

## ENHANCING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Sandeep Kumar Jaiswal\*

\*Research scholar,

Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi,  
Uttar Pradesh, India.

Received: May 20, 2018

Accepted: June 12, 2018

### ABSTRACT

*Several researches have been conducted over the years that support the fact that there are connection between parental involvement and student academic success, learning outcomes, and motivation. Society in general and educational researchers and policy maker in particular have long been interested to create a healthy relation among school, home, and society to ensure better students' academic performance as well as the total functioning of life. Computer and information technology have enhanced and explored the opportunity of communication between the home and school, engagement of families in learning with their child, inform parents about student academic performance and attendance, enable teachers to better engage parents in school activities, and effectively monitor the students' time to time activities in school. In this article, researcher has briefly addressed the ways to ensure effective parents school cooperation by accessing the technological tools and skills to use them properly. Email System, Chat and video conferencing, School web page, E-newsletter, online access of students' data, and mobile apps are the some technological tools that can use to enhance parents school communication in the wellness of students' academic performance.*

**KEYWORDS:** parental involvement, technology, communication, technological tools

### Introduction

The role of parental involvements, its various constructs, and level of involvement at different stages of children's education are an important issue of various discussions and studies since many years. Society in general and educational researchers and policy maker in particular have long been interested to create a healthy relation among school, home, and society to ensure better students' academic performance as well as the total functioning of life. In general, parental involvement is viewed as the interaction and support which parents provide to their children in order to somehow enhance or benefit their children's academic success. Parental involvement includes such activities as parents volunteer work at school, communication and discussions with teachers and school administrators, assisting with homework, discussions about school and future aspirations with their children, and the quality of parent-teacher relationships (Hill & Craft, 2003; Hill and Taylor, 2004; Epstein, 2001). Parent's school based involvement activities such as volunteering at school and attending school events is positively associated with achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Computer and information technology have enhanced and explored the opportunity of communication between the home and school, engagement of families in learning with their child, inform parents about student academic performance and attendance, enable teachers to better engage parents in school activities, and effectively monitor the students' time to time activities in school. Several research studies show that child whose parent engage in their child's homework assignments, talk with them about school, and help in making a plan for their educational activities, and contact the school on regular basis, obtain better grades, have better school attendance, and demonstrate better behavior at school and at home (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999; Jaiswal & Choudhuri, 2017). Every parent want to see their child successful and wish to be involved in their educational activities in home as well as in school but, workings Parents face so much difficulty in parenting the child and giving them appropriate time because they have not enough time due to multiple jobs, job in distance area, and both mother and father in job. These parents may have difficulty becoming more involved in their child's education in traditional ways, such as attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and parent-teacher conferences or volunteering in the classroom. Computers, high-speed internet, mobile app and some others effective technological tools that hold great potential for overcoming distance, time, language, and access barriers to educational resources. Parents and teachers are two of the most credible contributors to a students' educational success. The good communication between student and teacher is one major key to educational success. On the other hand, when parents and teachers communicate with each other, they become able to know about weakness and strengths of students and then they can support students' learning together more effectively. As a team, teacher and parent can create more effective environments to foster academic,

emotional and intellectual well-being of students. In the era of communication and technology, technological tools have enabled the schools and teachers to communicate with parents on a more regular basis, and in a more efficient way. Technologies like email, texts, websites, E-newsletters, students' online data base, mobile app, online surveys and video chat applications like Skype and whatsapp, social media like Facebook and twitter have provided the opportunity to make communication between parents and teachers more timely, efficient and productive way. These digital tools allow parents to check on their student's work and to aware how well their child is doing in school. Parents want to know about their child's academic performance and school activities regarding their child's progress. Technology is enabling them to do so in an easy and convenient manner. When parents and teachers communicate with each other, they are able to work towards their common goal of facilitating the best educational experience possible for students. By integrating technology into communication strategies, school can quickly reach as many parents as possible (Ramirez, 2001).

One of the pioneers of the parental involvement research is Epstein (2001) who proposed a typology of parental involvement which aimed to comprehensively categories the variety of involvement activities in which parents can engage in their children education. Epstein (2001) propose six type of parental involvement activities in her typology mainly focus on the collaboration among home, school, and society i.e. Type 1- parenting, Type 2- communication, Type 3- volunteering, Type 4- learning at home, Type 5- decision-making, and Type 6- collaborating.

**Table 1 Activities in Epstein's Typology of Involvement**

S.N.	Type	Activities
1.	parenting	Build positive home conditions conducive to children's learning such as providing them with guidance, supervision and materials.
2.	communication	Sharing of information between home and school about school program and children progress. This can achieve through parent- teacher meeting, parents' participation in school activities, School newsletters, telephonic contact etc.
3.	volunteering	Parental involvement in school activities such as volunteer in child's classroom, attending school occasions, etc.
4.	learning at home	Helping in homework, discussion about school activities and learning, Monitoring, and providing encouragement etc.
5.	decision-making	Leadership opportunity for parents in school, Involvement in organisation or planning of the school program, such as on parents' associations or councils, serving on district school boards.
6.	collaborating	Parents within the community working together and sharing information in the best interests of the children.

In this article researcher has briefly addressed the ways to ensure effective parents school cooperation by accessing the technological tools and skills to use them properly. Technology reinforces existing connections between parents and school and constructs new ones also. There are several information and communication technology tool that can use as a bridge for closing the gap between parents and school.

### Email System

Despite all the methods of communication, email is a popular and worldwide use method of two way communications. In present time, parents want more information about their child's activities and progress from teachers and school. On the other side, they also want information to be timely and personalized to their area of interests. The majority of information schools share with parents are traditionally one way like automated mobile message, newsletters, school web pages and letters. These one way communication methods do not facilitate the opportunity for parents to clear any doubts or concerns regarding school messages or information. Email provides an easy and great opportunity of two way communication. In present time, most parents have email account, and it allows the school and teachers to provide all kind of information related to students through email system. In a study of Harvard family project (Digital Opportunity for Youth Issue Brief, 2010) it was found that internet based family communication had positive impact on students' academic performance and educational expectations, even when controlling for prior achievement that of other forms of parents school communication.

The use of email can ranges from reminders, registration, scheduling a personal meeting with parents as well as with teachers, newsletters and announcement of school regarding future activities or events. It is needed to make sure that every teacher have personal computer and email address also therefore, they can easily access to a computer and check the email on regular basis. Teacher's quick response on email of parents and clarifying their doubts in reasonable time make an effective relation between child's teachers and parents (Digital Opportunity for Youth Issue Brief, 2010).

### **Chat and video conferencing**

Chatting and video conferencing are the effective way to make virtual contact with parents. A School can create a chat room and invite the parents to chat together, share common ideas, PTA meetings or facilitating a new dialogue around a common interest. Another useful communication tool that school can use to make contact with parents is videoconferencing. Sometime it is a little bit difficult for every parent to attend the parent teacher meeting when they have a busy work schedule or when they are out of the station. Video conferencing provides an opportunity to parents to join a parent teacher conference from home or outside school campus. These forms of communication rely on schools having video conferencing capabilities and staff who know how to use them effectively (Digital Opportunity for Youth Issue Brief, 2010). Video conferencing helps in minimising the conflict between teachers and parents. Teachers can invite students' parent to attend the parent teacher meeting via video conferencing, no matter where students' parent at home or out of home.

### **School web page**

School websites are the most efficient way to provide an easy platform to the parents to observe that what are happening in the schools. On School website picture of school activities, welcome letter and school homework, newsletter, School calendar, and week by week listing of course and assignments and due dates can be provided by school officials. Photos of project and events can also be share and make parents up to date with this information.

### **E-newsletter**

Newsletter informs parents about school related activities, policies, news, schedule changes, student awards, updates, events and community happening. Newsletters help parents to plan for attending upcoming school event and engagement in school activities with their child. E-newsletter is easy and quick way to send the information directly to parents' email account by skipping the middleman (students). It is notable that every parent has not access of email and internet so also provide the hard copy option for those who need it.

### **Provide online access of students' data**

School can provide online access of Students' data to their parents that will be helpful for parents to monitor their child attendance reports, class test report and other important activities in school. This data should be available to parents via a password protected website. This anytime and anywhere protected access of the students' data allow parents up to date information of their child's academic performance and classroom and school behaviour and alerts parents to child's undesired activities.

### **Mobile app**

Mobile apps are becoming a very popular technique to make the relationship between parents and schools more meaningful and effective way. Mobile technology provides an opportunity to parents and schools to communicate instantly and without the worry of physical meetings. Mobile technology connects the schools and parents on a much more immediate and instant level, and this increased involvement is become very beneficial for student's academic performance. A mobile app can make it easy to access basic information like student enrollment times, alerts, calendars, directories, news, reminders for holidays and lunch menus. Mobile technology can also make it simple to integrate the phone, email and texting, conferencing, and chatting features into the single app and making it even more useful. By Mobile apps, school notifications and updates can easily communicate with the parents and increase virtual involvement of parents in school. Here some useful mobile apps and their important basis feathers are given. School as well as parents can use this app in order to make healthy school parents connection.



(<https://hellopARENT.in>)

Hello parent is a mobile app to be in contact with the school staff and administrations. It is a very nice way to interact and know about your child.

- Parents do not need to wait till Parent Teacher Meeting for feedback. Parents can ask about child's progress to the teachers at a single click.
- Provide school planning in advance in mobile. There is no need to reach out for physical curriculums or notices for daily schedule.
- Timely feedback and higher engagement with parents creates better relations which in turn help in creating parent friendly image for the schools.
- Automatically identifies the parents who is not connected with the app and sends them SMS/Email to ensure they are not left out.

## Educhat

(<http://www.educhat.in/>)

EduChat is a mobile app that instantly connects parents, teachers and students under one platform. It has a very simple and easy to use interface for everyone. Parents and Teachers can connect and chat with each other at any time. Parents with children in different schools can access multiple groups under one single account. EduChat provides a secure platform to chat as it maintains privacy of contact numbers.

- Teachers can send announcements, adulations, present messages, reminders, schedules, images, projects, assignments etc. instantly and directly to parents of their students with just one click.
- It allows the teacher to interact with a student or parent individually.
- An easy, simple and instant communication platform ensures deeper involvement of parents with the progress and everyday activities of their children.
- It allows parents to stay involved and updated on the progress of their child at school every day without the trouble of having to visit personally



(<https://tenoapp.com/>)

Teno app allows school administrators, teachers and parents to stay connected at all times via real time messaging. Teno has comprehensive features ranging from multimedia messaging support to a complete school management system.

- Share important school updates like announcements, class work and homework. Have option for one-to-one feedback with each parent.
- Take class attendance on this app and inform the parent if their child is absent.
- Share marks of all exams with parents and track students' progress with detailed analysis.
- Add class or exam timetable for parents to view online



(<https://veraxe.com/>)

Veraxe is a mobile app which provides a single platform to manage information about all children and real-time updates about child's school curriculum and establish easy interaction with school.

- Instant message update on child's attendance.
- Schools bus tracking through mobile app and check exact location of bus with bus speed.
- Upload audio/video attachments for live events held in class.
- Take attendance for assigned class within few seconds.
- Feeds parents with real-time information about their child.
- Enables bird's eye view of all school elements.
- Permits seamless interaction between all stakeholders of school management.
- Stores centralized information of all stakeholders.
- A single platform for parents to track more than one child.



(<https://connect.sqoolz.com/>)

Sqoolz connect mobile app is a useful app to help school administrators and teachers to communicate with parents. It allows to share notice, circulars, photos, videos, documents, audio announcements, meeting and events with parents.

- School can add any number of students. Form groups, be it academic or activity based and assign a staff member as group owner.
- School can send text messages, documents, photos and videos. All files sent are automatically organized as libraries for you to manage.
- School teachers can share attendance for all students with parents. Attendance reports remain private. Parents also have a quick summary view in their mobile apps.
- School can share exam schedules, upload holidays for the year, call for meetings or simply announce events.
- Organize the students into as many groups as you may need, each group has a timeline. Let one of school teachers or staff members manage it. You school post text messages, photos, audio, video, document or event invitations and connect with parents instantly.

### **Ways to Effective use of technology**

- Integrate technology into the school as a tool to communicate among teachers, students, parents, and school leaders.
- Organise training program about use of technology in school for both teachers and parents.
- Update about school website, teachers mobile numbers.
- Always welcome the parents query regarding use of technological tools.
- Make sure that school officials communicate with parents in their own language (e.g., Hindi).
- Workshop program for technological awareness and uses and invite the parents to be part of the conversation.
- Communicate in easy and simple ways to ensure two way communications.
- Give the respect to parents' opinion regarding strengthen the teacher parents relation through technology
- Update the school website, Newsletters, school calendars and online access of students' data time to time.

### **Conclusion**

The use of technology for healthy parents and teacher relation is growing now the days. Technology can be used as an effective tool to keep parents connected with their children and school. Many teachers enjoy the ease of using technology to inform their students and their parents about current events and topics of interest within their subject matter (Ramirez, 2001). School administrators should encourage the teachers to use school websites and email effectively to keep touch with parents. Providing parents with technological tools for communication and monitoring of children's progress may lead to increased parent involvement at every level of schooling. In the era of technology and Smartphone, most of the people are familiar with their functioning but, all the families are not equipped with computer, internet and familiar with the use of technological tools therefore, paper based communication should have a place in overall communication methods of school also.

### **References:**

1. Digital Opportunity for Youth Issue Brief. (2010). Empowering Parents Through Technology To Improve the Odds for Children. Retrieved from [http://www.childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Empowering-Parents-Through-Technology%20To-Improve-the-Odds-for-Children\\_October-2010.pdf](http://www.childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Empowering-Parents-Through-Technology%20To-Improve-the-Odds-for-Children_October-2010.pdf).
2. Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
3. Hill, N. E., & Craft, S. A. (2003). Parent-school involvement and school performance: Mediated pathways among socioeconomically comparable African American and Euro-American families. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95*, 74-83.
4. Hill, N. E., & Taylor, L. C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13*, 161-164.

5. Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental Involvement in Middle School: A Meta-Analytic Assessment of the Strategies That Promote Achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(3), 740–763.
6. Jaiswal, S., Choudhuri, R. (2017). A Review of the Relationship between Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Performance. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 4(3), 110-123.
7. Miedel, W. T., & Reynolds, A. J. (1999). Parent involvement in early intervention for disadvantaged children: Does it matter? *Journal of School Psychology*, 37(4), 379–402.
8. Ramirez, F. (2001). Technology and Parental Involvement. *The clearing House*, 75(1), 30-31.