

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF
PRESCHOOLERS IN LANGATA DIVISION**

BY:

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for degree award in any other university.

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DEDICATION

With affection, my work is dedicated to my parents:

My father Dr. Marangu Rucha and my mother Mrs. Pauline Marangu.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	7
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	8
1.4 Research Objectives.....	8
1.5 Research Questions.....	9
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	9
1.7 Limitations of the Study.....	10
1.8 Delimitations of the study.....	10
1.9 Assumptions of the Study.....	10
1.10 Definition of Terms.....	10
1.11 Acronyms.....	12
1.12 Organization of the study.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 The Current Understanding of Parental Involvement.....	13
2.3 The Role of the School in Parental Involvement.....	14

2.4 Parenting.....	17
2.5 Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education	18
2.6 Parental Literacy Teaching and Literacy Development.....	21
2.7 Theoretical Framework	29
2.7.1 Complimentary Learning Theory	30
2.8 conceptual Framework	30
2.9 Summary	32
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	33
3.1 Introduction.....	33
3.2 Research Design.....	33
3.3 Target Population	34
3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure.....	34
3.5 Research Instruments	34
3.5.1 Reliability of Instruments	35
3.5.2 Validity of Instruments.....	35
3.6 Data Collection Procedure	35
3.7 Data Analysis Procedure	36
3.8 Ethical Issues.....	37
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS DISCUSSION AND INTERPRITATION.....	38
4.1: Introduction.....	38
4.2 Home-based parental involvement and Literacy Development	38
4.3: School-based Parental Involvement and Literacy Development	42

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	47
5.1 Introduction	47
5.2 Summary	47
5.3 Conclusion.....	50
5.4 Recommendations	51
5.5 Recommendations for further research	52
REFERENCES.....	53
APPENDICES.....	59
Appendix i: Questionnaire for parents	59
Appendix ii: standardized test for the children	61

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Relationship between home-based parental involvement activities and literacy development.....	38
Table 4.2: Relationship between school-based parental involvement activities and literacy development.....	42

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Correlation between home-based parental involvement and literacy development... 39	39
Figure 4.2: Home-based parental involvement score and sound/letter naming fluency..... 40	40
Figure 4.3: Home-based parental involvement and phoneme segmentation fluency. 41	41
Figure 4.4: Home-based parental involvement activities and nonsense word fluency..... 41	41
Figure 4.5: Relationship between school-based parental involvement activities and literacy development..... 43	43
Figure 4.6: School-based parental involvement activities and sound/letter naming fluency 44	44
Figure 4.7: School-based parental involvement activities and phoneme segmentation fluency .. 45	45
Figure 4.8: School-based parental involvement and nonsense word fluency..... 46	46

ABSTRACT

This research project sought to establish a relationship between parental involvement and the literacy development of preschool children in Langata Division, specifically those between five and six years of age because reading skills are necessary for success at every level and in every subject yet many children struggle to learn how to read. It is therefore important to use research based methods to facilitate literacy development. Literacy is also a key concern in Kenya as we strive to achieve vision 2030. Key stakeholders in the education industry may benefit from the results of this research project. For example, curriculum developers may be motivated to develop more interactive materials such as books and play materials which parents can effectively use with their children and may encourage parents to put forth extra effort to become more involved in their preschooler's education. The literature review discussed the current understanding of parental involvement based on research, the role of the school in parental involvement, parental involvement in Early Childhood Education and parental literacy teaching and literacy development which focused on various literacy programs in different countries. A consideration of previous literature on parental involvement helped to define the research objective and questions, choose appropriate research methods and assisted designing appropriate research instruments. The study used a Correlational Research Study Design to describe in quantitative terms the degree to which parental involvement and literacy development are related. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a stratified random sample from both public and private schools in Langata Division. The study established that there is a positive correlation between parental involvement and the literacy development of preschool children in Langata Division. This correlation is enhanced when the school facilitates parental involvement through open parent-teacher communication and by organizing school functions that promote parental involvement. In view of these findings, the study recommends that policy on parental involvement be formulated and implemented in both private and public schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Literacy refers to the interrelatedness of language speaking, listening, reading, writing and viewing. The five “Big Ideas” of early literacy are phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with text, vocabulary and comprehension. Early readers need to grow from using beginning word strategies in simple texts to more complex problem solving in longer more difficult texts while early writers need to develop a wider application of the basic conventions of print. (Mahurt, Metcalfe and Gwyther, 2007)

“Reading skills are necessary for success at every level and in every subject. Early deficits in reading have been linked to both academic and social problems. Yet, many children...struggle as they learn to read.” (Fafani, 2003) In view of the importance of developing reading skills early in life, it is important to use research based methods to facilitate literacy development. It is also vital to use age-appropriate methods that will not only be effective but which will foster a love for reading and a positive attitude toward reading as this will serve any child a lifetime regardless of their background.

In a survey of reading standards in disadvantaged schools in Ireland in 2003, almost 30% of students in grades 1, 3 and 6 achieved scores at or below the 10th percentile on a nationally standardized test. Internationally, a number of evidence-based interventions have been proposed to address low levels of literacy among children in disadvantaged circumstances. (Literacy in Early Childhood and Primary Education)

Research by Cornille et al., (2004) shows that the earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer lasting the effects. Of all the activity areas, reading has been found to be the most sensitive to parental influences. (Senechal and LeFevre, 2002) Therefore, it is important that interventions for increased and meaningful parental involvement trickle down to the lowest levels of Early Childhood Education. (Christina, 2007)

A survey on educational achievement was carried out by Uwezo- a civil society group that monitors educational achievement- in three East African countries, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. In the literacy tests administered, children were asked to recognize a letter from the alphabet, read a word, read a paragraph and read and understand a short story in English.

The report found that poorer pupils do worse with children from disadvantaged households performing worse in literacy at all ages. Pupils in private schools in Kenya perform better than pupils in public schools. The pass rate in private schools was eighty three percent compared with seventy five percent in public schools. Despite gains in access to educational facilities, pupils are not learning core skills expected at their age, in this sense, the quality of education has stagnated. In view of these findings, Uwezo advised that a key problem could be the choice of interventions. Therefore it stands to reason to consciously create room for different ideas, technologies and approaches which should be tested to determine how well they work (Uwezo East Africa 2012 Research Findings).

A study conducted in twenty seven countries and for twenty years confirmed that having over five hundred books in ones' home is more important to a child's academic success than a parent's education. There are few studies to date on parental involvement in early literacy skills and literacy development when reading with them yet educators know that the number one predictor of lifelong academic achievement is parental involvement (Stewart, 2011)

A study of 3-5 year-olds who had been read to at least three times per week found the children two times more likely to recognize all letters, two times more likely to have word sight recognition and two times more likely to understand words in context. The Early Childhood Longitudinal study found that 62% of parents with a high socioeconomic status read to their children everyday compared to only 36% of parents with a low socioeconomic status (Early Literacy, National Institute for Family Literacy, 1999). Yet, parental involvement in their child's literacy practices is a more powerful force than other family background variables such as social class, family size and level of parental education as posited by Flouri & Buchanan Study (as cited in Clark, 2007)

Developing literacy during the early years requires more than simply reading to preschool children but requires strategic efforts toward developing skills such letter-sound recognition, recognition of sight words, print recognition, left to right awareness and reading comprehension. Letter-sound recognition refers to the association of letters with sounds and identification of upper and lower case letters. Recognition of whole words by sight is used to master words such as a child's name or words which a child uses often such as 'the'. Learning to distinguish punctuation marks, letters from words and when words start and end is accomplished as children

develop a stronger concept of print; print recognition in order to read with understanding, a child needs to understand basic motivations for characters and events, make predictions and relate the story to their own lives. They are better able to do this as they develop reading comprehension. (5 Goals for your Kindergarten Reader, 2013)

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills are a set of free standardized, individually administered criterion referenced measures of early literacy development. Phonemic awareness which is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken word consists of Initial Sounds Fluency; a child's ability to recognize and produce the initial sound in an orally presented word and Phoneme Segmentation Fluency; a child's ability to segment three and four phoneme words into their individual phonemes fluently. Understanding of alphabetic principle can be assessed by Nonsense Word Fluency. This measure probes knowledge of letter sound correspondence and sounding out words and the ability to blend letters into words in which letters represent their most common sounds. Oral Reading Fluency is a test of accuracy and fluency with connected text. Comprehension is assessed by Retell Fluency.

In order to effectively involve parents in the development of their children's literacy, they must be given support that will enable them to effectively develop the needed literacy skills in their children (Strickland and Riley-Ayers, 2010). Senchel and LeFevre (2002) did a five year longitudinal study of parent involvement in the development of reading skills. In this study, informal experiences included: reading bedtime stories and focusing on the story and illustrations. Formal experiences were times when parents talked about specific letters and the sounds made in words. It was found that informal interactions helped to develop the receptive

language skills of children and formal interactions were more closely related to the development of emergent literacy.

In Early Childhood Education, the aspect of family involvement referred to as responsibility for learning outcomes tends to focus on how parents can support children's literacy. The other two aspects of family involvement namely parenting in early childhood and home-school relationships play a vitally supportive role in terms of preschool children's language development and literacy acquisition.

Project Early Access to Success in Education (EASE) is a literacy program in Minnesota that offers home activities for kindergarteners and their families. Parent educators coach mothers in developing literacy skills then teachers send home book-related activities to do with their children. Gail Jordan, Catherine Snow and Michelle Porche (2000) looked at the project in four low-income schools in a mostly middle-class district and reported that the children in project EASE made greater gains on language scores than children in a control group. The more activities a family completed, the higher their student gains. Children who started out with the lowest skills gained the most.

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters is an early literacy project that uses trained paraprofessionals of similar background to the assigned families to model lesson through role play and provides mothers with books to read to their children then engage them in learning activities. This is done entirely through home visits and it is aimed at poor and immigrant

families with four and five year old children. Training and supervision is carried out by HIPPY coordinators.

Amy Baker, Chaya Piotrkowski and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn 1998 (p.584) examined outcomes in 182 HIPPY programs and control group children in two cohorts in a New York school district. The study extended through the two-year program and followed up one year later, at the end of first grade. The results were mixed; for cohort 1, positive gains in the in the HIPPY children's school performance, both during the programs and in the first grade, compared with the control group. For cohort 11 there were no significant differences between the HIPPY and control children. The researchers concluded: "we may be seeing naturally occurring variations on the effects of programs within communities...Our findings also alert us to the importance of replication studies and caution us about generalizing positive or negative evaluations from single-sample, single-site evaluations"

Direct parent-teaching activities such as teaching children how to write words are mostly practiced in relatively high-cost private schools despite the fact that such activities are easily planned in line with a well laid out strategies. Materials for use during such activities can be improvised with forethought and effort by individual preschool teachers.

According to Flouri & Buchanan, parental involvement in their child's literacy is a more powerful force than other family background variables such as social class, family size and level of parental education (Clark Christina, 2007). Poverty is associated with limited parenting support. For parents lacking in supports, time and financial resources, learning about why

parental involvement is important and how to be involved could be missed opportunities. (Gramann, 2006) However schools can provide parents with opportunities for involvement in their child's education by providing needed support such as through parent-teacher conferences, good parent-teacher communication whether formal or informal and setting up home-lending libraries which could be improvised. This support will serve to mitigate the negative impacts of poverty on the literacy development of poor children. "Family involvement can be strengthened with positive results for young children and their school readiness. To achieve these results, it is necessary to match children's developmental needs, parent's...practices and early childhood programs'... support of family involvement." (Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education, 2006)

In Africa, literacy development is viewed as solely the teacher's responsibility. In Kenya, public schools tend to have a teacher-centered approach in language development due to the large number of children and high teacher to student ratio. Teaching-learning materials are insufficient for individualized attention in the classroom therefore rote learning and drills are used to teach sounds, the alphabet and sound words. However, through parental involvement the needs of individual children can be met.

1.2 Statement of the Problem.

Literacy is a key concern because Kenya must develop human resource if it is to achieve Vision 2030: no country has ever developed without at least 90% of its population being literate. Since Early Childhood Education lays the foundation for literacy and future learning, literacy development during the early years (age three to nine) is crucial.

Parental involvement in literacy development is important because it mitigates the effects of factors such as socio-economic background and individual differences creating quality education for each child including those who are otherwise vulnerable to poor literacy. Therefore, this study will investigate the effect of parental involvement on children's development in literacy.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of parental involvement on the literacy development of preschool children by investigating the effect of parental involvement on various aspects of literacy development in early childhood. The study sought to relate the following aspects of parental involvement: assisting with homework, attendance of school functions, parent-teacher communication, reading to a child and story-telling to the following aspects of literacy development: letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency and nonsense word fluency.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i.** To establish the effect of home-based and school-based parental involvement activities on the letter naming fluency of preschoolers children in Langata Division.
- ii.** To determine how home-based and school-based parental involvement activities affects the phoneme segmentation fluency of preschoolers in Langata Division.
- iii.** To find out the effect of home-based and school-based parental involvement activities on the nonsense word fluency of preschoolers in Langata Division.

- iv. To investigate the effect of home-based and school-based parental involvement activities on the overall literacy development of preschoolers in Langata Division.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. To what extent do home-based and school-based parental involvement activities influence the letter naming fluency of preschoolers in Langata Division?
- ii. What bearing do home-based and school-based parental involvement activities have on the phoneme segmentation fluency of preschoolers in Langata Division?
- iii. What is the influence of home-based and school-based parent involvement activities on the nonsense word fluency of preschoolers in Langata Division?
- iv. What is the effect of home-based and school-based parental involvement activities on the literacy development of preschoolers in Langata Division?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study will inform preschool teachers of the importance of parental involvement in the development of the literacy of five to six year old children who might then have to improve on and enrich their practice to facilitate parental involvement.

Curriculum developers will benefit from this research because they might be motivated to create more interactive teaching-learning materials which parents can use effectively with their children. Books used in the preschool curriculum should be designed in such a way as to encourage parents to participate in their child's education.

Most parents may not realize that an activity such as reading to their child or telling a story is important and worthwhile. This study will provide a basis for parents to put forth effort in participating in the education of their child.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The findings can only be generalized to areas with characteristics similar to those of preschool children in Langata Division.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study was carried out in public and private preschools in Langata Division and included all parents of preschool children in Langata Division and all preschoolers in Langata Division.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that five to six year old preschool children in public and private schools in Nairobi County have equal ability to develop literacy; preschool teachers of five to six year old children in public and private preschools in Nairobi County use appropriate teaching methods and effective teaching-learning resources to develop literacy.

The study also assumed that all who participate in the study will provide information honestly.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Family Involvement: Family Involvement refers to the participation of the entire family; be it older siblings or extended family in activities which promote learning and development of children during early childhood.

Home-based parental involvement activities: These are activities carried out at home by parents and children to enhance the language development of preschoolers. The home-based activities considered in this project were: assisting with homework, storytelling, and reading aloud to preschool children.

Literacy development: In the context of this study, literacy development involves the acquisition of the following skills necessary for reading and writing: Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency and Nonsense Word Fluency.

Parental involvement: for the purposes of this study, parental involvement refers to the capacity of parents to get involved in activities that promote the ability of preschool children to read and write at an age appropriate level.

Preschool children: The preschool children who participated in the study were five to six years of age.

School-based parental involvement activities: These are activities and arrangements made by the school to facilitate the inclusion of parents in their preschool children's learning. The school-based activities referred to in this project are: school functions and parent-teacher communication.

Swap's Protective Model: The protective model is an approach to parent-professional relationships proposed by Swap (1993) whose aim is to reduce conflict by separating parental and professional functions. For example; the teacher's role is to teach the child while the parent's role is to make sure the child gets to school on time.

1.11 Acronyms

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ECE: Early Childhood Education

1.12 Organization of the study

Chapter One covers the introduction and includes background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study and basic assumptions. Chapter two includes the review of related literature with focus on what scholars and researchers have said and ascertained on the importance of parental involvement in literacy acquisition during the early years. Of relevance are: the benefits of parental involvement, the role of the school in parental involvement, the role of parents in parental involvement, parent involvement in Early Childhood Education and an overview of literacy programs in various countries. Chapter Three discusses the Research Methodology; the research design, target population, sample and sampling procedure and the relevant research instruments, data analysis, piloting and ethical issues. Chapter four presents an analysis of data. Chapter five consists of the conclusion; a synthesis of research findings, recommendations based on the inferences derived from the research and recommendations for further research in view of the conclusions based on the research study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses literature on parental involvement and the literacy development of preschool children. The first subheading deals with the current understanding of parental involvement in the field of early childhood education. The second subheading is on the role of the school in parental involvement, the third focuses on parents and their role in the aspects of parental involvement while the third subheading is on the role of parents in Early Childhood Education. The fourth subheading addresses the parental involvement strategies used by various literacy programs in different parts of the world. Finally, the fifth section provides a summary of the Literature Review. Included thereafter in the sixth section is the conceptual framework while the seventh section presents the theoretical framework.

2.2 The Current Understanding of Parental Involvement

Parental Involvement refers to the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and her child's life. (Ireland, 21st January, 2010). Parents are in a good position to assist the development of their children especially during the early years but for families and parents to become involved, school educators, administrators and staff must have attitudes and behavior that welcome, encourage and support such involvement. Communication is important among all parties therefore special efforts to reach out to low-income families may be needed... (Hill, 2010) Schools can provide opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education by organizing events for example, parent's days. Parent's days keep parents informed

about what is going on in the classroom and may be used to make them aware of ways they can participate in their child's education.

Involvement of parents is a critical dimension in the effective schooling of a child. (California State Board of Education Policy #89-01, 2001) and the families' involvement in children's education takes a variety of forms, including involvement in the home, (for example. help with homework), involvement in the school (for example. attending open houses) and parent-parent communication." (Dearing Eric, Kreider Holly et al., 2007)

2.3 The Role of the School in Parental Involvement

Teachers often do not have the attitudes, knowledge, skills and strategies needed to collaborate with families effectively because the topic of family involvement in education has not enjoyed a central role in teacher education programs (de Acosta, 1996; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Foster & Loven, 1992; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Midkiff & lawler-Prince, 1992; Williams, 1992)

In other words, inadequate preparation for working with families to involve them in the education of their children is a weakness in most teacher education programs (Bredenkamp, 1996). More often than not, teachers do not realize that parents can be asset to them in the teaching learning process while parents expect the school to shoulder the responsibility of their child's education; if their preschool child does not perform the problem is with the teacher and the school and they could not have had any personal input in their child's education to better their achievement. Parents need guidance from the school in order to participate in their child's education in a meaningful and purposeful way: For example, most parents learnt letter names

before letter sounds, they may therefore find it a bit strange when their child points to the letter 'a' and say the sound 'a'. Making parents aware of what the child is learning may make them eager to work together with the teacher. Moreover, they will notice the progress the child has made during his or her interaction with the child. This will give them a sense of satisfaction especially being aware that they were part of the progress made.

The school can encourage or discourage parental involvement. Schools can create an environment conducive to parental involvement by clearly outlining their expectations of parents and regularly communicating with parents about what their children are learning. (Research Spotlight on Parental Involvement in Education, 2012) Communication should be established early on in the school year so that issues facing both the parents and the institutions can be ironed out to pave way for effective communication and involvement. For example, schools may offer parent education classes in order to build the capacity of parents to effectively assist their child's development (Lion, 2010).

Continuity is important therefore proper records of work the child does with his or her parents need to be well kept. It is the teacher's responsibility to help in this regard, for example by helping him or her set up graphic organizers and data collection sheets that indicate work completed and methods used at home (Thomson, 2011). Graphic data charts can be used as a record of a child's work and lead to broader assessment of a child's unique abilities (Lion, T., 2010). The idea is to make parents' involvement in their child's education as meaningful and effective as possible by setting high parent expectations and raising the standards for parental involvement. (Thomson, 2011)

Research on parental involvement in public schools in Kenya (Kimu, June, 2012) found that generally, schools had no defined parental involvement policy therefore schools had limited formal opportunities to become involved in the education of their children. In view of this finding, it is important to carry out research on various parental involvement activities in order to determine which ones are crucial to early childhood development as well as which ones are easiest to implement by both teachers and parents. This would inform the teacher training curriculum since the study also revealed that parental involvement has not been a compulsory part of the teacher training curriculum.

According to the study, Principals and teachers did not understand the potential benefits that could result from comprehensive parental involvement and therefore teachers did not view involving parents as part of their roles. It stands to reason that, in order to influence the perceptions of all stakeholders in the education sector toward parental involvement, we must provide them with concrete evidence of the positive impact of parental involvement on the wholistic development of children. For example, although teachers gave pupils homework to practice the skills taught in class, they did not use homework as a tool for parental involvement because they were unaware of the benefits of parental involvement with regard to homework if done properly. Additionally, main form of communication between teachers and parents occurred through verbal messages and written notes that usually dealt with the progress and problems pertaining to their children. However, parents did not always respond positively to such types of communication likely because they did not realize the impact their cooperation with the preschool teacher could have on their child's development. Importantly, as much as

formal and informal parent-teacher meetings were valued, most parents visited the school only when there were specific issues that needed to be addressed despite being invited to do so.

The study also identified specific challenges to parental involvement: schools seemed to ascribe to the Swap's Protective Model regarding reducing possible conflict between the school and parents mainly by separating parent's and teacher's functions. This however is counterproductive as children especially preschool children learn and develop best when parents and teachers work together toward a common objective (Michigan Department of Education, Decision Making Yardstick, 2001) Another hiccup in the parental involvement process is encountered during the study is that Principals and teachers did not understand the potential benefits that could result from comprehensive parental involvement and therefore teachers did not view involving parents as part of their roles These stumbling blocks to effective parental involvement can be easily overcome through advocacy.

2.4 Parenting

Parenting is the family involvement process that includes the attitudes, values and practices of parents in raising their children for example, participating in child-centered activities. Parent-child activities are culturally influenced. For example In the Early Childhood years, the Home-School Relationship refers to the formal and informal connections between families and their young children's educational settings. Frequent participation in preschool based activities and regular communication between parents and teachers are complimentary to a child's development. The home-school relationship buffers the negative effects of poverty on the holistic development of the child. "For example, children of low-income parents who

participated in Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) were more prepared for kindergarten, were less likely to be referred to special education...” (Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education, 2006)

Responsibility for learning outcomes refers to placing emphasis on educational activities that place emphasis on educational activities that promote school success. In early childhood, this family involvement process tends to focus on language and literacy. For example, children whose parents read to them at home recognize letters of the alphabet and write their names sooner. Direct parent-teaching activities like showing children how to write words are linked to children’s ability to identify letters and connect letters to speech sounds. (Involvement Education, 2006)

2.5 Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education

Parental involvement in Early Childhood Education is vital because parents are a child’s first teachers and the bridge between the home and the external environment (Lion, 2010). For example, “School age children spend seventy percent of their waking hours (including weekends and holidays) outside of school. The earlier in a child’s educational process parental involvement begins, the more powerful the effects. The most effective forms of involvement are those, which involve parents in working directly with their children in learning activities at home” (The Michigan Department of Education, Decision Making Yardstick, 2001)

In addition to helping with and promoting learning at home, parent involvement includes other aspects such as communicating with the school, volunteering in the classroom and participating

in parent-teacher organizations which all facilitate learning and development in preschool children (Hinkle, 2010) During the preschool years, parents exert a strong influence on their children (Hinkle, 2010). They are therefore in a position to act as models during the preschool years. Cooperation between parents and teachers is important in view of the significant role parents play in the lives of children in terms of nurture, care and modeling. For example, if a parent is aware that a child is learning how to read words in the word group at preschool, a parent can rehearse the pronunciation of these words through word cards and reinforce what the child is learning.

(Ballad, 2010) states that “there are many opportunities for parents to become teachers in the course of an average day.” For example, having age appropriate books in the home exposes children to print and helps them acquire concept of print such as books are read from front to back, from right to left and from top to bottom. As parents engage in conversation during activities with their children, they expose them to new and varied vocabulary as they use new words to explain concepts. As they interact with everyday items, they are able to learn the names of different colors and develop counting skills.

Reading materials could be created, provided or shared by parents for the benefit of all the children in the class. Storytelling by a parent can be a very enjoyable while learning any of the activity areas. If parents value early Literacy, their participation in parent-teacher organization will affect the priority given to literacy hence the quality of pre-literacy and literacy development. Parents who extend their enthusiasm to school institutions can ensure the quality of instruction, which can benefit all participants in the school system.” (Lion, 2010)

During a study carried out among preschool parents and teachers in Mumias, Kenya (Mukana and Indoshi, 2012), research was carried out on the perception of the role of parents in early childhood development. The following were some of the research findings derived from the study: 75.9% of teachers and 55.1% of parents agreed that it is the role of parents is to pay school fees for their children. Majority of the parents, 71.2% and 69% of the teachers involved in the study felt that it is the role of the parents to take and pick their children to/from school. Both teachers (84.6 %) and parents (79.1%) believed that it is the role of the parents to provide basic needs for their children. However, both parents and teachers were not in support of the idea of parents participating in school development matters like doing repairs, supporting their children in doing homework, attending to child discipline, providing labour in the school and paying teachers' salaries. Quite a number of teachers (65.5%) and parents (66.2%) were inclined toward the idea that parents should not be involved in things like doing repairs of the school buildings and desks.

A majority of parents (76.4%) and most teachers, 82.8% felt that it was not the parents' role to support their children with homework and 79.7% of parents and 69% of the teachers involved in the study believed that it was not the role of the parents to discipline their children. Parents, 69.9% and teachers, 96.7%, did not favour the idea of parents providing labour in the school. Both parents (85.5%) and teachers, (81.3%) disagreed that it was the parents' responsibility to pay the teachers' salaries. Approximately half of the parents (51.8%) agreed that it was their responsibility to provide snacks for their children, while more than half of the teachers (65.5%) disagreed. An overwhelming majority of the parents (84.5 %) were not in agreement that it was

their responsibility to provide teaching/learning materials for their children while a clear majority of the teachers (86.2%) felt that the onus lay with the parents.

A possible explanation to the results presented above was given as inadequate knowledge on the responsibilities of a pre-school parent. Both teachers and parents would wish parents to be involved in the ECD curriculum development, but the specific activities have not been well defined. Through research, the ECDE curriculum guidelines and the ECDE Policy Framework should spell this out clearly. (Mukuna and Indoshi, 2011)

It is therefore necessary to carry out research into the effect of parental development on various aspects of early childhood development including language development in order to spell out specific parental involvement activities both in the home and school environment which are crucial to wholistic early childhood education and development.

2.6 Parental Literacy Teaching and Literacy Development

As of 2006, the net enrolment ratio (NER) in Malta for Early Childhood Education had risen to near universal rates of 95%. In Kenya, the net enrolment ratio was 57.6% as of 2004. A National Literacy Survey in Malta (NLS, 1999), which tested the phonological, literacy, reading and writing skills of school pupils aged six to seven years revealed that children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds experienced difficulties in learning and acquiring skills. In addition, their parents were not strongly involved in either the education of their children or school affairs.

One of the most important implications of these NLS results was that, in order to assist children with learning difficulties and/or literacy needs, it was critical to simultaneously promote parental involvement in both child learning and the operation of schools. The former entailed strong support for home-based learning initiatives through parental empowerment. The Maltese National Minimum Curriculum (1999) underlined the importance of parental involvement in the national education system. Therefore, an effective education system recognizes the link between the home environment and variations in pupil achievement.

Family Literacy Programmes (FLPs) in Malta were set up by the Foundation for Educational Services to address these needs of children who are denied a support system outside the school especially those between the ages of six to seven and those between the ages seven and eight. FLPs are now recognized as a key component of the mainstream national education system due to the fundamental roles they have played in the development of early literacy. There are four core family literacy support programs included within the Maltese Family Literacy Programmes: the Hilti Program, the Parents-in-Education program and the Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project. The Hilti Program (My Ability) is an after-school family oriented educational project that reinforces school-based teaching and learning. The Parents-in-Education Program and the Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project (PEFaL) initiatives include Parents' Sessions in Hilti Clubs during which parents are encouraged to learn and use practical tools that stimulate their children to learn more effectively. They participate in child learning activities and discuss educational strategies with teachers and are provided with a guidebook which focuses on how they can base a range of activities in the home on the themes contained in children's books is provided to parents to make them more effective at assisting their preschool children.

One of the aims of the Hilti Program is to provide after school support to children in order to compliment and strengthen school-based teaching and learning activities as children develop language best through use in real life situations. Literacy skills should thus be developed in a holistic, play-to-learn context. A child's first educators are his or her parents so it stands to reason that they should be empowered by equipping them with the necessary skills to promote their child's development. Parents who have acquired a measure of skill and experience can serve as leaders and educate and encourage other parents. Moreover, children share a bond with their parent's that is unique and influential in their lives and which serves to ape into children's desire to work, play and learn with their parents can only enhance their ability to acquire literacy skills.

Evaluation results indicate a strong correlation between parental participation in their children's educational progress in terms of literacy, participation in classroom activities and personal and social skills. Data collected from day-school teachers showed statistically significant correlations between children's increase in literacy development and parent's rate of participation and children's participation in the program and improvements in their literacy, personal and social skills. Approximately ninety percent of parents believe that the program has improved their parenting capabilities as manifested by, for example, improved relations and communication with their children, an increased capacity and willingness to assist their children with their school work and higher involvement school affairs. Teachers who participate in the program are inclined to cooperate actively with parents thereby creating strong links between children's school and home learning. (UNESCO, 16th July, 2010).

Across the Australian federation, Tasmania has the lowest adult literacy rates. In addition, many children are not exposed to Early Childhood Education (ECE) and therefore commence their primary education with limited literacy skills. The Reading Together Literacy Program (RTLTP) is an intergenerational literacy program that targets socially disadvantaged families, in particular, parents or caregivers of preschool children aged between three and four years. It is based on the principle that effective mastery of literacy skills is based on reading aloud; progressive learning of the alphabet; the development of phonetic awareness through rhyme, songs and games and the development of sound-symbol relationships. The objectives of the program include creating learning opportunities for parents, caregivers and their children in order to combat illiteracy in state, nurturing a culture of reading and learning within families and empowering parents and caregivers with appropriate literacy skills in order to enable them to effectively nurture the educational and psychosocial development of their children.

The RTLTP consists of two-hour weekly family sessions conducted by qualified ECE and adult education teachers over a period of three school terms. Training is done through interpersonal and participatory teaching-learning methods (such as songs, games, story-telling and discussions) and various learning aides (picture books, local newspaper and magazine articles, arts and crafts). Learner's everyday life experiences are used as the basis for learning and parents receive mentorship in appropriate ECE practices which support reading and literacy development in children through home or family-based teaching-learning activities. Adult participants are allowed to borrow books for home-based learning. Feedback received from individual participants and schools indicate that RTLTP child-graduates have greater reading capacity and are able to master new literacy skills faster than children who did not participate in the program.

Reports further indicate that child graduates have more advanced interpersonal skills and are more enthusiastic to participate in learning activities than their peers. (UNESCO, 2005)

Parental involvement lays a positive foundation for a child's future learning by shaping their attitude toward education. The success of the program indicates parental involvement the development of a child's literacy skills produces positive results that would not have been otherwise achieved in terms of mastery of literacy skills. Key is activity based literacy learning in the home and use of everyday life in the family setup as a basis for learning. Teaching-learning materials are necessary because preschool children learn best through play.

Parents with limited literacy skills may still be instrumental in facilitating reading and literacy skills in their children with mentorship from teachers though this may require considerable resources in terms of time and manpower but with educational effort such parents can and should be empowered participate in the education of their children. Parent-teacher meetings are a practical way to inform and educate parents at a level they can benefit from and can be practised in any kind of school. It is best if programs are individually designed according to the literacy level of the parent and the child in order to increase the potential for the child to master intended skills.

Hamburg, Germany has a significant proportion of resident migrants. Most citizens of foreign descent are functionally illiterate and are therefore unable to actively and effectively participate in the educational development of their children. The German Family Literacy project (FLY) was designed to address these challenges. The program promotes strong linkages between the

school and home based learning processes by supporting parent to increase literacy activities at home and enabling them to help with their children's schoolwork in addition to strong interaction between parents and school teachers.

The FLY curriculum emphasizes language development; listening and comprehension (through storytelling); reading, writing and comprehension (reading aloud and discussions); letters and phonological awareness (initial sounds, rhymes, working with syllables). The objectives of the program include improving children's early literacy and language skills development by training and empowering parents to take an active role in their children's psychosocial and learning development, promoting home-based learning through provision of learning materials and training of parents as educators, creating strong links and cooperation between school and home-based learning.

The project is based on the basic principle that the family constitutes the fundamental springboard for children's sustainable learning and education therefore parents are empowered in the following ways; mothers participate in literacy-related activities in the classroom, for example, looking at books together with the children or playing simple literacy related games in the morning when they have brought their children to school. This gives them an opportunity to become familiar with how children learn with the aim of empowering them as educators in their own right. Parents also participate in literacy classes where they learn how to produce literacy materials such as storytelling bags, word cards, written stories and pictures on various topics to be used for home-based learning.

One million children in South Africa live in a household where no adult can read and just over fifty percent of South African families own no books for recreational or leisure time reading. As a result, average Reading Comprehension and Writing scores are low. The project is aimed at families as a means of addressing the low literacy achievement of many pre and primary school children since the literacy scores of preschool children were not improving despite government interventions in the Early Childhood sector. Some of the objectives of the program are to transform literacy into a shared pleasure and a valuable skill shared by the whole family and to stress the importance of the parent or caregiver as the child's first educator and support them in assuming this role.

The Kasiisi project is a pilot project in Uganda funded by Australia to improve literacy through the use of mobile phones in an attempt to avoid the problems of accessibility and affordability that are associated with books. Daily audio literacy lessons are sent to the primary adult caring for the children in native Rutooro, the language the children understand best. An emergent issue in parental involvement is parental literacy. Parents have to be capable of supporting their child's literacy development and this may require improving parent's literacy levels. If there is no program that focuses on adult literacy, children from disadvantaged backgrounds will suffer lack of parental involvement as they acquire literacy skills and as has been proved through research may lag behind their peers from advantaged backgrounds due to this.

Home-based care should not be left to chance. Moreover, parents who are in a position to support their children in their education also need support from teachers in order to effectively promote acquisition of literacy skills. It is therefore important that the school administration and teacher

make efforts and strategize on how to include parents in the education of their child. For example, the teacher may give homework assignments to the child that involve his or her parent for example. a reading assignment and ask for feedback on which words the child found difficult to read through the school diary. In addition the parent could rehearse words the child has learnt during the week over the weekend and provide feedback to the teacher. Parental involvement is not a phenomenon that occurs by chance but it is a decision made as part of a professional commitment to do what is in the child's best interest.

A good relationship between the teacher and the parent is important in motivating the child to become involved. This requires that parent and teacher communicate on a regular basis through formal and informal means at a professional level. The level of training a preschool teacher has received may determine how professional they are and their ability to mobilize parents; for example, using them as resource persons or in the acquisition or improvisation of instructional resources from the local community. Teacher training at any level should include practice on parental involvement. Resources such as books, rhymes, songs and charts are useful in creating opportunities for parents to foster literacy skills in their children and evaluate their progress. Without teaching-learning materials and resources, it is impossible to involve parents in the development of their child.

Children from a disadvantaged socio-economic background often receive poor education which makes it difficult for them to break free from the cycle of poverty. In this context, it is vital that we look for ways to mitigate the negative effects of their background in order for them not to lag behind their peers. Teachers are in a position to form direct links with the children's parents

and families and are also able to build the capacity of parents to assist in the literacy development of their children in addition to providing the link between what the child learns at home and what the child should learn at home. Parents also need to have a sense of responsibility toward their child's education if they are to be motivated to make the effort needed to participate actively in their child's development and education.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

As the limits of in-school reforms become clear, it is imperative that we look to non-school supports that will enhance and promote learning and development. These supports are referred to as complimentary learning.

The second cornerstone of complimentary learning is the notion that the many contexts in which children learn should compliment and support each other and work toward a consistent range of outcomes. Being strategic about the way in which the contexts connect and building on the strengths of multiple learning contexts can be a more effective way to improve child outcomes than if these contexts continue to operate independently of each other. (Beyond the classroom: Complimentary Learning to Improve Achievement Outcomes, 2005).

Emergent literacy has been recently defined as “the view that literacy learning...is encouraged through participation with adults in meaningful activities; these literacy behaviours change and become conventional over time” (Neuman, Copple & Bredekamp, 2000: p. 123). When children are engaged in an interesting and meaningful reading, and writing experiences, they develop literacy knowledge early in their lives. (Early Literacy, 1999)

The Social Cultural Theory views children as inseparable from their social contexts and knowledge and meanings are seen as embedded within social cultural practices. In view of this, any proposed intervention should use strategies, methods and teaching-learning materials which are relevant to the social cultural context. “A social cultural model of literacy and literacy learning moves beyond a narrow skills and processes view of reading and writing to become a wide range of social and cultural context” (Hammer Judy, 2005)

2.7.1 Complimentary Learning Theory

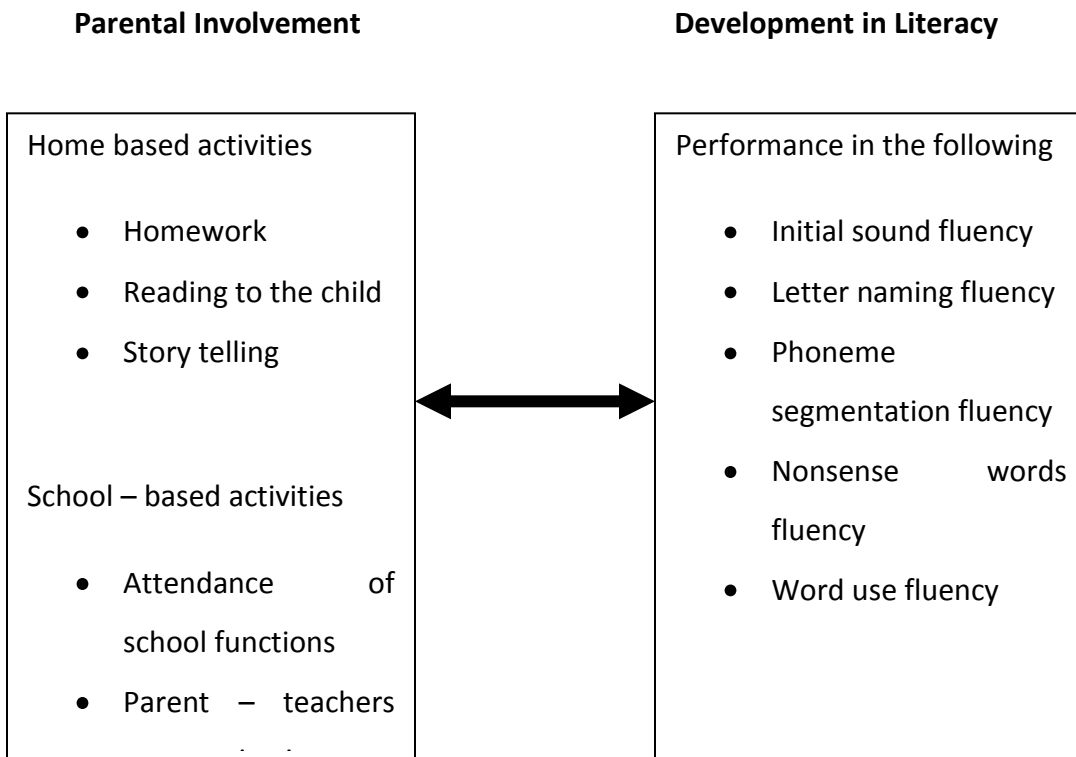
The concept of complimentary learning is a framework for thinking about the importance of and linkages among the many contexts, activities and actions in which children learn. In this sense, learning and development do not occur solely in the school context and should not be expected to. The widening achievement gap between private and public preschools in literacy has led me to consider non-school supports that will enhance and promote learning; however, these supports need to be linked to each other if they are to be effective. Some of these complimentary learning supports include high quality early childhood education and family involvement at home and at school.

2.8 conceptual Framework

This holistic framework is underpinned by the perspective of the engaged child, engaged teacher, engaged parent and engaged teaching and learning. Implications of this framework on pedagogy are profound: parents need to be provided with resources to help them support their children’s literacy learning through regular communication with the preschool about their child’s language and literacy development and invite their participation.

Moreover, drawing on current research to inform discussions with school authorities and parents will add credibility to evidence-based practice. This Conceptual framework is also helpful in generating future research into children’s language development and early literacy practices.

All the factors indicated in the conceptual framework below individually affect the literacy development of the child in terms of initial sound fluency, letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, nonsense word fluency and word use fluency. This study focuses on two of these parental involvement influences that is home-based parental involvement activities and school based parental involvement activities.



2.9 Summary

In view of the literature discussed it is clear that parental involvement is important for literacy development and also has positive effects on other domains. The school therefore has the responsibility to link school literacy activities with the activities parents do with their children at home as this will help in achieving the common goal of helping each child achieve his or her full potential. Parental Involvement strategies have worked in other counties including neighboring Uganda so there is no reason to believe that teachers in Kenyan preschools cannot implement the principles on which parental involvement programs are based. The progress made in the literacy development of the children involved in these programs regardless of their socio-economic background proves that it is worth the effort.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study. It describes the research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, and data collection and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a Correlational Research Study Design to establish a relationship between parental involvement and literacy development. A correlational research study design is used to describe in quantitative terms the degree to which variables are related. A correlation coefficient of zero denotes no relationship, a correlational coefficient of -1 denotes a negative correlation while a correlation coefficient of +1 denotes a positive correlation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003)

Parental involvement includes two aspects: Home based parental involvement; assisting with homework, reading to a child and storytelling and School based parental involvement activities: attendance of school functions and parent-teacher communication. The literacy development of preschool children involves the acquisition of Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency and Nonsense Word Fluency.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted all preschool children and their parents in Langata Division.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure.

Langata Division has a population of twenty private schools and six public schools. A sample of ten percent of the population shall be used by the researcher. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a stratified random sample. The strata will consist of private preschools and public schools.

3.5 Research Instruments

Questionnaires based on the Likert scale were used to collect data from parents on home based parental involvement: assisting with homework, reading to a child and storytelling and school based parental involvement: attendance of school functions and parent-teacher communication. Questionnaires for teachers provided further information on both home based and school based parental involvement activities.

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Edition (DIBELS) Kindergarten Benchmark Assessment will be used as a benchmark assessment to assess Literacy Development in terms of Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency and Nonsense Word Fluency. Both the DIBELS Benchmark Assessment Kindergarten Student Materials and the DIBELS Benchmark Assessment Kindergarten Scoring Booklet were used by the researcher.

Since it would be impractical to use the DIBELS Test in its entirety due to the fact that it is designed to assess a preschool child's literacy development over the entire school year, the researcher selected relevant elements from each component to be assessed for use as a research tool. Specific questions were picked from most sections of the DIBELS Test based on: relevance to the African context, familiarity of the material in the question, material already covered by the teacher in the classroom, ease of use by the researcher and amount of time needed to administer in a classroom setting. These considerations led to modification of the Phoneme Segmentation section of the DIBELS Test. The scores of the Likert Scale will be aggregated for each respondent to obtain a score on parental involvement in the defined aspect of parental involvement.

3.5.1 Reliability of Instruments

Reliability of the research instruments was determined using the test-retest method.

3.5.2 Validity of Instruments

A standardized test of international standard was used to determine the literacy development of the children participating in the study thus ensuring validity.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire for parents was passed on to the preschool teacher who then forwarded a questionnaire to each parent in his or her class. The completed questionnaires were then collected by the researcher.

The Benchmark Assessment Test was administered by the researcher in the classroom in the presence of the preschool teacher in charge of that classroom.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

Each of the completed questionnaires had the name of the child whose parent had filled the questionnaire at the top. The researcher then assigned each completed questionnaire a number.

Parental involvement was divided into two categories: home-based parental involvement and school based parental involvement. Home-based activity ratings were based on homework supervision, reading to the child as well as storytelling. Similarly, school-based activity ratings were based upon: attendance of school meetings and Parent-teacher communication.

Each component of parental involvement dimension was rated on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5 with 5 indicating minimal involvement in each dimension while 1 indicated a high level of involvement in each dimension. For purposes of analysis 1 on the scale was assigned a score of 1, 2 was assigned a score of 0.8, 3 was assigned a score of 0.6, 4 on the scale was assigned a score of 0.4 and 5 was assigned a score of 0.2. This was done to achieve consistency of scores to enable comparison.

An average score on the Likert Scale was then calculated for each parent in two categories: home-based activities and school-based activities. These were then compared to the respective child's performance in each of the parameters of language development considered in the study: sound/letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency and nonsense word fluency.

A table was then created which assigned each questionnaire number a parental involvement score, a percentage score on letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, nonsense

word fluency and an average score for performance in all three areas of language development: letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency and nonsense word fluency.

3.8 Ethical Issues.

Information collected from parents through questionnaires and was kept confidential through use of titles such as 'Parent to Natalie' as opposed to use of the parent's actual name. Results obtained through the benchmark assessment were kept confidential through use of only the first names of the children who participated in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS DISCUSSION AND INTERPRITATION

4.1: Introduction

In discussing and interpreting the research findings, consideration was given to home-based parental involvement which involved homework supervision, reading to the child and storytelling, school-based parental involvement which included attendance of school functions and parent-teacher communication and the effect of each of these on literacy development in terms of letter/sound naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency and nonsense word fluency.

4.2 Home-based parental involvement and Literacy Development

The table below presents the correlations between each of the three aspects of home-based parental involvement and each of the aspect of literacy development.

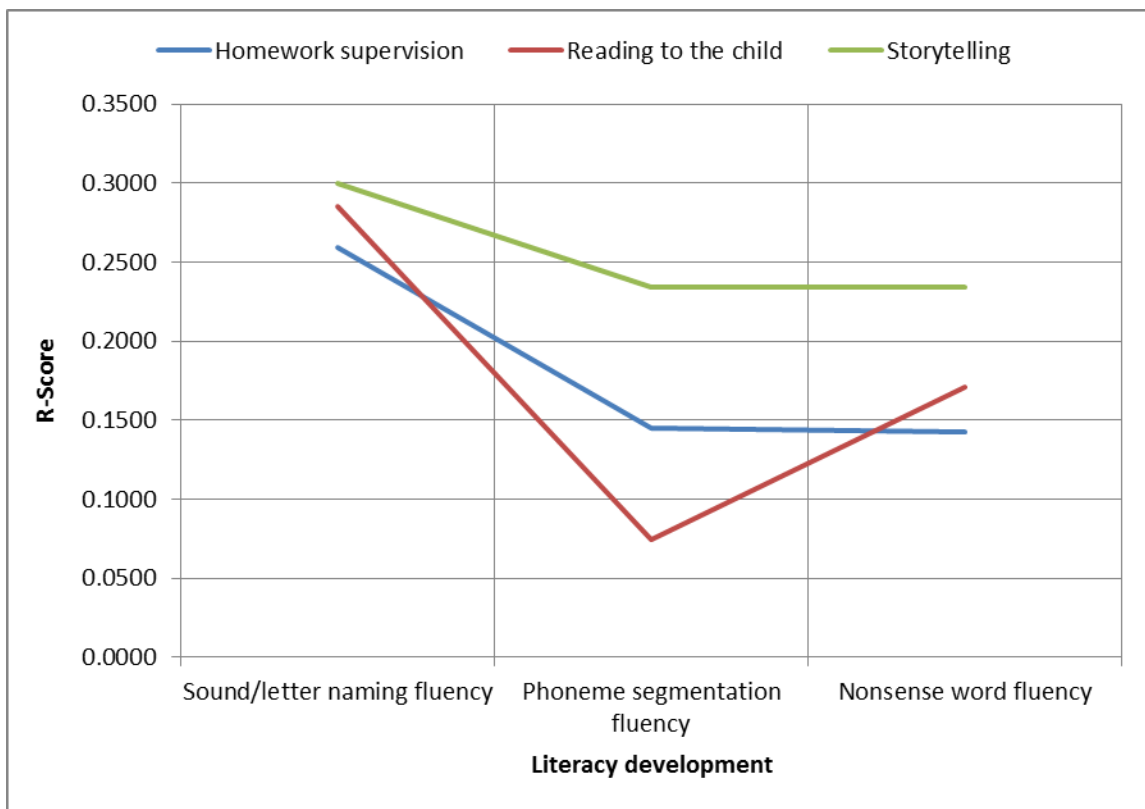
Table 4.1: Relationship between home-based parental involvement activities and literacy development

Home-based parental involvement	Sound/letter naming fluency	Phoneme segmentation fluency	Nonsense word fluency
Homework supervision	0.2590	0.1454	0.1422
Reading to the child	0.2850	0.0745	0.1712
Storytelling	0.3001	0.2346	0.2346

The study found that in terms of home-based parental involvement the highest correlation is that between storytelling and sound/letter naming fluency while the weakest correlation was that between reading to the child and phoneme segmentation fluency. There was also a weak

correlation between homework supervision and phoneme segmentation fluency and homework supervision and nonsense word fluency. Fafani, (2003) posits that reading skills are necessary for success at every level and in every subject. Early deficits in reading have been linked to both academic and social problems. Yet, many children...struggle as they learn to read.

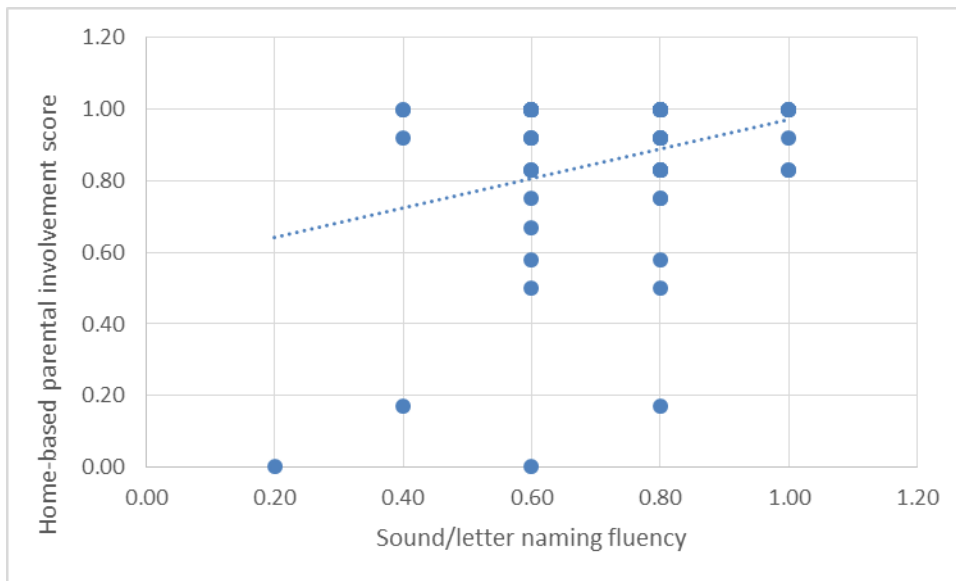
Figure 4.1: Correlation between home-based parental involvement and literacy development.



There is a sharp decline in the correlation between home-based parental involvement and sound/letter naming fluency and the correlation between home-based parental involvement and phoneme segmentation fluency. There is also a decline in correlation all aspects of home-based parental involvement and sound/letter naming fluency and the correlation between each of the aspects of home-based parental involvement and phoneme segmentation fluency. In other words, home-based parental involvement influences sound/letter naming fluency most and phoneme

segmentation fluency least. A study by Supporting Language and Early Literacy Practices in Kindergarten, n.d found out that parents need to be provided with resources to help them support their children’s literacy learning through regular communication with the preschool about their child’s language and literacy development and invite their participation. Presented below is a scatter graph demonstrating the correlation between home-based parental involvement scores and sound/letter naming fluency.

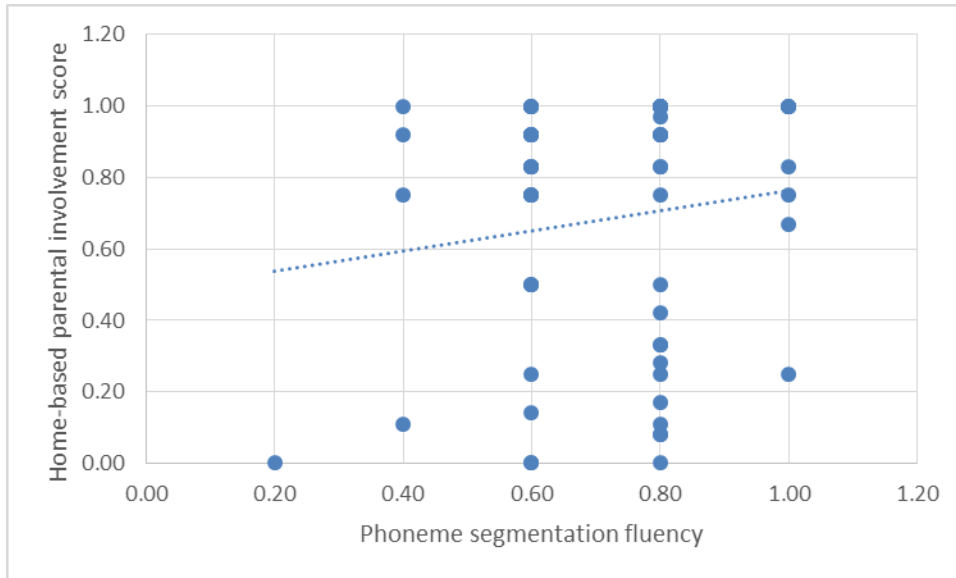
Figure 4.2: Home-based parental involvement score and sound/letter naming fluency



$r = 0.2940$

There graph demonstrates a weak but positive correlation between home-based parental involvement activities and sound/letter naming fluency. Hintze and colleagues (2003) examined the Letter Naming Fluency provides a measure of risk for problems in future literacy development. Considered next is the correlation between home based parental involvement and phoneme segmentation fluency.

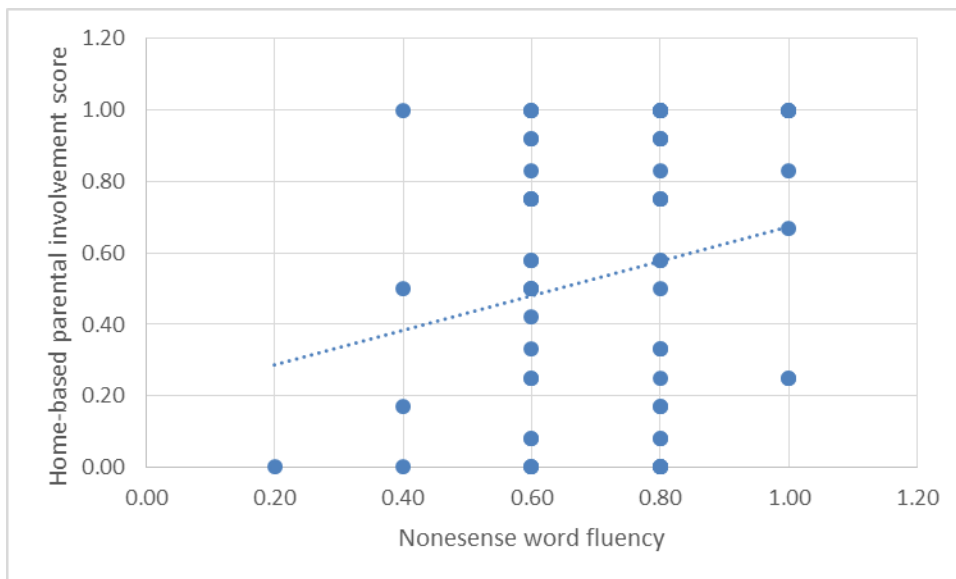
Figure 4.3: Home-based parental involvement and phoneme segmentation fluency.



$r = 0.1383$

A very weak but positive correlation between home-based parental involvement activities and phoneme segmentation fluency is shown. Discussed below is the correlation between home-based parental involvement and nonsense word fluency.

Figure 4.4: Home-based parental involvement activities and nonsense word fluency



$r = 0.2181$

There is a weak but positive correlation between home-based parental involvement activities and nonsense word fluency. Understanding of alphabetic principle can be assessed by Nonsense Word Fluency. Strickland and Riley-Ayers, (2010) concurs that in order to effectively involve parents in the development of their children's literacy, they must be given support that will enable them to effectively develop the needed literacy skills in their children.

4.3: School-based Parental Involvement and Literacy Development

The table below gives the correlation between the two aspects of school-based parental involvement: attendance of school functions and parent-teacher communication and each aspect of literacy development.

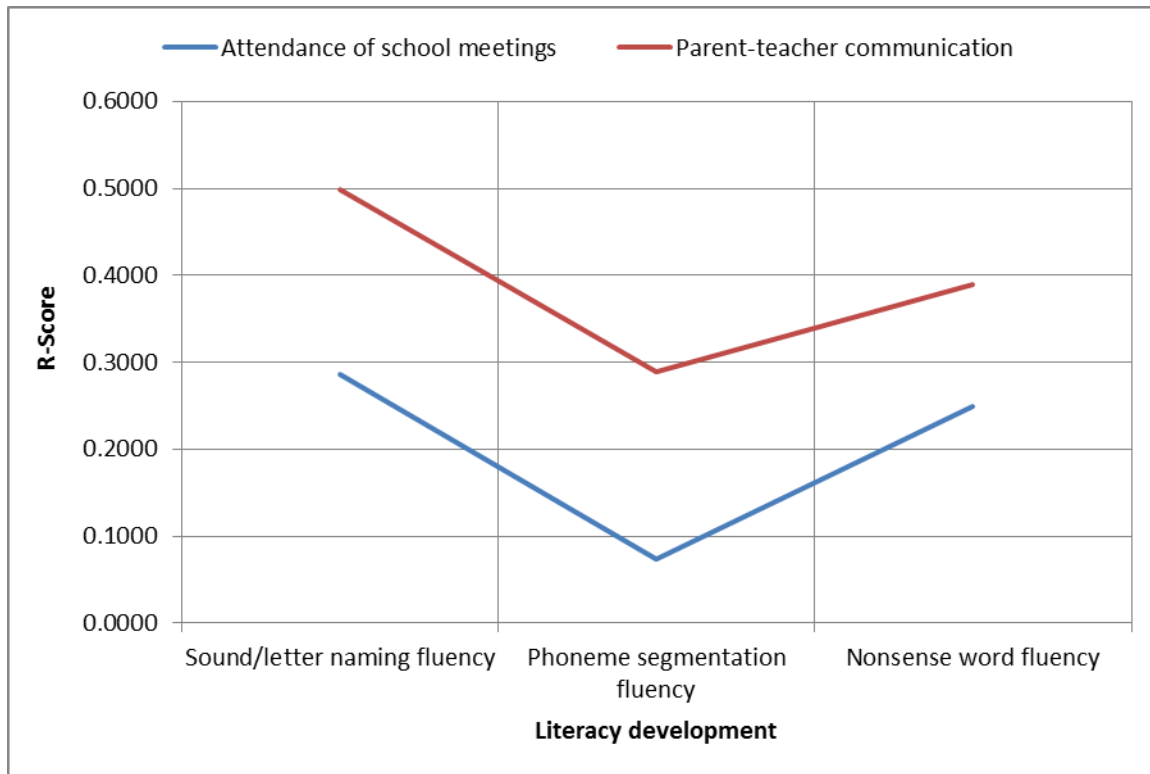
Table 4.2: Relationship between school-based parental involvement activities and literacy development

School-based parental involvement	Sound/letter naming fluency	Phoneme segmentation fluency	Nonsense word fluency
Attendance of school meetings	0.2860	0.0739	0.2489
Parent-teacher communication	0.4990	0.2883	0.3893

From the table it is clear that the highest positive correlation in terms of school based parental involvement is that between parent-teacher communication and sound/letter naming fluency. The weakest correlation though positive is that between phoneme segmentation fluency and attendance of school meetings. Senchel and LeFevre (2002) did a five year longitudinal study of parent involvement in the development of reading skills. In this study, informal experiences

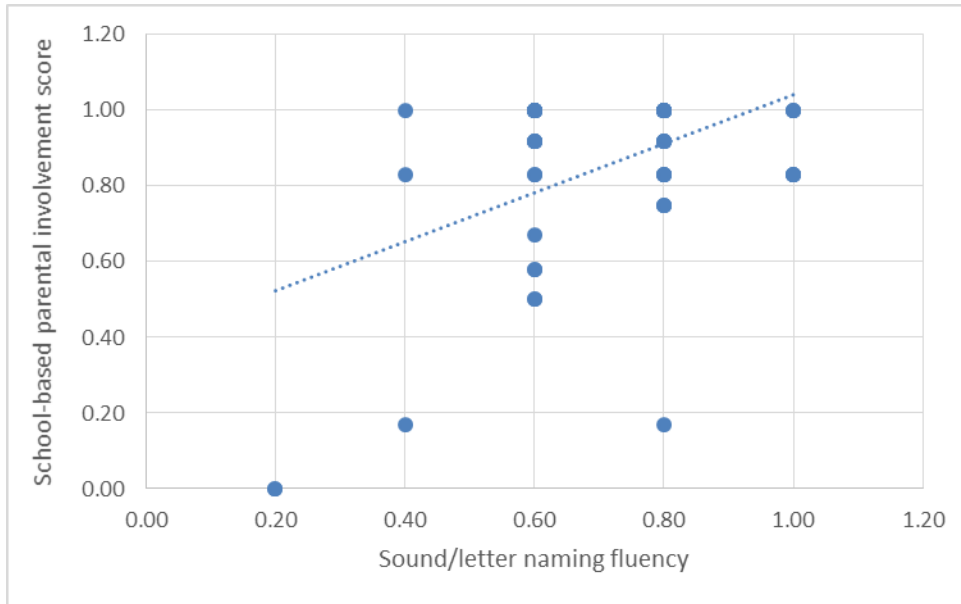
included: reading bedtime stories and focusing on the story and illustrations. Formal experiences were times when parents talked about specific letters and the sounds made in words.

Figure 4.5: Relationship between school-based parental involvement activities and literacy development



From the graph, school-based parental involvement influences sound/letter naming fluency the most and phoneme segmentation fluency the least. Parent-teacher communication has a greater effect on all aspects of literacy development. Gail Jordan, Catherine Snow and Michelle Porche (2000) were of the opinion that in Early Childhood Education, the aspect of family involvement tends to focus on how parents can support children's literacy. The other two aspects of family involvement namely parenting in early childhood and home-school relationships play a vitally supportive role in terms of preschool children's language development and literacy acquisition.

Figure 4.6: School-based parental involvement activities and sound/letter naming fluency

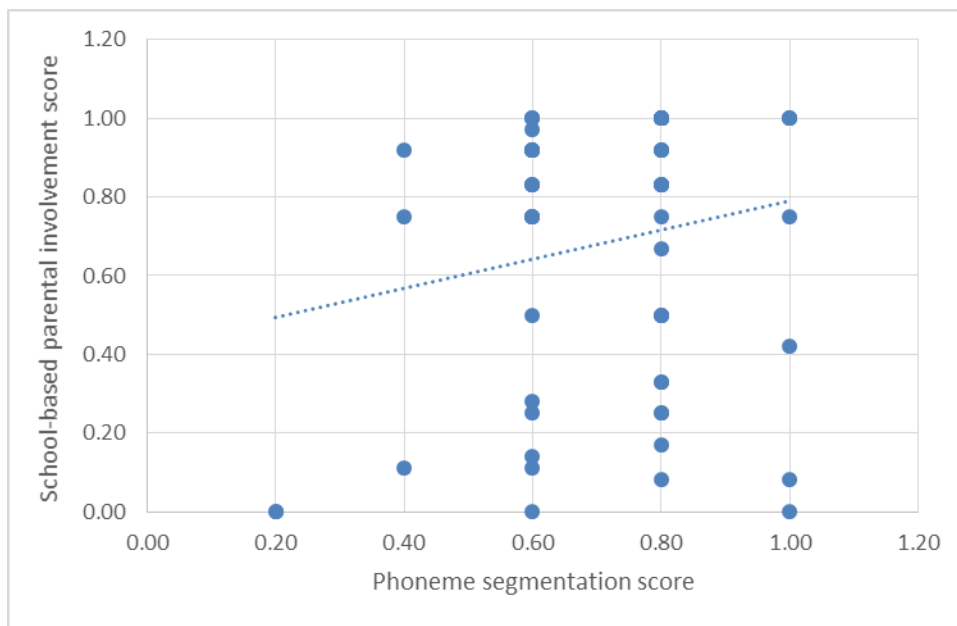


$r = 0.4730$

A moderate positive correlation between school-based parental involvement activities and sound/letter naming fluency is clearly seen. This is in line with a study by Good & Kaminski, (2002) is a series of standardized, individually administered, brief grade-level specific probes designed to measure key research based aspects of early literacy skills. This study used first grade DIBELS probes, including Letter Naming Fluency the number of letters on a stimulus page that a child can name in one minute.

Figure 4.7: School-based parental involvement activities and phoneme segmentation

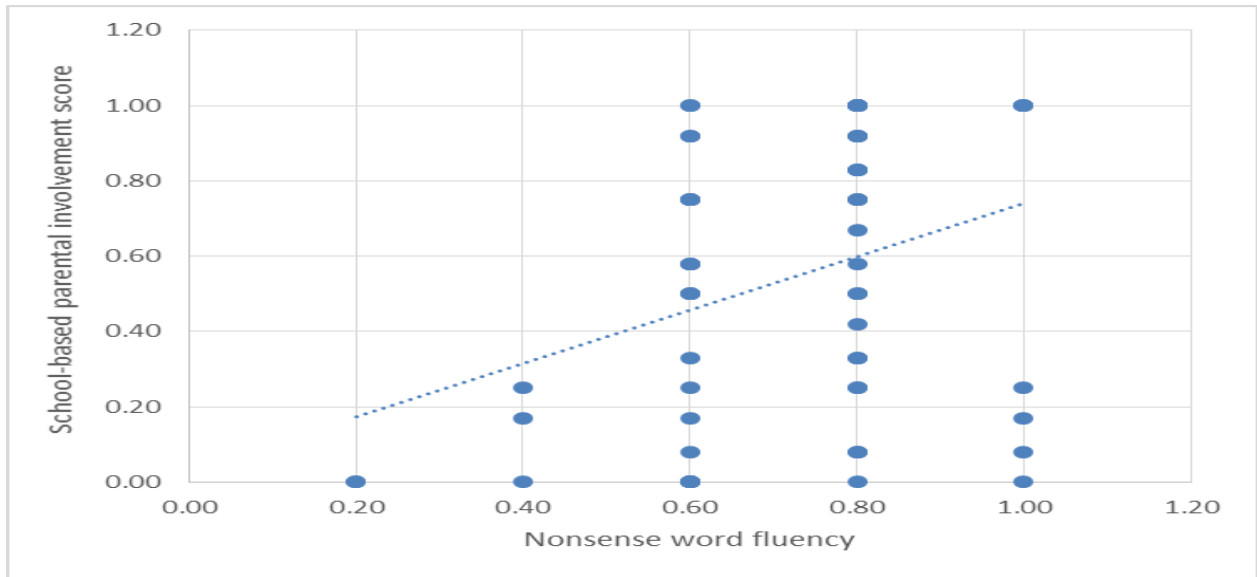
fluency



$r = 0.1874$

Very weak but positive correlation between school-based parental involvement activities and phoneme segmentation fluency can be deduced from the trend. Fishel & Ramirez, 2005 and Senechal & Young, 2008 were of the opinion that Phoneme Segmentation Fluency probes produce a single score; the Nonsense Word Fluency probe produces two scores, Correct Letter Sounds and Whole Words Read, for a total of four reading measures for first grade participants.

Figure 4.8: School-based parental involvement and nonsense word fluency



$R = 0.3297$

A weak positive correlation exists between school-based parental involvement activities and nonsense word fluency. Strickland and Riley-Ayers, (2010) were of the opinion that understanding of alphabetic principle can be assessed by Nonsense Word Fluency. This measure probes knowledge of letter sound correspondence and sounding out words and the ability to blend letters into words in which letters represent their most common sounds.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the key study findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations. It also makes suggestions for further research. The findings are summarized in line with the objectives of the study which was to determine the effect of parental involvement on the literacy development of preschool children by investigating the effect of parental involvement on various aspects of literacy development in early childhood. The study sought to relate the following aspects of parental involvement: assisting with homework, attendance of school functions, parent-teacher communication, reading to a child and story-telling to the following aspects of literacy development: letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency and nonsense word fluency.

5.2 Summary

The study sought to achieve the following objectives: to establish the effect of home-based and school-based parental involvement activities on the letter naming fluency of preschoolers children; to determine how home-based and school-based parental involvement activities affects the phoneme segmentation fluency of preschoolers; to find out the effect of home-based and school-based parental involvement activities on the nonsense word fluency of preschoolers and to investigate the effect of home-based and school-based parental involvement activities on the overall literacy development of preschoolers in Langata Division.

Literature pointed out the importance of parents' involvement in their children's educational experiences reflects Bronfenbrenner's (1986) The Social Cultural Theory, which underscores the substantial influence of environmental interactions on a child's development. According to this model, the relationship between a child's family and school is multidirectional; the family influences the school, while the school influences the family.

Conceptual framework was also helpful in generating future research into children's language development and early literacy practices. This holistic framework is underpinned by the perspective of the engaged child, engaged teacher, engaged parent and engaged teaching and learning. Implications of this framework on pedagogy are profound: parents need to be provided with resources to help them support their children's literacy learning through regular communication with the preschool about their child's language and literacy development and invite their participation. Moreover, drawing on current research to inform discussions with school authorities and parents will add credibility to evidence-based practice.

The study used a Correlational Research Study Design to describe in quantitative terms the degree to which parental involvement and literacy development are related. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a stratified random sample from both public and private schools in Langata Division. The study targeted all preschool children and their parents in Langata Division. Langata Division has a population of twenty private schools and six public schools. A sample of ten percent of the population shall be used by the researcher. Questionnaires based on the Likert scale were used to collect data from parents on home based parental involvement:

assisting with homework, reading to a child and storytelling and school based parental involvement: attendance of school functions and parent-teacher communication

School-based parental involvement activities produced a more positive correlation in all aspects of literacy development this is likely due to the fact that children benefit most in terms of literacy development from structured activities which are best formulated with the guidance of a preschool teacher during parent-teacher conferences and regular communication between parent and teacher. These results are consistent with the established research discussed in the review of literature section; parents report improved feelings of involvement when they are empowered and trained to play an active role in their children's education.

Parents' active involvement in their children's learning experiences have been shown to improve children's academic outcomes. As a result, parents' involvement activities, such as teaching specific literacy skills, have been recommended as strategies to engage families in their young children's education experiences. However, little research has investigated the impact of parents' involvement during the preschool years on later outcomes. Further research is needed to discover ways in which parents' involvement can be promoted during the preschool years, particularly with low-income children.

Phoneme segmentation fluency seems to be one of the aspects of literacy least influenced by both home-based and school-based parental involvement activities while sound or letter naming fluency seems to be the aspect of literacy development most positively influenced by school-based parental involvement activities. The correlation between parental involvement and the

literacy development of preschool children in Langata Division is generally a weak positive correlation.

The study found that in terms of home-based parental involvement the highest correlation is that between storytelling and sound/letter naming fluency while the weakest correlation was that between reading to the child and phoneme segmentation fluency. There was also a weak correlation between homework supervision and phoneme segmentation fluency and homework supervision and nonsense word fluency. Moreover, the findings are similar to those found by Kagitcibasi et al. (2001), who observed increases in mothers' reading, story-telling, teaching, and assisting with their children's homework after mothers' training. Parents' reported increases in carry implications for the academic, behavioral, and social outcomes of the children whose parents implemented the early literacy intervention.

5.3 Conclusion

Parental involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive and well planned this can be deduced from the difference between the research results presented above and the results derived from the various literacy programs discussed earlier. When parents engage in more directed and structured activities in collaboration with the preschool teachers, the impact of parental involvement on the literacy development of their preschool children is likely to more profound.

This study measured the impact of parents' active participation in a parent directed early literacy intervention on literacy development and their preschool-aged children. This relationship was also examined in the context of parents' prior experience with their children's preschool education. Average levels of literacy development significantly increased over time among

parents in the intervention group, indicating parents' engagement in a variety of home-based activities such as taking their children to the library and teaching their children early numeracy skills. Further research is needed to identify ways in which literacy development can be promoted, as well as to determine whether parents with less or more experience with the education system may benefit from direct intervention in increasing parental involvement. Promoting parents as teachers within the home setting may serve as a potential strategy to increase levels of parental involvement.

Schools can and should provide parents with opportunities for involvement and provide needed support through parent-teacher conferences and good formal and informal parent teacher communication in order to meet preschool children's developmental needs.

5.4 Recommendations

Parental involvement strategies should be implemented in both private and public schools. Such strategies include school-based activities such as parent-teacher conferences, frequent parent-teacher meetings, curriculum open days in which parents are enlightened on what children are learning at school and on what is expected of them and of each child as regards teaching and learning, creating access to resources which parents can use at home to assist their children to develop literacy skills at home; these resources include storybooks and soundcards.

Results of the changes in parental self-efficacy scores showed that the first objective appears to be true: there was a significant positive change in parental involvement scores across the course of treatment. This suggests that training parents to do a simple home-literacy intervention with

their children will make parents express higher feelings of parental involvement about their ability to help their children with school.

Home-based activities such as assisting with homework and reading to the child in the family should be encouraged and the benefits discussed at parent-teacher conferences.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

The findings of the current study indicate that assigning Head Start parents an active role in developing their preschoolers' pre-literacy skills could be an effective strategy to increase home-based parental involvement activities. Studies should be conducted on increases in literacy development that may turn result in positive immediate and long-term academic, behavioral, and social outcomes for children.

Furthermore, the intervention may also be feasible for education professionals to recommend to parents, as the one-time training required is brief and associated with high intervention integrity. Parents' use of the intervention could therefore be encouraged in a variety of settings and by a variety of education professionals, such as teachers and school psychologists employed in preschool settings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i: Questionnaire for parents

The following questions are intended to help you rate your contribution to your child’s success at school. Your honest responses to these questions below will help us determine the correlation between home-based and school-based activities to performance of preschool children. Thank you for sparing your time to make this important contribution to your child’s learning.

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the statements given below by ticking the scale that best represents your opinion.

SCALE:

- 1 - Strongly Agree
- 2 - Agree
- 3 - Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 - Disagree
- 5 - Strongly Disagree

S/No.		1	2	3	4	5
1	I have identified a specific place and regular time at home for my child to his/her homework					
2	I spare some time each day to teach my child how to identify and pronounce letters and words					
3	I regularly monitor my child’s television viewing					
4	Reading to my child and encouraging him/her to read to me takes a good amount of my time everyday					
5	Story telling is a leaning activity which I engage my child in regularly					
6	I ensure that my child attends all school days and only misses school due to unavoidable circumstances					

7	My child does not sleep late each night and wakes up without difficulties every morning					
8	I have attended more than half of all the meetings arranged by my child's school					
9	I understand, support and reinforce the discipline plan of my child's school					
10	I regularly communicate with my child's teacher through phone calls, school diary and personal visits to the school to discuss his/her performance					

Appendix ii: standardized test for the children

Letter Naming Fluency

g x j n h

d n s c q

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

Sim Yiz Zoc Mik Nuf Ruv

Lut Wan Ful Zum Kun Fod

Nonsense Word Fluency

Sim Yiz Zoc Mik Nuf Ruv

Lut wan Ful Zum Kun Fod