack of specialized training and feelings of disempowerment, particularly the perceived loss of confidence in advocating for their child. Sarah expressed this challenge: *"I don't understand the work in school."* This suggests that some parents feel unprepared to assist their children because they are not familiar with subject content or instructional strategies used in the classroom.

Similarly, Joseph and Elizabeth shared difficulties in interpreting school tasks. Joseph stated: *"Sometimes the schoolwork is difficult for me to explain to my child."* Elizabeth also noted: *"Some of the things they are learning in school are hard for me to understand."* These statements indicate that parents sometimes struggle to guide their children due to

challenges in interpreting or understanding academic content. This means that there is a need for clearer explanations, guidance and accessible resources that can help parents to support learning at home.

Lehman (2018) explains that parents often feel unprepared because school tasks involve unfamiliar methods, jargon or content. This is a barrier among parents with lower educational backgrounds or those who are not proficient in the language of instruction. This suggests that such limitations hinder their ability to meet their children's educational needs.

Sub-theme 2.6: Communication Opportunity Structure Needs

Parents emphasized the need for consistent and proactive communication rather than irregular or reactive communication from schools. This indicates that parents value timely updates and clear coordination with teachers regarding their children's needs. Elizabeth stressed the importance of structured communication opportunities: *"We need consistent and comprehensive transition meetings."* This reflects that parents value the need of organized communication channels that provide updates on academic progress and developmental transitions.

Hannah similarly observed limited school-parent communication: *"Sometimes we need more communication from the school."* Likewise, Sarah noted that effective home support depends on clear communication from teachers: *"It helps when teachers explain things clearly and regularly."*

American University (2024) highlights the importance of structured, multi-channel communication systems that improve clarity

and accommodate diverse families, particularly those facing language barriers, limited availability, or unfamiliarity with school systems. Scheduled meetings combined with digital platforms (e.g., apps and emails) and phone calls promote more inclusive and culturally responsive communication practices.

Finally, the challenges expressed by teachers and parents reflect interdependent systemic, emotional, and practical barriers, which closely align with barriers to inclusive education. Teachers' experiences of parental denial, as noted by Lehman (2018) and Smith & Kreig (2022), show that emotional factors—such as shock, fear, stigma, and guilt—often delay involvement in special education processes. Language barriers and communication gaps, according to Pang et al. (2019) and Dagen (2021), demonstrate that linguistic mismatches are a significant factor in limited parent participation, especially in multilingual families.

Teachers' concerns regarding lack of staffing, slow assessment processes, and insufficient specialist support also indicate documented systemic issues which, according to Zgaga (2019), Zabeli and Gjelaj (2020), and Madarang and Martin (2022), can weaken inclusive implementation due to inadequate school infrastructure, training, and resources. Moreover, Paramansyah & Parojai (2024) also reported that teacher preparedness and system capacity remain persistent challenges in inclusive contexts.

Parents' struggles with time, workload, and understanding schoolwork also confirm the barriers in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model and reflect findings from Oranga et al.

(2022), which documented those parents often feel unprepared, intimidated, or unsupported when trying to understand special education systems.

These barriers demonstrate limitations that are not due to a lack of willingness but rather to structural and sociocultural constraints. The correspondence in participant experiences supports the conclusion that inclusive education requires institutional reforms, such as improved communication systems, culturally responsive practices, and increased staffing, to ease the burden on teachers and parents. This provides contextualized evidence of the intersection of systemic weaknesses and emotional barriers in real-world settings.

Perceived Strategies and Practices of Teachers in Building Strong and Consistent Involvement in Inclusive Education

GET 3: Alignment of Home-School Strategies Enhances Student Outcomes

Findings show that both teachers and parents draw on coordinated strategies perceived to support children. These practices focus on consistency, communication, and shared understanding, which can be understood through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory at the microsystem and mesosystem levels, where direct interactions and home-school collaboration shape support for the child. This approach is related with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influence that are about coordinated approaches and collaboration in inclusive settings.

Table 7. Perceived Strategies and Practices of Teachers in Building Strong and Consistent Involvement in Inclusive Education: Teachers' Perspectives

Group	Sub-themes	Brief Description	Exemplars
Experiential Theme (GET)			
GET 3: Alignment of Home-School Strategies Enhances Student Outcomes	3.1 Instructional Differentiation and UDL-Based Supports	This refers to teachers' implementation of differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies	"I try to individualize the curriculum as much as possible to meet children's needs."

Group Experiential Theme (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Description	Exemplars
		to accommodate diverse learning needs.	
	3.2 Social-Emotional and Behavioral Supports	This refers to teachers' emphasis of social-emotional learning and behavior management strategies to support students' development.	"Using extra practice, small group time and emotional strategies helped him meet his goal."
	3.3 Collaboration with Specialists and Multi-Professional Teams	This pertains to teachers' collaboration with multidisciplinary teams such as RSP teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, and counselors to provide comprehensive support for students with disabilities.	"I work closely with RSP, Speech, Psychologist and counselors to assist students."
	3.4 Multi-Platform Based Communication	This pertains to teachers' communication with parents using different platforms such as email, ParentSquare, conferences, and IEP meetings to coordinate support for students.	"Even if you don't have a lot of contact... if the child knows the parent and teacher are talking, they are more accountable."

Sub-theme 3.1: Instructional Differentiation and UDL - Based Supports

Teachers described the use of differentiated instructional techniques as a key in addressing individual learning profiles and needs. Among the strategies mentioned were small-group instruction, simplified directions, repetition, and expectations adjusted to fit the learner. Jean, for instance, focused on adapting the curriculum itself to meet individual needs, explaining, *"I try to individualize the curriculum as much as possible to meet children's needs."* Along similar lines, teachers adjust not just the curriculum but also materials and activities depending on each student's abilities. Helen offered a more specific list of what's worked for her: "Strategies that have helped are small group instruction, behavior charts, reward systems, realistic expectations."

Maria took a similar approach with classroom activities, modifying them to keep every student engaged. As she put it,

"Sometimes we modify activities so students with different needs can still participate." Taken together, these accounts suggest teachers view flexible instruction as central to making sure all learners can take part in the classroom, not just keep up with it.

This is also aligned with what Sheikh (2024) and Glendale India (2025) describe about differentiation and UDL-based instruction that these approaches are flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of classroom needs. CAST (2018), as cited in Sharma (2024), frames UDL as a way for students to engage with content through channels that match their own abilities and learning styles. A student with dyslexia offers a useful example here: someone who struggles with heavy reading loads might still demonstrate real understanding through oral presentations or multimedia work, benefiting from multiple ways of taking in and expressing

material, which is exactly the kind of flexibility differentiated instruction is built around.

Sub-theme 3.2: Social Emotional and Behavioral Supports

Teachers consistently emphasized social-emotional learning (SEL) and behavior management routines. They described the use of visuals, emotional check-ins, predictable schedules and co-regulation techniques, which help reduce disruptive behaviors and improve the classroom environment.

Helen observed that emotional and behavioral supports facilitate student learning. She stated, *"Using extra practice, small group time and emotional strategies helped her meet his goal."* Teachers agreed that combining academic reinforcement with emotional support strategies helps students manage challenges and achieve learning objectives. Similarly, Maria emphasized the importance of a supportive classroom climate, where she stated, *"Making sure that students feel safe and included in the classroom is my first priority."* Emotional safety and inclusion are considered foundational for student participation in classroom activities. Jane further emphasized the role of collaboration in emotional support, explaining, *"When children know that their parents and their teachers are on the same page, they feel safe and supported."* This indicates that teacher-parent collaboration contributes to students' emotional stability and sense of security.

These findings align with Casey (2022) and Stanford (2023), who reported that SEL routines support focus, emotional regulation and classroom behavior, particularly among students with disabilities. Shawer (2022) identified five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills. The first three are intrapersonal competencies that support emotional identification, regulation and decision-making, while the latter two are interpersonal competencies that foster empathy, perspective-taking and positive relationship-building, contributing to improved classroom engagement and behavior.

Sub-theme 3.3: Collaboration with Specialists and Multi-Professional Teams

Teachers also described structured collaboration with specialists, including RSP teachers, speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, and counselors. Collaboration in special education involves educators, specialists, and parents working together to support learners with disabilities. It promotes inclusive learning, differentiated instruction, student engagement, communication among stakeholders, and the integration of professional expertise (Wilson College, 2023).

Fanny emphasized that inclusive education becomes more effective when classroom teachers coordinate with other professionals providing specialized expertise. She stated, *"I work closely with RSP, Speech, Psychologist and counselors to assist students."* Jane also explained that services are determined based on individual student needs: *"Some kids require a one-on-one aide, some get RSP service, and some get speech."*

Anne highlighted the limitations of relying solely on classroom teachers, stating, *"I don't think a classroom teacher can fully include a student on their own... without a team of experts."* This underscores the necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration to meet diverse learner needs and ensure equitable access to quality education. These findings align with Abrol (2023) and Sharma (2024), who emphasize that multidisciplinary teamwork strengthens inclusive education by combining complementary expertise to support student development.

Sub-theme 3.4 Multi-Platform Based Communication

Communication between teachers and parents was maintained through platforms such as ParentSquare, email, conferences, and IEP meetings. Fanny explained how communication strategies support learning continuity: *"Working with parents to use similar language at home... sharing strategies and tools to which the child responds well..."* Anne also emphasized alignment between home and school practices: *"Even if you don't have a lot of contact... if the child knows the parent and teacher are talking, they are more accountable."*

These findings support American University (2024), which advocates multi-platform communication systems for culturally and linguistically diverse families. Effective strategies identified include differentiated instruction, UDL-informed support, SEL routines, home reinforcement, and consistent communication—all aligned with established inclusive education practices.

Teachers' academic differentiation practices reflect Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, as highlighted by Shekh (2024) and Glendale India (2025), which emphasize flexible and accessible instructional approaches. The use of visual cues, routines, and emotional regulation strategies aligns with Casey (2022), who noted that SEL-informed practices enhance engagement and behavioral stability.

Home-based reinforcement strategies reflect Epstein's framework of overlapping

spheres of influence, where alignment between home and school contributes to improved outcomes. This is supported by Jiguel et al. (2019) and Priya (2024), who found that structured home reinforcement strengthens learning among students with disabilities. Multi-platform communication also aligns with American University (2024), which recommends structured, multimodal communication systems for diverse school populations.

Overall, these findings validate that consistent parent-teacher coordination—not merely involvement frequency—is a key factor associated with improved academic outcomes and resilience in inclusive education settings (Kovács et al., 2022; Ma et al., 2016). This suggests that coherence and alignment across home and school systems function as the primary mechanism linking collaboration to student success.

Table 8. Perceived Strategies and Practices of Teachers in Building Strong and Consistent Involvement in Inclusive Education: Parents' Perspectives

Group Experiential Theme (GET)	Sub-themes	Brief Description	Exemplars
GET 3: Alignment of Home-School Strategies Enhances Student Outcomes	3.5 Home Reinforcement of Academic Skills	This refers to parents' academic support at home by helping their children practice reading, writing, and mathematics to reinforce classroom learning.	Parents described helping their children with reading, writing, and homework activities to support learning at home.
	3.6 Use of Consistent Tools at Home and at School	This pertains to parents' strategies recommended by teachers such as visual schedules, cue cards, and behavior charts to maintain consistency between home and school environments.	"Using visuals, gestures... repeating what the person before them said."

Sub-theme 3.5: Home Reinforcement of Academic Skills

Parents described providing daily academic support in reading, writing, and mathematics. These efforts reinforce classroom learning and reflect parents' provision of learning support at home. Parents also stated that the use of school-based strategies such as flashcards, letter recognition activities, and structured

homework routines can be effective in supporting their children.

Sub-theme 3.6: Use of Consistent Tools at Home and at School

Parents shared that they use tools at home that are recommended by teachers, including visual schedules, behavior charts, cue cards, and color-coded routines. They also emphasized that consistent routines between

school and home should be maintained. Sarah explained, *"We try to follow the same routines that the teacher uses so my child understands what to do."* They agreed that using classroom techniques at home supports children in their daily learning activities. Joseph also described applying teacher-recommended strategies at home: *"If the teacher suggests something that works in class, we try to use the same thing at home."*

Likewise, Elizabeth emphasized that consistency across environments strengthens her child's understanding. She explained, *"When we use the same strategies at home, it helps my child understand better."* These experiences show how coordinated strategies between parents and teachers can enhance children's learning experiences. Consistency is one of the key principles in Epstein's home-school partnership model, which posits that student success is strengthened when similar supports are reinforced in both environments.

Influence of Parent and Teacher Involvement in Academic and Social Development of Children in Inclusive Education

GET 4: Parent-Teacher Collaboration Builds Academic and Social-Emotional Development

Findings reveal that collaborative involvement between teachers and parents is perceived to support children's academic performance, independence, emotional regulation, and social adjustment through interactions within the microsystem and coordination across the mesosystem. Teachers and parents described that these outcomes are strengthened when involvement is consistent and sustained, particularly through ongoing communication between home and school (mesosystem). These findings are consistent with a large body of empirical research showing positive relationships between parent-teacher communication and student achievement and well-being (Stanford, 2023; Casey, 2022).

Table 9. Influence of Parent and Teacher Involvement in Academic and Social Development of Children in Inclusive Education: Teachers and Parents' Perspectives

Group Experiential Theme (GET)	Subthemes	Brief Description	Participant	Exemplars
Get 4. Parent-Teacher Collaboration Builds Academic and Social-Emotional Development	4.1 Improved Academic Performance and Independence	This refers to how collaboration between parents and teachers supports students' academic growth and independence in completing school tasks.	Anne (Teacher)	"When parents are involved... the child will grow academically, socially and emotionally."
			Joseph (Parent)	"The more involved the parent is, the better the outcome for the student."
	4.2 Emotional Regulation and Social Skill Development	This pertains to how consistent support from parents and teachers helps children develop emotional stability, confidence, and better social interaction.	Maria (Teacher)	"They become more confident... start to grow."

Group Experiential Theme (GET)	Subthemes	Brief Description	Participant	Exemplars
			Hannah (Parent)	"Children become calmer and more confident."
	4.3 Development of Positive Learning Identity	This refers to how parent-teacher collaboration helps children develop confidence, motivation, and a positive perception of themselves as learners.	Jane (Teacher)	"My role is to make sure the child feels successful, confident and happy."
			Elizabeth (Parent)	"Children feel safe when parents and teachers work together."

Sub-theme 4.1 Improved Academic Performance and Independence

Teachers and parents observed students' academic progress when collaboration was intentional and sustained. This progress includes improved focus, task completion, participation in class activities, and increased independence. For instance, Anne explained that *"When parents are involved... the child will grow academically, socially and emotionally."* Teachers agreed that parental support reinforces learning beyond the classroom and helps children maintain consistency in their educational experiences.

There are also emotional and psychological benefits. Maria noted that *"The child feels more supported and gains confidence."* This indicates that children develop greater emotional security and self-assurance when they experience consistent support from both teachers and parents. Thus, collaboration between parents and teachers creates a supportive environment that encourages greater student participation.

Meanwhile, teachers also recognized their role in helping students develop a positive self-perception as learners. Jane described, *"My role is to make sure the child feels successful, confident and happy."* This statement underscores the importance of teachers in nurturing students' confidence and motivation to develop a strong sense of competence.

Parents confirmed these effects, noting that their children demonstrated increased skill development, mastery of schoolwork, and motivation to learn. According to Ma et al. (2016) and Kovacs et al. (2022), parental involvement is a consistent predictor of academic achievement across disability categories.

Sub-theme 4.2: Emotional Regulation and Social Skill Development

Beyond academic development, teacher and parent involvement was also perceived to enhance children's emotional and social functioning. Teachers reported improvements in confidence, emotional stability, and social adjustment. Maria observed that students begin to develop greater confidence in themselves and their abilities when they receive consistent support from both teachers and parents. She explained, *"They become more confident... start to grow."*

They also emphasized that when children know their parents and teachers are communicating and working together, they develop a stronger sense of emotional security. Jane stated, *"When children know that their parents and their teachers are on the same page, they feel safe and supported."* This demonstrates how collaborative relationships between teachers and parents contribute to an environment where students feel emotionally

safe and are more willing to participate in classroom interactions.

Parents also reported that children became calmer, more expressive, and more socially engaged when home-school support was consistent. Moreover, Casey (2022) found that children with involved parents demonstrate better self-esteem, emotional regulation, and classroom behavior. Thus, parent involvement strengthens communication between home and school and supports coordinated responses to behavioral concerns.

Sub-theme 4.3: Development of Positive Learning Identity

Teachers emphasized the importance of developing children's confidence and sense of competence, particularly when both teachers and parents provide unified support. Their experiences indicate that when consistent encouragement is provided by both parties, children begin to view themselves as capable learners who can succeed academically and socially.

For instance, Jane emphasized the importance of fostering student confidence by ensuring that they feel supported and valued in the classroom. She stated, *"My role is to make sure the child feels successful, confident and happy."* This implies that teachers intentionally create supportive learning environments to help students develop positive beliefs about their abilities and attitudes toward learning.

Teachers also agreed that when parents and teachers collaborate, students become more secure in their learning environment. Anne emphasized, *"When children know that their parents and their teachers are on the same page, they feel safe and supported."* This fosters students' sense of belonging and encourages more confident engagement in academic activities. Hornby and Blackwell (2018) and Balli (2016) also argue that emotional support and relational continuity are essential in developing a strong learning identity for students with disabilities.

Thus, both teachers and parents reported improvements in academic performance, independence, confidence, social interaction, and emotional regulation. Increased academic engagement, according to Stanford (2023) and Casey (2022), contributes to improved

motivation, attendance, and school performance. The social-emotional benefits are also strengthened through effective parent-teacher partnerships, which are linked to better behavioral regulation and adjustment.

Meanwhile, Caridade et al. (2020) and Thompson et al. (2017) emphasized that teachers' perceptions of student behavior improve when parental involvement is strong and sustained. The development of a positive learning identity reflects the principles of inclusion articulated by Rapp and Corral-Granados (2021), particularly the promotion of belonging and self-efficacy.

These findings suggest that involvement affects not only academic and behavioral outcomes but also the development of a learner identity. This extends traditional perspectives on involvement by demonstrating that sustained collaboration between teachers and parents supports the internalization of positive self-beliefs, a critical yet often underemphasized dimension of inclusive education.

A Multi-Layered Framework for Strengthening Parent-Teacher Involvement

Findings from participants' accounts, supported by the literature, indicate a set of interconnected components that can guide the strengthening of parent-teacher involvement in inclusive education. This proposed framework is based on (1) lived experiences and professional insights of teachers, (2) articulated challenges and preferences of parents, and (3) evidence-based practices from the literature. Together, these sources converge into a five-part, multi-layered involvement framework focusing on communication, instructional alignment, capacity building, emotional support structures, and systemic infrastructure.

By grounding the framework in participant experiences and supporting it with existing research, this study offers a contextually responsive, empirically informed model for strengthening inclusive education. This framework contributes to the field by integrating multicultural communication needs, teacher capacity gaps, and home-based

strategy alignment into a unified framework for action.

Figure 1 shows how inclusive education is supported and sustained through five interconnected pillars: (1) structured

communication systems, (2) capacity building for parents and teachers, (3) aligned home-school support plans, (4) strengthened system-level supports, and (5) SEL integration across home and school.

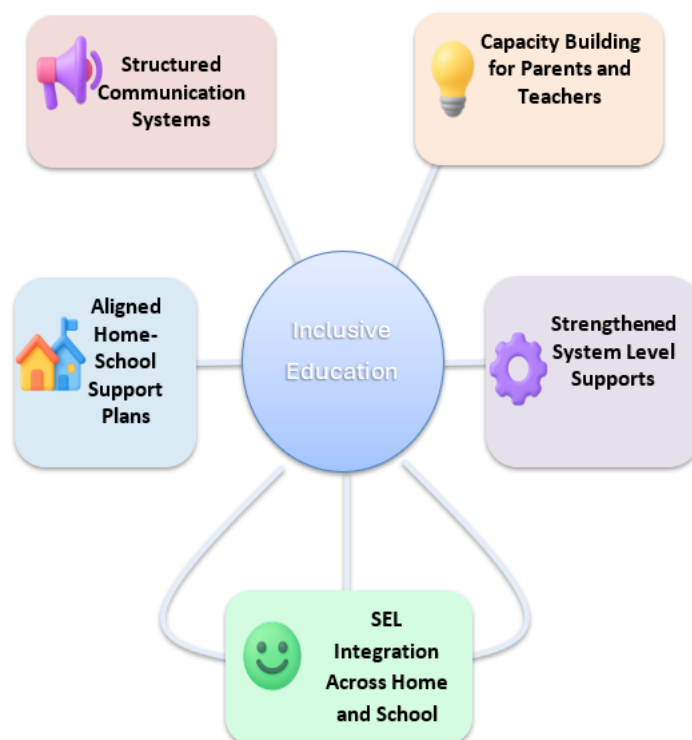


Figure 1. Inclusive Home-School Collaboration Framework (IHSCF)

Each component reflects the barriers identified in the findings and aligns with inclusive practices, parent involvement, and multi-system collaboration. Inclusive education, at the center, symbolizes the core or common goal: creating an equitable and supportive learning environment through effective teacher-parent collaboration, where children with disabilities can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The components also represent essential conditions that must work together to achieve this goal.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Inclusive education is a shared and relational responsibility of inclusion teachers and hands-on parents. Teachers function not only as classroom instructors

but also as advocates, facilitators, collaborators, and protectors of children with disabilities. Parents, on the other hand, serve as bridges between home and school by providing academic support, reinforcing routines, and sharing effective strategies for their child. Successful inclusion depends on the complementary and interconnected roles of teachers and parents in supporting learners' development.

2. Teachers and parents face multiple and interrelated barriers in achieving effective involvement in inclusive education. Teachers encounter difficulties linked to parental denial, communication and language barriers, and inadequate school resources and specialist support. Parents experience challenges due to work demands, limited understanding of schoolwork, and insufficient structured

communication opportunities. These barriers are not rooted in unwillingness but in emotional, systemic, linguistic, and contextual factors that limit sustained collaboration.

3. Parents and teachers view coordinated and consistent practices as the most effective strategies for strengthening involvement in inclusive education. Teachers apply differentiated instruction, social-emotional and behavioral supports, collaboration with specialists, and structured communication with families. Parents reinforce learning through home-based academic support, consistent use of tools across settings, and continuous communication with teachers. Effective involvement is therefore built through alignment of strategies, shared understanding, and coordinated practices across environments.
4. Parent and teacher involvement has a positive influence on the academic and social development of children in inclusive education. Collaboration between home and school enhances academic performance, task completion, motivation, independence, emotional regulation, confidence, and social adjustment. It also contributes to the development of a positive learning identity by fostering feelings of support, competence, and security. Sustained collaboration supports not only academic achievement but also the holistic development of learners with disabilities.
5. A responsive framework for enhancing parent-teacher cooperation in inclusive education may be proposed based on the insights of teachers and parents. The findings support a multi-layered framework consisting of structured communication systems, aligned home-school action plans, capacity building for parents and teachers, social-emotional learning integration, and system-level supports. These components suggest that improving involvement requires not only individual effort but also institutional structures that promote communication, consistency, competence, and adequate support services.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Schools may set up scheduled updates and translated communications for families, and keep parent-teacher dialogue going consistently through platforms like ParentSquare, conferences, and IEP meetings. Teachers should provide clear, regular updates on academic progress, classroom routines, and behavioral support, while parents are encouraged to stay actively engaged through these channels. Building up these practices can help foster shared responsibility, transparency, and trust among everyone involved.
2. Schools may also look at increasing support staff, including RSP teachers, paraprofessionals and interpreters, to help manage workload demands and ensure fair access to services. Timely assessment and referral procedures should be a priority to avoid delays in supporting learners with disabilities. Furthermore, educational policies may focus on strengthening infrastructure, increasing funding for inclusive education programs, and expanding access to resources to address systemic issues proactively rather than reactively.
3. It is also recommended that teachers and parents intentionally and consistently coordinate their practices. Teachers may provide parents with reproducible materials (e.g., visual schedules, academic tools, behavior supports) to ensure consistency in routines and expectations across environments. Parents are encouraged to reinforce these strategies at home to support learning and emotional regulation. Schools may also develop a Shared Support Profile summarizing strategies used at home and at school to ensure coherence and continuity in supporting learners.
4. Parent-teacher involvement has positive effects on academic and social-emotional development. It is suggested that both stakeholders may implement practices that foster emotional regulation, social skills,

and engagement in learning for students. Teachers may also incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies into their classroom routines, such as mindfulness breaks, positive reinforcement systems, emotional labeling, and structured behavior expectations. Parents may replicate these practices at home by maintaining predictable routines, providing consistent praise, using calm-down strategies, and modeling communication skills. Schools may further provide SEL workshops for both teachers and families to equip them with the necessary knowledge and tools to support children's well-being.

5. Since the Inclusive Home-School Collaboration Framework was built from the experiences of a small group of participants at Laurel Elementary School in California, it shouldn't be applied broadly without further testing. Schools in similar settings might start by piloting and adapting the framework to their own context, gathering feedback from teachers, parents, and administrators and evaluating results before scaling it up. Administrators can support this process through ongoing capacity-building programs focused on inclusive strategies, IEPs, communication, and social-emotional learning. Policymakers can strengthen these efforts by ensuring adequate funding, professional development, and community partnerships.
6. Future studies may address the limitations of this research by involving larger and more diverse samples, including multiple schools, and incorporating additional stakeholders such as students and administrators. Researchers may also employ quantitative or mixed-methods designs to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed framework. Further validation of the framework across different contexts is also recommended for continued refinement and improvement.

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