

# Parental Involvement in the Education of Students with Visual Impairment: A Systematic Review of Empirical and Theoretical Literature

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## Abstract

Parental involvement has consistently been recognized as a crucial factor influencing students' academic success and psychosocial development. For students with visual impairment, parental engagement assumes even greater significance due to the unique educational and developmental challenges associated with vision loss. Parents frequently serve as primary facilitators of learning, mobility training, social integration, and emotional support within both home and school contexts. Despite the importance of parental participation, research examining its role in the educational experiences of visually impaired students remains relatively fragmented across disciplines such as special education, rehabilitation studies, and developmental psychology. The present study provides a systematic review of literature on parental involvement in the education of students with visual impairment. Relevant scholarly works published between 2000 and 2024 were identified through databases including ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using key search terms related to parental engagement and visual impairment. After applying predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, empirical and theoretical studies were analyzed using thematic synthesis. The review identifies several major dimensions of parental involvement, including academic support, collaboration with teachers, emotional guidance, and advocacy for educational resources. Findings indicate that effective parental engagement significantly enhances students' academic participation, independence, and psychosocial adjustment. However, numerous barriers such as socio-economic constraints, limited parental awareness, institutional limitations, and cultural attitudes toward disability often restrict meaningful parental participation. The study highlights the need for stronger school–family partnerships, parent training programs, and policy interventions that promote inclusive educational environments for students with visual impairment.

**Keywords:** Parental Involvement, Visually Impaired Students

## Introduction

Education plays a vital role in fostering social inclusion, independence, and empowerment among individuals with disabilities. Within the field of special education, students with visual impairment encounter unique learning challenges that require comprehensive support from educational institutions, families, and communities. Visual impairment can significantly affect cognitive development, mobility,

access to information, and social interaction, thereby necessitating specialized educational interventions and collaborative support systems (Papadopoulos, 2014). Among the various stakeholders involved in the educational process, parents occupy a particularly influential position because they serve as the primary caregivers and facilitators of their children's developmental experiences.

Parental involvement in education refers to the active participation of parents in activities that support their children's academic progress and overall development. This involvement may occur in multiple forms, including assisting with homework, communicating with teachers, attending school meetings, and creating a supportive learning environment at home (Hill & Tyson, 2009). In the context of children with disabilities, parental engagement often extends beyond routine academic assistance to include advocacy, rehabilitation support, and collaboration with specialized professionals.

For students with visual impairment, parental involvement becomes even more critical because many learning experiences occur outside the classroom environment. Parents often play an essential role in introducing adaptive skills such as Braille literacy, tactile exploration, orientation and mobility training, and the use of assistive technologies. These activities contribute not only to academic learning but also to the development of independence and self-confidence among visually impaired learners (Ferrell, 2011). Previous studies have demonstrated that active parental participation positively influences students' educational outcomes across diverse educational contexts. Jeynes (2012) conducted a meta-analysis indicating that parental involvement significantly improves students' academic achievement, motivation, and school engagement. Similarly, research within special education has highlighted that collaborative partnerships between families and schools facilitate better educational planning and support for students with disabilities (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Despite these recognized benefits, families of visually impaired children often encounter numerous challenges that hinder effective parental involvement. These challenges may include limited access to information regarding educational resources, socioeconomic constraints, lack of specialized training, and inadequate institutional support. In many cases, parents may feel uncertain about how to support their children's learning due to insufficient guidance from educational institutions (Hatlen & Stryker, 2013).

Furthermore, research focusing specifically on parental involvement among visually impaired students remains comparatively limited when contrasted with studies on other disability groups. The existing literature is dispersed across different disciplines and geographical contexts, making it difficult to develop a comprehensive understanding of the role and impact of parental engagement in this field.

In response to this gap, the present study undertakes a systematic review of existing literature on parental involvement in the education of visually impaired students. By synthesizing empirical and theoretical research findings, this review seeks to identify major themes, methodological approaches, and research gaps related to parental engagement within this educational context.

### **Methodology of the Review**

The present study employs a systematic literature review methodology to examine scholarly research concerning parental involvement in the education of visually impaired students. Systematic reviews are widely recognized as rigorous approaches for synthesizing research evidence because they follow transparent and replicable procedures for identifying, evaluating, and integrating findings from multiple studies (Snyder, 2019).

The literature search was conducted using several academic databases, including ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected because they provide extensive coverage of

research in education, disability studies, and social sciences. The search strategy involved the use of various keywords and combinations of terms such as “parental involvement,” “parental participation,” “family engagement,” “visual impairment,” “blind students,” and “special education.” Boolean operators were used to refine the search and ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies.

The inclusion criteria were established to ensure the relevance and quality of the selected literature. First, only peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and conference papers were considered. Second, studies were required to address parental involvement within the context of visual impairment or blindness. Third, both qualitative and quantitative research studies were included in order to capture diverse methodological perspectives. Finally, the review focused primarily on literature published between 2000 and 2024 to reflect contemporary developments in the field.

Studies were excluded if they focused exclusively on other disability categories without reference to visual impairment or if they lacked sufficient methodological transparency. Duplicate records identified across multiple databases were removed during the screening process.

Following the initial search and screening procedures, the selected articles were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying recurring patterns and conceptual categories across multiple studies through iterative reading and coding of the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this process, several major themes emerged regarding the nature and impact of parental involvement in the education of visually impaired students.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives on Parental Involvement**

Understanding parental involvement in education requires consideration of various theoretical frameworks that explain how family engagement influences student development. One of the most widely recognized models is Epstein’s framework of school–family–community partnerships. Epstein (2011) identifies six key types of parental involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaboration with community resources. This framework highlights that parental engagement extends beyond simple participation in school activities and encompasses broader interactions between families and educational institutions.

Another influential theoretical perspective is Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that children's development occurs within multiple interconnected environmental systems, including family, school, and community contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to this framework, parental involvement represents a critical component of the microsystem that directly influences children's learning experiences and developmental outcomes. Within the context of visual impairment, these theoretical perspectives underscore the importance of collaborative partnerships between families and educational institutions. Because visually impaired students often require specialized instructional approaches and adaptive technologies, effective communication between parents and educators becomes essential for ensuring appropriate educational support.

Moreover, parental attitudes and expectations significantly influence the educational aspirations and self-perceptions of Visually Impaired Students. Positive parental beliefs regarding children's capabilities can foster resilience, motivation, and independence, whereas negative attitudes may contribute to overprotection and reduced opportunities for social participation (Papadopoulos, 2014).

## **Dimensions of Parental Involvement in the Education of Visually Impaired Students Academic Support**

One of the most prominent dimensions of parental involvement relates to academic support provided within the home environment. Parents frequently assist visually impaired children with homework, reading activities, and the use of adaptive learning materials. Because visually impaired students often rely on alternative formats such as Braille, audio resources, and tactile materials, parental assistance becomes crucial for facilitating access to educational content (Ferrell, 2011). Another research indicates that parents who actively monitor their children's academic progress and encourage learning activities at home contribute significantly to improved academic outcomes. Jeynes (2012) reported that parental involvement positively affects students' motivation, school engagement, and academic achievement across multiple educational settings.

### **Emotional and Social Support**

In addition to academic assistance, parents play a vital role in supporting the emotional and social development of visually impaired students. Children with visual impairment may face challenges related to social interaction, self-esteem, and independence due to environmental barriers and limited opportunities for participation in social activities. Parents who provide emotional encouragement and promote social engagement can help mitigate these challenges. Studies suggest that supportive parental relationships foster positive self-concept and psychological wellbeing among visually impaired children (Papadopoulos, 2014).

### **Collaboration with Teachers and Schools**

Effective communication and collaboration between parents and teachers represent another critical aspect of parental involvement. Regular interactions between families and educators enable the sharing of information regarding students' academic progress, learning needs, and support strategies. Such collaborative partnerships facilitate the development of individualized educational plans and enable teachers to better understand the specific challenges faced by visually impaired learners. Research in special education consistently highlights that strong school-family relationships contribute to improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

### **Advocacy and Resource Mobilization**

Parents often act as advocates for their children by seeking appropriate educational resources, assistive technologies, and support services. In many contexts, families must actively engage with educational institutions, government agencies, and disability organizations to secure necessary accommodations for Visually Impaired Students. This advocacy role is particularly significant in regions where educational resources for students with disabilities remain limited. Through active engagement and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, parents can contribute to the improvement of educational opportunities for their children.

### **Barriers to Effective Parental Involvement**

Although parental involvement is widely recognized as beneficial, numerous barriers may restrict parents' ability to participate actively in their children's education. One major challenge relates to socioeconomic

constraints. Families with limited financial resources may struggle to provide assistive devices, transportation, or specialized learning materials required for visually impaired students.

Another significant barrier involves the lack of parental awareness regarding educational strategies and available resources. Parents who have limited knowledge about visual impairment or specialized instructional methods may feel uncertain about how to support their children's learning effectively (Hatlen & Stryker, 2013).

Institutional barriers also contribute to limited parental involvement. In some cases, schools may fail to establish effective communication channels with parents or may not provide adequate opportunities for parental participation in educational decisionmaking processes. Such limitations can create feelings of exclusion among parents and reduce their motivation to engage with educational institutions.

Cultural attitudes toward disability may further influence parental participation. In certain societies, disability continues to be associated with stigma and negative social perceptions, which can discourage families from actively engaging with schools and community institutions.

## **Discussion**

The findings from the reviewed literature highlight the multifaceted nature of parental involvement in the education of visually impaired students. Parents contribute to various aspects of their children's development, including academic learning, emotional wellbeing, and social participation. These contributions are particularly significant because visually impaired learners often rely on supportive home environments to complement school-based instruction.

The literature also emphasizes the importance of collaborative partnerships between families and educational institutions. When parents and teachers work together to support visually impaired students, they can create more inclusive and responsive learning environments that address students' unique needs. However, the persistence of socioeconomic, institutional, and cultural barriers indicates that parental involvement cannot be viewed solely as an individual responsibility. Instead, educational systems must actively facilitate parental participation by providing training programs, accessible information, and opportunities for collaborative engagement.

## **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Educational institutions should implement structured programs aimed at strengthening parental involvement in the education of visually impaired students. Parent training workshops focusing on assistive technologies, Braille literacy, and strategies for supporting learning at home can enhance parental confidence and competence.

Schools should also establish consistent communication mechanisms that encourage regular interaction between parents and educators. Parent-teacher meetings, counselling sessions, and collaborative planning processes can facilitate mutual understanding and shared responsibility for students' educational progress. At the policy level, governments should prioritize inclusive education initiatives that recognize families as key partners in the educational process. Policies should promote access to resources, support services, and information that enable parents to participate actively in their children's education.

## **Conclusion**

Parental involvement represents a critical factor in promoting the educational success and overall development of students with visual impairment. The literature reviewed in this study demonstrates that

active parental engagement positively influences academic achievement, emotional wellbeing, and social integration among visually impaired learners. Despite these benefits, various barriers continue to limit meaningful parental participation in many educational contexts. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from educators, policymakers, and community organizations to create supportive environments that encourage effective school- family partnerships. Future research should focus on developing context specific strategies for enhancing parental involvement, particularly within developing countries where resources for special education may be limited. Such research will contribute to the advancement of inclusive education and improve educational opportunities for students with visual impairment.

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