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EPSTEIN'S FRAMEWORK OF SIX TYPES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Bezrukova A.R.,

Teacher at the Department of English Language and Methods of its Teaching
Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University

У статті розглянуто шість типів залучення батьків до навчального процесу, розроблених американською дослідницею Д. Епштейн. Висвітлено значення школи в системі формування педагогічних знань і культури батьків. Також досліджено роль підтримки та заохочення батьків учителями до участі в освітньому процесі.

Ключові слова: залучення батьків, батьківство, спілкування, волонтерство, прийняття рішень, співпраця з громадою, навчання вдома.

В статье рассмотрены шесть типов привлечения родителей к учебному процессу, разработанных американской исследовательницей Д. Епштейн. Освещено значение школы в системе формирования педагогических знаний и культуры родителей. Также исследована роль поддержки и поощрения родителей учителями к участию в образовательном процессе.

Ключевые слова: привлечение родителей, отцовство, общение, волонтерство, принятие решений, сотрудничество с обществом, обучение на дому.

Bezrukova A.R. EPSTEIN'S FRAMEWORK OF SIX TYPES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The article presents six types of parental involvement in the educational process created by the American scientist J. Epstein. It highlights the role of the school in the system of formation of pedagogical knowledge and culture of parents. The article defines the role of supporting and encouragement of parents by teachers to participate in the educational process.

Key words: parental involvement, parenting, communication, volunteering, decision making, collaborate with community, learning at home.

Parental Involvement is the amount and type of participation of a parent within their children's schooling; parental involvement includes family involvement. Parental involvement activities include interaction between home and school. Involvement activities include attending school events, going to parent-teacher conferences, communicating with the teacher, attending sporting events and volunteering in the school [12].

The analysis of recent works and publications showed that parental involvement increases academic grades, attendance, leadership skills, graduation rates, higher self-esteem among parents and students, and more positive attitudes in school (J. Epstein, L. Ferlazzo, A. Harris, K. Hoover-Dempsey, K. Mapp, E. Pomerantz, etc). The research work of K. Hoover-Dempsey and H. Sandler's is based on several different psychological theories that suggest that parental beliefs and the social contexts that they live in may influence the parents' decision regarding their level of involvement in their children's education [9]. W. Jeynes completed an analysis of 52 studies about parental involvement. In W. Jeynes' study parent involvement was defined as parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children that include parental expectations, attending and participating in school func-

tions and activities, the level of communication between parent and child and homework assistance [10]. K. Anderson investigated the relationship between parents' role construction, their sense of self efficacy and their involvement at home and school. G. Flynn conducted a study of 144 principals of elementary, middle and high school to gain a better understanding of their perception of communication practices between teachers and parents within their schools [3].

The great contribution to the investigation of parental involvement was made by American researcher J. Epstein. The study of the nature and effects of family and community involvement is reflected in more than one hundred publications. That's why, the aim of the article to investigate Epstein's framework of six types of parental involvement and analyze the efficiency of this involvement.

Joyce Epstein has worked at Johns Hopkins University and learnt how schools, parents, students and community can develop and maintain effective parental involvement programs and partnerships within schools and communities. Epstein's research reflected in a framework of six major types of parental involvement [2; 4; 6]. This framework has been used to help educators develop comprehensive parental involvement programs [6]. Each type of involvement includes different levels of



participation, provides challenges and different levels of results for students, parents and the school community. The six components of Epstein's framework are: *parenting*; *communicating*; *volunteering*; *learning at home*; *decision making*; *collaborating with community* [3; 4].

Epstein's first component is *parenting*, defined as providing positive home conditions: health, safety, nutrition, clothing and basic parenting skills. Parenting provides information and activities that assist families in understanding child and adolescent development, and in setting home conditions that support children as students at each grade level. As a result, parents feel supported from school and other parents; develop an understanding and build confidence of parenting skills; are able to share knowledge and challenges of parenting with other parents; develop understanding of child and adolescent development and respect other families and school staff [2; 7; 11]. Epstein explains the benefits for students within this type of involvement: improving attendance in school; promotion of the respect for parents and teachers; developing the awareness that families and schools are working together for the student, an awareness that school is important; balance in completing chores, homework, school and family related activities, formation of positive habits, personal qualities, beliefs and values, positive interactions with parents. The obligation of the school consists of providing parents with workshops, outside resources, printed materials and home visits to support parents in this process. Schools can also provide parents with parent education and training courses providing all parents, not just those who want or need it. This type of support should be clear, concise, usable to all parties in their native language [3; 4; 5; 6]. This type of involvement enables families to share their knowledge about their own culture, background and individual children's needs and talents with teachers and other staff members [13; 14]. Staff members are able to understand family backgrounds, cultures and goals for their children, and develop a respect for families' strengths and efforts; and develop an awareness of own skills and ability to share information on child development, to support student success in school.

Communication is considered another basic obligation with the purpose of designing effective forms of communication between home and school about children's progress and school programs [2; 3]. Involvement in this area may include: phone calls home by staff, parent-teacher conferences, language translators, weekly or monthly folders with students' works, parent handbooks, copies of class syl-

labus, newsletters, parent's information on the Internet safety, bullying, etc. As a result, parents are provided with clear information about school policies and programs, opportunities for interaction with teachers and solutions to students' problems [4; 5; 6]. Children also benefit from this component. They develop awareness of their own role in partnerships, understanding of school policies relating to student success: attendance, behavior, student conduct and academic success [7; 11; 12; 13]. When schools utilize Epstein's communication component staff increase opportunities to elicit and understand family views on student performance, develop an appreciation and increase the usage of parent's networks, develop an awareness of their own ability to communicate openly and clearly with families. Epstein states that successful communication includes: providing all forms of communication in parent's native language, consider parents who do not read well or need large print when sending out printed materials, review all material for readability, clarity, form and frequency (including all forms of communication in print and non print forms), establish clear two way channels of communication from home to school and from school to home, review the quality of major communication on a regular basis.

The third component involves parents' *volunteering* at school. It includes providing opportunities for parents to volunteer and support the school in various capacities. Parents are recruited and provided with all necessary trainings. Examples of volunteering opportunities: becoming a class parent, parent safety patrol, recess or lunchroom monitors, classroom or school volunteer, special events volunteer for holiday celebrations or fundraisers, offer to make phone calls from home, provide office support, parent room volunteer, etc. Benefits for parents include further understanding of teacher's job, increasing the comfort level in the school and realizing that families are welcomed there, developing self-confidence about their own ability to work, improving their own education and leadership skills, gaining specific skills while volunteering that may lead to a job. By volunteering at the school parents are modeling an awareness of skills, talents, occupations and contributions of parents and other adults, students develop skills and are given opportunities to practice communicating with adults in various roles and they also may receive extra tutoring and mentoring by the adult volunteers. Teachers and other staff members also benefit from parents volunteering at the school level. These benefits include: an awareness of parent's talents and skills, an increase of communication with parents and students, opportunities for greater



support provided for individual students within classroom, develop a greater understanding of new ways to involve parents and families. According to Epstein (2009) schools have to provide successful volunteering opportunities. They need to provide flexible schedules and training for parents to volunteer, recruit all parents and recognize their efforts.

The fourth component in Epstein's model of parental involvement is *learning at home*. Many research studies have documented that this component is considered the most effective and the easiest way to involve parents. While learning at home teachers are to provide parents with ideas and information on how to support their child at home, to increase student's knowledge and engage parents in activities that can be completed at home, to assist students' own learning, to enhance the learning that is taking place in the school. Schools have to provide information that will help parents with these activities. The success of beginning a parental involvement program using this approach is that it is a simple way to begin opening the lines of communication between parents and teachers. Providing regular and timely information to students and families regarding graduation requirements, grades, credits earned and information on planning the next steps of education are all components of a successful learning at home involvement component of Epstein's theory. Other examples include developing and following an interactive homework: schedule that gives students responsibility for discussing important parts of their learning with parents, coordinating family friendly home-school links, homework activities and involving families in all important curriculum matters. Parents who include this component in their parental engagement strategies will develop an awareness of their child as a learner, appreciate the work and skills of the teacher, promote discussion with the child of school, homework and classwork, gain knowledge of how to support and help their child at home with homework and classwork and develop a more thorough understanding of the instructional program of each year and the expectation of students within a given grade level. Benefits for the students: an increase of self confidence in their ability as a learner, greater success in completion of homework, developing a more positive attitude towards school work, viewing parents as partners in learning, gains in skills, abilities and test scores that are linked to homework and classwork, having a better understanding the instructional program each year and expectations of students. The benefits for teachers include understanding the role, responsibilities and abilities of families outside of school, respect of family time, great-

er sense of satisfaction of parental involvement and support. Teachers engage more with the parent about the homework process and the homework. As a result, it becomes better designed and meets the needs of the student [7; 11; 13; 14].

In *decision making* component families are provided with ideas and information on how to support their child at home, to increase student knowledge, and engage parents in the learning process. Family members are actively involved in parent-teacher organizations and local school councils, participation in committees, network with other parents, regarding school related events and linking them to possible resources, work with independent advocate groups and participate in district or state level committees for family and community involvement. For this type of involvement the school district need to provide training for families and their representatives to prepare them to become school representative leaders, involve students and parents in decision making groups; and develop a parent leader group that represents all racial, ethnic, socio-economic groups of the school. The fifth component provides parents with opportunities to develop leadership skills as they become involved in decision making, governance and advocacy positions within the school community. This happens as parents become active members of the school's parent teacher organizations, school committees, etc. Benefits also include developing an awareness of parents' voice in school decisions, have feeling of ownership of school, share experiences and develop connections with other parents, develop an awareness of school, district and state policies and have input into the policies that affect their child's education. Students of these parents also benefit by developing an understanding that the student and family have rights that are protected, an awareness of representation of families within the decision making process and that their parents value of education. Finally, teachers and staff members develop an awareness of parent perspective with policy development and decisions and they view family representatives as an equal partner in the decision making process when parents have leadership roles on committees [3; 4; 5; 6].

The sixth component of Epstein's model was actually added in 1998. Due to this component parents can *collaborate with community* organizations to improve the school-home connections. Parents develop relationships with these organizations and support students' academic, social-emotional and health through services and resources that the local agencies and government groups can provide



to strengthen family practices, student learning and development [2; 3; 4; 5; 6]. Families are provided with ideas and information on how to support their child to increase student knowledge and engage parents in the learning process. Examples of this type of support include: participation as alumni in school programs, becoming student's mentors, supporting integration of services between school and community, provide service to the community to promote school and student achievement (recycling, art, music, working with seniors) and advocate for community activities that would benefit the school. Parents benefit from this type of involvement by becoming aware of the role of the school within the community, contributions that the community makes to the school, ability to interact with other community members, becoming aware of community resources and have the ability to utilize these resources to meet the family needs. Students benefit by becoming aware of careers and options for the future education and work, increase their own skills and talents through extra curricular activities and learn to utilize resources within the community that has specific benefits to student's individual needs. Teachers benefit from the involvement of parents within the community as well. As teachers become aware of community resources, enrich school curriculum, develop partnerships with community resources to utilize services, volunteers, etc. and also have the ability to make knowledgeable referrals to families of services available to them within the community. Epstein identifies the requirements for this type of involvement: developing clear roles and responsibilities between staff, parents and community members for collective activities, informing parents of community programs for students and parents, matching community contributions with the goals of the school, providing equity of opportunities for students and families to participate in community programs and to integrate child and family services with education [2; 6].

Conclusions. As a result, we can draw the conclusion that Epstein's framework of six types of parental involvement help to be aware of home conditions that support student in learning at each grade level, develop effective lines of communication between home-school in order to provide information regarding student's progress and school programs, provide volunteer opportunities for parents in and out of school to support school goals, provide opportunities for parents to help their child to learn at home through homework activities, encourage parents to become involved in school decisions, advocating for student rights through participation in school

level committees, teams, councils and other parent organizations and provide opportunities for parents to become a liaison between the school and community organizations.

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