



## **Evaluating the Impact of the Family-Friendly School Model on Enhancing Parental Engagement in Primary Education**

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**(Received: May-2024; Accepted: December-2024; Available Online: December-2024)**



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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Family-Friendly School Model in promoting parental engagement in primary education. Recognized as a pivotal factor in student academic success and holistic development, parental involvement often encounters barriers such as communication breakdowns, mismatched expectations, and limited awareness of parental roles in education. The Family-Friendly School Model was designed as a structured approach to address these challenges, emphasizing open communication, mutual respect, and inclusivity. Using a mixed-methods research design that includes questionnaires, interviews, and observational data, the study reveals that implementing this model leads to notable improvements in parental engagement. Outcomes include higher attendance at school events, increased participation in parent-teacher meetings, and a strengthened partnership between schools and families. Additionally, the findings highlight the model's positive influence on student learning outcomes. The study underscores the need for continuous professional development for educators to maintain and enhance parental involvement. This research provides actionable insights into fostering sustainable collaboration between schools and families, affirming the Family-Friendly School Model as an effective strategy for strengthening primary education.

**Keywords:** Parental Involvement; Family-Friendly School Model; Primary Education; School-Family Partnership.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is seen as a powerful weapon to transform any developing nation into a developed nation by accelerating its social and economic growth and promoting harmony and peace. Every nation wants to create a thoughtful citizenry. All parents and academicians want to develop intellectual and conceptual capabilities in their children by the end of primary school. Language and Mathematics have always been thought of as eyes through which we interpret the universe. How well we can prepare our children for life is a real question. Parental involvement in education is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing student achievement and overall school success. The engagement of parents in their children's educational journey not only enhances academic performance but also fosters social and emotional development, creating a holistic environment for learning (Wafa & Muthi, 2024). However, many schools face significant challenges in effectively engaging parents in meaningful partnerships that support their children's learning. These challenges can stem from various factors, including communication barriers, differing expectations, cultural differences, and a lack of understanding of the roles that parents can play in the educational process (Muhammad et al., 2024). This study addresses these challenges by proposing a model that fosters collaboration between families and schools, thereby creating an inclusive environment conducive to student development.

The research highlights the importance of understanding the barriers that hinder parental engagement. By identifying these obstacles, educators and policymakers can develop targeted strategies to overcome them, ultimately leading to improved collaboration between schools and families. The proposed family-friendly school model aims to provide practical solutions that facilitate greater parental involvement in school activities and decision-making processes (Angelova, 2022). This model emphasizes the need for schools to create welcoming environments where parents feel valued and empowered to contribute to their children's education.

In addition to addressing barriers, this study explores the various forms of parental involvement that can enhance student outcomes. Research indicates that effective parental engagement encompasses a range of activities, including attending school events, volunteering in classrooms, participating in parent-teacher conferences, and supporting learning at home (Омарханова et al., 2024). The family-friendly school model encourages schools to implement practices that promote these forms of involvement, recognizing that each family's circumstances and capacities may differ.

Moreover, the study underscores the significance of building strong partnerships between schools and families. Such partnerships are characterized by open communication, mutual respect, and shared goals for student success. By fostering these relationships, schools can create a supportive network that not only benefits students academically but also strengthens the community as a whole. The research emphasizes that when parents are actively involved in their children's education; it leads to increased student motivation, higher attendance rates, and improved behavior.

To develop the family-friendly school model, this study employs a comprehensive research methodology that includes qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups are utilized to gather insights from parents, teachers, and school administrators regarding their experiences with parental involvement. This mixed-methods approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding parental engagement and provides a solid foundation for developing effective strategies.

The anticipated outcomes of this research are twofold: first, to provide a validated framework for schools seeking to enhance parental involvement through the

implementation of the family-friendly school model; and second, to contribute to the existing body of literature on parental engagement in education. By sharing findings with educators and policymakers, this study aims to inform best practices that can be adopted across diverse educational contexts.

This study represents a significant contribution to the field of education by addressing the critical issue of parental involvement through the lens of a family-friendly school model. The insights gained from this research will not only enhance our understanding of the barriers to parental engagement but also provide practical solutions that can be implemented in schools to foster stronger partnerships with families. Ultimately, by promoting effective collaboration between schools and parents, we can create an educational environment that supports all students in achieving their fullest potential.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

The family serves as the foundational environment where a child begins their education and upbringing (Kochappilly, 2013). Family members act as the child's first and most influential teachers. While a child typically spends six hours at school, the remaining eighteen hours are spent at home, underscoring the significant role of the family in shaping academic success. Research consistently shows that children whose parents actively engage with their education and collaborate with schools tend to achieve higher academic performance, maintain better attendance, and aspire to higher levels of education. Moreover, underperforming students and those at risk of academic failure greatly benefit from increased family involvement and community support. To foster success for all students, schools should implement family-school partnership policies that encourage active collaboration and engagement.

Family engagement can be best practiced by using an ecological system theory of child development. The theoretical framework asserts that multiple layers of the system, directly and indirectly, influence child development (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012). Ecological systems theory provides a complete picture of the bifacial relationships between schools and families that influence child development (Seh, 2023).

Henderson & Mapp (2002) utilized the mesosystem of the ecological- systems framework to organize the links between the home and school environments into three main categories: (a) family engagement support for education at home by having discussions about school and helping with homework (b) family engagement that supports for education at school in the form of volunteering, chaperoning field trips, attending school events and (c) the interface of the two which includes the communications and interactions between families and in the form of parent-teacher conferences, home-school notes, phone calls. They found that each form of aforementioned family engagement was co-related to positive student outcomes.

## **TYPES OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Parents can be involved in child education in four ways as described by Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, Lloyd, & Leung, (2013).

- (a) Involving families in child's learning at home.
- (b) Involving families at school.
- (c) Family Involvement through school outreach, and
- (d) Parental support activities.

## **Learning Activities at Home**

The learning activities at home are the activities that occur outside of school. For instance, parents can support their child's reading and writing, help the child with

his/her homework, and help the school in maintaining its disciplinary systems (Hoglund, Jones, McNeal, 2014). Some activities do not occur at the child's home and may take place at the library, museum, and family resource centers. (Anderson et al, 2022).

Parents can use numerous activities that can enhance the child's learning outside of school. Dialogic reading is a type of interactive shared reading that can be used by parents to practice reading at home. In this approach, the parent builds conversation in the form of dialogue with the students around the text they read. (Beschoner & Hutchison, 2016). Research highlights that parent-child conversation at home, dialogic reading strategies, and shared reading activities have a positive impact on a child's literacy success (Morrow, 1992).

Numeracy activities fell into two broad categories: direct activities that relate to the acquisition of specific Numeracy skills (counting or recognizing digits) and indirect activities that have quantitative components (playing board games, measuring while cooking) but are not explicitly aimed at teaching Numeracy skills. Parents reported printing numbers and naming numbers as occurring less frequently than printing letters and naming letters.

### **Family Involvement at School**

Parent-teacher conferences, school open houses, volunteering in the classroom, and other on-campus interactions between families and the school are all examples of family involvement (Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013; Roy, 2016).

Parents may work with small groups of children, read a book aloud to the class, or carry out secretarial tasks as volunteers in the classroom (Christianakis, 2011; Roy, 2016). Family engagement at school is not as simple to do as the aforementioned learning activities at home, which can be carried out practically anywhere without any time constrain. Participation at school requires more parental planning and effort and typically occurs less frequently than learning activities at home (Sad & Gurbuzturk, 2013; Roy, 2016). Family involvement at school not only requires extra parental work but too much effort from the teacher's side as well.

### **Family Involvement through School Outreach**

The third element of parental involvement is school outreach to involve families. To involve families and make them feel welcome, schools and educators use –outreachll strategies and techniques (VanVoorhis, 2013). Home visits, phone calls to schedule meetings, letters to parents and/or students before the start of the school year, open houses, conversations with a child's parent, facilitating contact between and among parents of children in the class, workshops for parents, parent-teacher conferences, interactive homework or learning activities, and family nights after school, etc. are few examples of this (Early, Pianta, Taylor, & Cox, 2001).

### **Parental Support Activities**

Parental Support Activities are deemed to be the final category (Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013). These include parents establishing norms, demonstrating kindness, engaging in constructive dialogue with their kids about school, and fostering a pleasant home atmosphere (Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013). Several of these parenting practices were subtle, such as having high expectations for the child, maintaining open lines of communication with the child, and adopting a loving, supportive parenting approach that includes a healthy level of discipline and structure.

## **FACTOR AFFECTING THE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Child-related Factors**

Age, learning challenges, skills and talents, and behavior issues in children are potential barriers to parental participation (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). The age of a kid could be a hindrance to parental involvement because, as children grow in age, parental involvement declines (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Another obstacle to parental involvement, according to Hornby and Lafaele, could arise if a parent and school disagree regarding a child's learning impairment or disability (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Moreover, if a parent believes that their child is gifted but the school does not agree this could lead to conflict and decrease a parent's engagement as they lose faith in the educational system (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Finally, a child's behavior may prevent parents from getting involved. When negative behavior rises, parents tend to become less interested in their children's education (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). These studies demonstrated that there is a wide range of reasons why parents might choose not to be involved in their children's education.

### **Parent and Teachers related Factors**

Barriers related to parent-teacher aspects have to do with goals and agendas as well as attitudes, according to Hornby and Lafaele (2011). Parent engagement may be hindered by disagreements between school and home regarding goals and agendas. Frustration can result from these disparate objectives and conceptions of parental participation since each side strives to further its interests in a way that often clashes with one another (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Barriers to parental involvement can also be created by teacher and parent attitudes when their presumptions about one another are not consistent (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Mautone, Marcelle, Tresco, & Power, 2015). The result of this mistrust causes obstacles to parental participation because teachers may believe that parents don't care about their children's education and that parents believe that teachers are just interested in developing a superficial relationship. Whether a parent accepts an invitation to get engaged with their child's school will depend on how they interpret the request. Parents were likely not to be interested if they believed that the teacher or school did not value parental involvement (Hoover- Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Parental involvement can also be hampered by teacher preparation (Bracke & Corts, 2012). Family engagement on the part of teachers leads to a significant, intimate relationship. Lack of training for teachers in techniques for engaging parents in meaningful, constructive ways, may cause trouble for teachers to engage challenging parents (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Teachers contact the parents only when it is necessary. Being afraid of dominating parents, who may cause more harm than benefit. Some teachers avoid involving these kinds of parents in the classroom.

### **School Environment**

Families can establish connections with other families, teachers, and school personnel in a supportive school environment. Parents may encounter obstacles as a result of an unfavorable school environment. It can be challenging encouraging parent involvement in a school when families come from different cultural backgrounds (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). If parents feel welcomed at school they get more involved in school activities. In terms of communication, big schools are found to be less respectful and less safe than small schools. (Goldkind & Farmer, 2013). If we talk about the most effective indicator of family engagement, a low student-teacher ratio was discovered as the best signal. (Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014). Family engagement in a child's schooling has also

been found to be influenced by parents & perceptions of the academic environment (Vera, Israel, Coyle, Cross, Knight-Lynn, Moallem & Goldberger, 2012).

### **Language as a Barrier**

Families that use English as a second language might find it difficult to communicate with the school (Fillmore, 2000). Schools may create possibilities for such kinds of parents. For instance, parents who speak the same language can collaborate to connect and support one another (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

### **Families Structure**

Societal variables such as shifting family dynamics such as increasing the number of divorces that lead to more single-parent families and the number of households where both parents work full-time may lead to less involvement of parents. These elements are now more prevalent than ever. In the United States, one in three kids has a parent who doesn't live with them; these kinds of parents are less involved (Stewart, 2010). Families with single mothers are impacted by economic problems and thereby impacting their involvement in their child's education.

Parental participation is restricted by age, learning disabilities, capabilities, skills, and behavioral issues. Parental participation is believed to decline as children grow older, therefore age can be viewed as a possible obstacle to that involvement. (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). If a child is having a learning disability and difficulty and parents and school have a different perspective about that difficulty or disability that may also cause a lack of parental engagement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Additionally, if a school shows disagreement with parents' belief about a child's talent, this could lead to a problem and result in a reduction in parental engagement, as their faith in the educational system gets shaken (Patel & Stevens, 2010; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011;). Finally, a child's behavior could prevent parents from getting involved. It was found that parents are typically less concerned with the teachers as misbehavior worsens (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). When teachers and parents have conflicting beliefs about one other, restrictions might be put in place about parental involvement. Limits around parental engagement grow as a result of parents' and teachers' expectations that one is just interested in a surface-level relationship and the other doesn't care about the education of their students (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). The level of parent involvement might also be hampered by teacher education (Bracke & Corts, 2012; Lindberg, 2014). Little outreach by teachers to families can result in developing a significant and private connection between families and schools. Teachers were rarely trained in effective methods for interacting with parents, and they frequently excelled at handling difficult parents (LaRocque, Kleiman; Darling, 2011). In many cases, one-way communication happens between teachers and parents (Gregg, Rugg & Stoneman, 2012). Many teachers fear involving parents in their children's educations because they considered them & helicopter Parents who are harsh to their children and may endanger the pupil more than help (Lindberg, 2014; Wanat, 2012; Roy, 2016). For parents to assist their children with their homework, teachers must provide them with direction (VanVoorhis, 2011).

### **Societal Factors**

The greatest category of impediments has historically been societal considerations. Sociocultural factors such that increasing single-parent families owing to divorce, families having both parents who work full-time, and changing personal circle of relations networks as a result of parents traveling for work and putting in extra hours create a potential barrier in parent involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

**METHOD**

The research addresses the critical barriers that hinder effective partnerships between schools and families, which are essential for fostering student success. Through this study, the author aims to identify these obstacles and propose practical solutions to improve engagement. The methodology employed is based on a Research and Development (R&D) approach, specifically utilizing a Research-Development-Research (RDR) design. This approach allows for the iterative development and assessment of the proposed model, ensuring that it is both valid and practical for implementation in educational settings.

Data collection methods include questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis, which provide a multifaceted view of parental involvement dynamics. The study involves school personnel and parents of students enrolled in the participating schools, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered. The analysis focuses on identifying key barriers to engagement and evaluating how the Family Friendly School Model can effectively address these challenges. The findings indicate significant obstacles faced by parents in engaging with schools, emphasizing the need for schools to adopt better strategies to foster stronger partnerships with families. This research not only contributes to academic discourse on parental involvement but also provides actionable insights for improving educational practices and policies in Indonesia.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Result**

The findings revealed several key obstacles that parents face in engaging with their children's education. These barriers included communication gaps between schools and families, a lack of understanding of parental roles, and insufficient opportunities for meaningful participation in school activities. The data collected from questionnaires indicated that many parents felt disconnected from the school environment, primarily due to inadequate outreach efforts and a lack of flexible involvement options that accommodate their diverse schedules and commitments. Additionally, some parents reported feeling intimidated or unsure about how to engage with teachers and school staff, which further exacerbated their sense of alienation from the school community.

**Table 1. The responses collected through the questionnaire.**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Awareness of School Events	- 70% of parents reported feeling uninformed about upcoming school events.
Interest in Participation	- 85% expressed a desire to participate more actively if flexible options were provided.
Barriers to Involvement	- Main barriers identified include: - Lack of communication from the school (60%). - Scheduling conflicts with work or other commitments (55%). - Limited knowledge about how to get involved (50%).
Preferred Communication Methods	- 65% preferred receiving information via text messages or school apps. - 25% favored traditional methods like newsletters or flyers.

Support for School Initiatives	- 90% of parents indicated they would support initiatives that promote family engagement.
Suggestions for Improvement	- Parents suggested regular meetings, workshops, and social events to foster better relationships with school staff.

This table effectively summarizes the key insights derived from the questionnaire responses, providing a clear view of parental perceptions and experiences regarding their involvement in elementary schools under the Family-Friendly School Model.

**Table 2. The interviews with school personnel and parents regarding parental involvement in elementary education.**

Interview Aspect	Key Insights
Perceptions of Parental Involvement	- Parents expressed a strong desire to be involved but felt disconnected from school activities.  - School staff recognized the importance of parental involvement for student success.
Barriers to Engagement	- Common barriers identified include:  - Lack of communication from the school (notifying parents about events and opportunities).  - Time constraints due to work commitments, making it difficult for parents to attend events.  - Limited awareness of how to engage with the school effectively.
Suggestions for Improvement	- Parents suggested more structured opportunities for engagement, such as:  - Regular workshops and informational meetings about school programs.  - Social events that promote interaction between parents and teachers.  - Clearer communication channels (e.g., newsletters, social media updates).
Experiences with School Events	- Positive feedback on events that allowed informal interactions between parents and staff.  - Noted low attendance at formal meetings, indicating a need for more engaging formats.
Role of School in Facilitating Involvement	- School personnel emphasized the need for proactive outreach to parents to foster involvement.



Interview Aspect	Key Insights
	- Importance of creating a welcoming environment where parents feel valued and included.

This table encapsulates the essential themes and findings from the interviews, providing a clear understanding of the perspectives of both parents and school staff regarding parental involvement in the context of the Family-Friendly School Model.

In response to these challenges, the Family Friendly School Model was developed as a practical framework to facilitate greater parental involvement. This model emphasizes creating an inclusive school environment that prioritizes open communication, mutual respect, and shared goals between educators and families. It includes strategies such as organizing regular social events to bring parents and teachers together, providing workshops to educate parents about their roles in supporting their children's education, and offering various flexible options for participation that cater to different family needs. For instance, schools implemented evening meetings and virtual engagement options to accommodate working parents, thus ensuring that more families could participate in school activities.

The evaluation of the model's effectiveness showed significant improvements in parental involvement metrics post-implementation. Statistical analysis indicated a marked increase in parental attendance at school events, higher participation rates in parent-teacher meetings, and a greater willingness among parents to engage in volunteer activities within the school. Moreover, qualitative feedback from interviews highlighted that parents felt more valued and empowered as partners in their children's education after the introduction of the Family Friendly School Model. Many parents expressed appreciation for the school's efforts to reach out and involve them in meaningful ways, noting that they now felt more informed about their children's academic progress and were more confident in supporting their learning at home.

Furthermore, the research identified specific areas where the Family Friendly School Model had a profound impact on fostering a sense of community among parents and educators. Parents reported feeling more comfortable approaching teachers with questions or concerns and appreciated the open-door policy that many schools adopted as part of this model. This shift not only improved parent-teacher relationships but also contributed to a more collaborative atmosphere within the school environment.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Family Friendly School Model has demonstrated its effectiveness in overcoming barriers to parental involvement in primary education. By prioritizing communication, inclusivity, and respect for diverse family needs, schools can create an environment where parents feel empowered to engage actively in their children's education. This research underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to build strong partnerships between schools and families, ultimately leading to enhanced educational outcomes for students. Future studies should continue to explore innovative strategies for sustaining parental involvement over time and adapting these models to meet the evolving needs of families within diverse educational contexts.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this research underscore the critical importance of addressing barriers to parental involvement in primary education. The identified obstacles reflect broader systemic issues within educational institutions that often hinder effective collaboration between schools and families. These challenges include communication gaps, cultural misunderstandings, and a lack of resources dedicated to fostering parental engagement.

By implementing the Family Friendly School Model, schools can create an environment where parents feel welcomed and encouraged to participate actively in their children's learning processes (Camelo et al., 2023). This model not only recognizes the diverse needs of families but also actively seeks to bridge the gap between home and school, facilitating a more cohesive educational experience for students.

The positive outcomes associated with the model suggest that when schools adopt family-friendly practices, they not only enhance parental engagement but also contribute to improved student outcomes (Cruickshank, 2024; Utami, 2022). Increased parental involvement has been linked to higher academic achievement, better social skills, and improved behavior among students. Research consistently shows that students whose parents are engaged in their education tend to perform better academically and exhibit more positive attitudes toward school (Mohd Hanafiah et al., 2024). Therefore, fostering strong partnerships between schools and families is essential for creating a supportive educational ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders involved, including students, educators, and the broader community.

Furthermore, this research highlights the need for ongoing professional development for educators regarding effective communication strategies and partnership-building with families. Training programs should focus on equipping teachers with the skills necessary to engage parents meaningfully and address any concerns or misconceptions they may have about their roles in the educational process. Such training can empower educators to create inclusive environments where parents feel comfortable sharing their insights and participating in school activities. Additionally, professional development should emphasize cultural competence, enabling teachers to understand and respect the diverse backgrounds of their students' families.

The findings also indicate that schools must continuously evaluate their engagement strategies to ensure they remain effective and responsive to changing family dynamics. Regular feedback from parents can provide valuable insights into what works well and what areas need improvement. Schools should consider implementing mechanisms such as surveys or focus groups to gather parent input on their experiences with school engagement initiatives. This feedback loop will not only help refine existing strategies but also foster a sense of ownership among parents regarding their involvement in the educational process.

In conclusion, the Family Friendly School Model presents a viable solution for improving parental involvement in primary schools. The research findings indicate that by recognizing and addressing barriers to engagement, schools can cultivate a collaborative atmosphere that enhances educational outcomes for students. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of implementing such models across diverse educational contexts to further validate their effectiveness and adaptability. Moreover, it would be beneficial to investigate how different demographic factors—such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, and family structure—impact parental involvement under this model.

Overall, this research contributes valuable insights into how educational institutions can better support families in their crucial role as partners in education. By prioritizing family engagement through structured models like the Family Friendly School Model, schools can not only strengthen academic performance but also foster a thriving community where every child has the opportunity to succeed. The implications of this study extend beyond individual schools; they offer a framework for policymakers and educators nationwide to rethink how they approach parental involvement as an integral component of educational success. Moving forward, it is imperative for educational stakeholders to embrace these findings and work collaboratively towards

creating environments where families are fully engaged partners in their children's education.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the effectiveness of the Family Friendly School Model in improving parental involvement in primary schools reveals significant insights into the dynamics of school-family partnerships. The research demonstrates that addressing barriers to parental engagement is crucial for fostering a collaborative educational environment. The identified obstacles, such as communication gaps, cultural misunderstandings, and insufficient opportunities for participation, reflect systemic issues within educational institutions that can hinder effective collaboration between schools and families.

The implementation of the Family Friendly School Model has proven to be a viable solution to these challenges. By prioritizing open communication, mutual respect, and inclusivity, this model creates an environment where parents feel welcomed and empowered to engage actively in their children's education. The positive outcomes associated with the model indicate that when schools adopt family-friendly practices, they not only enhance parental involvement but also contribute to improved student outcomes, including higher academic achievement and better social skills.

Furthermore, the research highlights the necessity for ongoing professional development for educators. Training programs focused on effective communication strategies and partnership-building with families are essential for equipping teachers with the skills needed to engage parents meaningfully. This continuous professional growth is vital for sustaining the momentum of parental involvement initiatives and ensuring that educators can effectively address any concerns or misconceptions parents may have about their roles in the educational process.

The Family Friendly School Model represents a significant advancement in efforts to improve parental involvement in primary education. The findings of this research indicate that by recognizing and addressing barriers to engagement, schools can cultivate a collaborative atmosphere that enhances educational outcomes for students. Future studies should continue to explore the long-term effects of implementing such models across diverse educational contexts to validate their effectiveness and adaptability. Overall, this research contributes valuable insights into how educational institutions can better support families in their crucial role as partners in education, ultimately fostering a thriving community where every child has the opportunity to succeed.

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