

Parental Involvement in Modular and Online Learning

Renato Luis Domingo

Abstract

Remote education expanded parental involvement while blurring the boundary between support and substitute teaching. This conceptual review examines involvement as a negotiated family-school relationship rather than a single amount of participation. Evidence through 2021 is organized around five roles: prepare the learning conditions, encourage learner agency, observe progress, communicate evidence, and refer instructional problems to the teacher. The proposed Family-School Support Boundary protects parents from being held responsible for curriculum delivery and protects assessment from answers produced by adults. It recognizes that employment, household care, language, education, disability, connectivity, and device sharing shape what families can reasonably provide. The framework recommends weekly demand maps, role-specific guidance, disclosure of assistance, predictable contact routes, and differentiated support for families facing higher coordination costs. It also distinguishes productive involvement from constant monitoring or control. The article does not measure parental participation or claim that more involvement always improves achievement. Its purpose is to define equitable, observable roles through which parents and schools can coordinate without transferring professional teaching obligations to the household.

Keywords: parental involvement; modular learning; online learning; family-school partnership; learner agency

Introduction

When lessons moved into homes, parents became schedulers, technology helpers, material collectors, motivators, and communication links. Some could work beside a child; others balanced employment, younger children, elder care, unreliable connectivity, or limited familiarity with the language and content of instruction.

The phrase parental involvement can hide this variation. It can also imply that visible adult participation is always beneficial. Excessive correction, answer production, surveillance, or conflict may reduce learner ownership and make returned work difficult for teachers to interpret.

Purpose of the Article

This article asks which family roles are educationally useful, where the teacher's responsibility should remain clear, and how schools can design involvement that does not depend on privilege.

Conceptual Approach

Design and Source Base

The framework draws on family-school partnership theory and studies of parents' emergency remote-learning experience available through 2021. It interprets involvement through invitations, resources, role beliefs, learner development, and the design of school tasks.

The proposed boundary is flexible by age and need. A young child or learner with a disability may require direct assistance, but the school must identify, support, and document that role rather than assuming every household can supply it.

The Family-School Support Boundary

Prepare Conditions

Parents can help locate time, space, materials, connectivity, and a realistic weekly rhythm. Schools make this role possible when requirements are coordinated and essential tasks are distinguished from optional work.

A household does not need a classroom replica. A workable plan may use shared devices, offline periods, short sessions, and negotiated quiet time. Flexibility should reduce conflict without creating an unlimited backlog.

Encourage Agency

Helpful involvement prompts the learner to begin, persist, explain, and ask for help. Questions such as what the task requires or which example may help preserve thinking. Giving the answer can complete the page while removing the learning opportunity.

The level of support should gradually recede when the learner gains competence. Parent instructions can state when to wait, when to offer a cue, and when to stop because teacher input is needed.

Observe Without Policing

Parents can notice whether a direction is confusing, a task repeatedly fails, attention is exhausted, or technology blocks participation. These observations are useful evidence and should not become constant surveillance of the child.

A simple note can identify time spent, assistance given, and the point of difficulty. This contextual information is more useful than requiring the parent to certify perfect completion.

Communicate Evidence

Schools should offer a predictable contact route, response window, and weekly summary rather than scattered messages from several subject teachers. Communication should explain the decision required from the family.

Parents need a safe way to report constraints without fear that honesty will lower the child's grade. Teachers, in turn, need concise information that distinguishes an access problem, motivational difficulty, unclear instruction, and content misconception.

Refer Teaching Problems

When the learner cannot proceed after a reasonable cue, the instructional problem returns to the teacher. Referral may lead to a call, demonstration, revised example, peer session, or alternative task. The parent should not be expected to invent a lesson.

Schools can identify families with higher coordination burdens and provide assisted schedules, printed guidance, language support, or device alternatives. Targeted help should be offered respectfully and reviewed with the family.

Table 1*Family-school support boundary*

Family role	Appropriate action	Boundary signal
Prepare	Arrange feasible time and materials	School demand exceeds household capacity
Encourage	Prompt effort and explanation	Adult supplies the answer
Observe	Note difficulty and assistance	Monitoring becomes continuous control
Communicate	Report concise contextual evidence	Messages have no response route
Refer	Return instructional need to teacher	Parent is expected to reteach content

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

Discussion

The framework treats parental involvement as coordination with limits. Effective partnership makes learner thinking more visible and connects the household to professional support; it does not measure commitment by the number of hours an adult sits beside the child.

Scope and Research Agenda

This review does not estimate effects on achievement or compare parenting styles. Reports may overrepresent connected and available parents. Future research should distinguish types and quality of involvement, document learner age and support needs, measure adult burden, and examine both achievement and learner autonomy over time.

Conclusion

Equitable involvement begins with a clear invitation and a bounded role. Parents prepare, encourage, observe, communicate, and refer; teachers retain responsibility for instructional design, feedback, and recovery. That division supports families while preserving the child's authorship of learning.

References

- Dong, C., Cao, S., & Li, H. (2020). Young children's online learning during COVID-19 pandemic: Chinese parents' beliefs and attitudes. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 118, 105440.
- Garbe, A., Ogurlu, U., Logan, N., & Cook, P. (2020). COVID-19 and remote learning: Experiences of parents with children during the pandemic. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 4(3), 45-65.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research*, 67(1), 3-42.
- Ribeiro, L. M., et al. (2021). Parental involvement during pandemic times: Challenges and opportunities. *Education Sciences*, 11(6), 302.
- UNICEF. (2020). Guidance on distance learning modalities to reach all children and youth during school closures.