

Challenges Encountered by Parents During Home-Based Learning

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Abstract

Home-based learning transferred a substantial part of educational coordination into households without transferring the time, training, equipment, or authority ordinarily available in schools. This integrative review reframes parental difficulty as a coordination problem rather than a deficit in commitment. Evidence available through 2021 is organized around five connected tasks: interpreting school requirements, arranging household time and space, supporting learner effort without replacing it, maintaining contact with teachers, and protecting family well-being. The review shows why a parent can be highly involved yet unable to sustain the expected routine when work schedules, device sharing, unfamiliar content, language, or delayed feedback converge. It proposes a Household Learning Coordination model that separates the responsibilities of schools, teachers, learners, and caregivers and uses a weekly learning map, a single help route, and escalation rules for unresolved barriers. The article is a conceptual synthesis and does not estimate the prevalence of parental challenges in a specific community.

Keywords: home-based learning; parental support; household coordination; remote education; learning continuity

Introduction

School closure changed the role of the home. Parents and caregivers were no longer asked only to encourage attendance, monitor homework, and communicate with teachers. Many also had to interpret modules, organize schedules, manage devices, explain unfamiliar tasks, photograph outputs, and return materials. These duties arrived while households were also managing work disruption, health risks, and care responsibilities.

Describing the problem as insufficient parental involvement is misleading. Involvement depends on conditions: instructions that can be understood, workloads that fit household time, a reachable teacher, materials suited to available devices, and a clear boundary between helping and completing work for the child. Studies of parental experiences during school closure repeatedly identified competing responsibilities, learner motivation, access, and uncertainty about learning as central difficulties (Garbe et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2021).

Purpose of the Article

This review asks which coordination tasks were shifted to households, where those tasks commonly failed, and how schools can reduce unnecessary parental burden while preserving meaningful family support.

Conceptual Approach

Design and Source Base

The article uses integrative conceptual synthesis. Sources published through 2021 were selected when they addressed parental experience, home learning, remote-school communication, learner access, or Philippine learning-continuity policy. Findings from different countries were used to identify mechanisms, not to infer local rates.

Evidence was mapped to the sequence a household follows from receiving a learning requirement to returning work and obtaining feedback. The analysis distinguished assistance a caregiver can reasonably provide from instructional and administrative responsibilities that remain with the school.

The Household Learning Coordination Model

Interpreting the Weekly Learning Demand

A household cannot plan around requirements it cannot see. Separate subject messages, changing deadlines, unexplained abbreviations, and activities distributed through several channels create coordination work before learning begins. A weekly map should show the essential task, expected learner effort, materials, submission route, and help contact for every subject.

Clarity must be tested with caregivers who were not present when the lesson was designed. A direction that is obvious to a teacher can depend on subject knowledge or classroom routines unfamiliar at home. Examples and answer formats should reveal what the learner is expected to produce without inviting the caregiver to supply the response.

Arranging Time, Space, and Devices

Home schedules are negotiated among employment, household work, caregiving, device sharing, electricity, and connectivity. Flexibility is useful only when the total demand remains manageable. If every subject extends deadlines independently, unfinished work can accumulate into an impossible backlog.

Schools can reduce conflict by coordinating the number of major tasks, permitting asynchronous completion, and offering equivalent offline routes. The goal is not to reproduce the classroom timetable inside the home but to preserve a realistic rhythm of learning, rest, and contact.

Supporting Effort Without Becoming the Teacher

Caregivers need a defined support role. They can help the learner start, read directions, identify available resources, ask the learner to explain thinking, and signal when help is needed. They should not be expected to reteach every competency or guarantee correct answers. Excessive dependence on adult explanation disadvantages learners whose caregivers have less time, schooling, or confidence in the language of instruction.

A useful module includes self-check cues and tells the caregiver when to stop and contact the teacher. This protects assessment integrity and reduces conflict. It also recognizes learner autonomy: the child's attempt, including error, is evidence the teacher needs.

Maintaining a Usable School-Home Link

Communication should have one authoritative route for requirements and one accessible route for questions. Group chats are fast but can bury important messages, expose personal concerns, or generate contradictory answers. Individual difficulties should move to a private channel with an expected response window.

Non-submission should trigger inquiry rather than immediate blame. A short reason code - unclear instruction, no device, illness, household duty, lost material, or other - helps the school decide whether the remedy is instructional, logistical, or welfare-related.

Protecting Family Relationships and Well-Being

When parents are made responsible for both enforcement and instruction, learning can become a repeated site of conflict. Schools should avoid messages that equate visible parental supervision with care. Families differ in composition, work, language, health, and available adults.

A sustainable design limits unnecessary monitoring, schedules genuine breaks, and provides referral when distress, violence, neglect, or prolonged disengagement is suspected. Teachers and parents need permission to prioritize safety and well-being when the normal learning plan cannot be maintained.

Table 1

Responsibility map for home-based learning

Coordination task	School or teacher responsibility	Caregiver contribution
Weekly demand	Consolidate tasks, deadlines, formats, and help route	Plan a feasible household schedule
Task meaning	Provide clear directions, examples, and feedback	Help the learner interpret and begin
Learning evidence	Design work the learner can perform independently	Preserve the learner's own attempt
Barrier response	Investigate and provide an alternative or referral	Report the barrier through the agreed channel
Well-being	Limit overload and maintain welfare procedures	Observe strain and seek help when needed

Note. The table is an analytic tool proposed in this article; it does not report field measurements.

Discussion

The coordination model changes what counts as parental support. The desired outcome is not constant adult presence but a workable handoff among school instructions, learner action, caregiver assistance, and teacher feedback. A weekly map and a single help route can remove avoidable friction before additional training is considered.

Scope and Research Agenda

This review is non-systematic and cannot represent every family. Online studies may underrepresent households with the weakest connectivity, and parental roles differ by learner age, disability, language, and local culture. Future studies should follow the same households over time and examine both burden and learning continuity without assuming that more involvement is always better.

Conclusion

Home-based learning is strongest when responsibility is explicit and proportionate. Schools retain responsibility for instructional clarity, feedback, accessibility, and welfare referral; caregivers provide encouragement, routine, observation, and communication within realistic limits. The household should be a supported learning environment, not an unpaid replacement for the school.

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