European Journal of Innovation in Nonformal Education (EJINE)
Volume 6 | Issue 4 | Apr - 2026 ISSN: 2795-8612

Behind Every Great Child is a Parent: Impact of Parental Involvement in the Academic Performance of Students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities

Felixberto Lazaro
Special Education Teacher, Maryland, USA

A B S T R A C T
This study aimed to determine the impact of parental involvement in the academic performance of the students with severe cognitive disabilities as perceived by the special education teachers. This study was quantitative in nature and used a descriptive correlational design. The respondents were 30 special education teachers in Prince George's County, State of Maryland, who handled students with severe cognitive disabilities. Data were collected using standardized survey questionnaires - the Academic Performance in Special Education Questionnaire adopted from Kushwaha and Ahmad (2024), and the Epstein Parental Involvement Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and the chi-square test. The study found that students with severe cognitive disabilities can achieve academic progress through individualized instruction. Parental involvement, especially communication and home support, significantly enhances outcomes. However, gaps in home-school collaboration exist. A strong, coordinated effort between teachers and parents is essential to improve engagement and sustain student success.

A R T I C L E I N F O
Article history:
Received 15 Feb 2026
Received in revised form
15 Mar 2026
Accepted 13 Apr 2026

Keywords: Parental Involvement; Academic Performance; Students with Cognitive Disabilities; Special Education Teachers.

Hosting by Innovatus Publishing Co. All rights reserved. © 2026

Introduction

Parental involvement is a well-established cornerstone of a child's educational success (Kushwaha & Ahmad, 2024). However, for students with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD), this involvement becomes even more crucial due to the unique and multifaceted challenges these students face. According to Oranga et al. (2022), severe cognitive disabilities often result in significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, necessitating individualized educational strategies and sustained support systems. Within this context, the role of parents transcends traditional involvement, evolving into a collaborative partnership with teachers, therapists, and specialists to ensure continuity and consistency in learning and development.

Students with SCD often encounter profound barriers to academic engagement stemming from difficulties in communication, memory, attention, and adaptive functioning. These challenges frequently necessitate the use of individualized education programs (IEPs), specialized instructional methods, and structured support both at home and at school. In such contexts, parental involvement is not merely beneficial but essential to optimizing educational outcomes (Ma, Liu, & Li, 2022). Active parental participation helps bridge the gap between home and school environments, reinforcing targeted learning objectives and fostering skill generalization.

Communication is one of the most significant challenges faced by students with SCD. Armstrong (2020) emphasized that when parents engage in consistent and supportive interactions—using methods such as picture exchange communication systems (PECS), sign language, or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices—they facilitate their child's ability to express needs and interact meaningfully with others. Furthermore, regular and transparent communication between teachers and

families ensures alignment between instructional strategies at school and reinforcement activities at home, enhancing the child's ability to transfer and apply learned skills across contexts.

Greenway and Eaton-Thomas (2020) further noted that students with cognitive disabilities often struggle with frustration, low self-esteem, and limited motivation due to the repeated experience of academic and social challenges. A nurturing home environment that emphasizes emotional support, celebrates small achievements, and promotes a positive attitude toward learning can substantially improve a child's motivation and sense of self-efficacy. When parents actively participate in school functions, therapy sessions, and classroom activities, they contribute to a sense of belonging and emotional security—both of which are essential to learning readiness and sustained engagement.

Whitley et al. (2021) highlighted the crucial role parents play in the IEP process. Their unique understanding of their child's strengths, needs, and behavioral patterns at home provides invaluable insights that help teachers develop more realistic and effective educational goals. Parental advocacy during IEP meetings also ensures that appropriate accommodations, resources, and interventions are in place, thereby promoting equity in educational access and outcomes. In this way, parents act as both collaborators and advocates within the special education system.

Behavioral and emotional improvements often accompany academic progress when strong parental involvement is present. Havrylkevych et al. (2021) found that consistent collaboration between families and schools enables parents to reinforce behavioral management strategies, establish predictable routines, and model adaptive behaviors. Such consistency across home and school environments is particularly critical for children with SCD, who often experience heightened anxiety and resistance to change.

Despite its recognized importance, parental involvement in the education of students with SCD remains inconsistent due to multiple barriers. These may include lack of awareness or training, limited time and financial resources, cultural or linguistic differences, and insufficient collaboration between families and educational institutions (Yadav & Yadav, 2024). This disconnect can result in fragmented support systems, where students receive inconsistent expectations and strategies across settings—ultimately hindering their academic and social development. Addressing these barriers is essential within the broader movement toward inclusive education, which emphasizes the right of all students to equitable and meaningful participation (Sengonul, 2022).

Although students with SCD may not progress at the same rate as their neurotypical peers, research indicates that parental involvement can significantly enhance their educational outcomes. Parents who reinforce learning objectives at home, ensure adherence to therapy and IEP goals, and provide opportunities for functional literacy, numeracy, and communication practice contribute directly to skill retention and generalization (Davis-Lee, 2024). Their active participation helps transform the home environment into an extension of the classroom, promoting continuous learning and developmental growth.

While a substantial body of literature explores the impact of parental involvement on student achievement in general education, much of this research primarily addresses students without disabilities or those with mild to moderate learning challenges. These studies consistently demonstrate that active parental engagement correlates with improved academic performance, motivation, and socio-emotional well-being. However, there remains a notable research gap concerning students with severe cognitive disabilities. Existing studies often aggregate data across various types of disabilities, obscuring the unique experiences and needs of students with SCD. Consequently, the specific forms of parental involvement that yield the most significant academic and behavioral gains for this population remain underexplored. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to how socioeconomic status, cultural context, and systemic inequities shape the capacity of parents of children with SCD to participate fully in their child's education. Addressing these research gaps is critical to developing evidence-based frameworks that support meaningful parental engagement and promote equitable outcomes for all students.

Thus, this study holds critical significance for multiple stakeholders in the field of special education. This research addresses a vital gap by examining how active parental participation contributes to the educational progress of a population that often faces substantial learning barriers and limited academic outcomes. In addition, this study is significant because it not only highlights the transformative role of

parental involvement in improving educational outcomes but also calls attention to the need for systemic support, inclusive practices, and informed collaboration to better serve students with severe cognitive disabilities.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do the special education teachers describe the academic performance of the students with severe cognitive disabilities in terms of functional academic skills; communication abilities; classroom engagement and participation; behavioral and social development; and progress toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals?
2. How do the special education teachers describe the parental involvement in special education of the students with severe cognitive disabilities in terms of home support for learning; participation in school activities; communication with teachers and staff; advocacy and decision-making; and consistency and collaboration between home and school?
3. Is there significant relationship between the academic performance of the students with severe cognitive disabilities and the parental involvement in special education as perceived by the special education teachers?

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives that explain how and why parental involvement influences the academic performance of students with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD): Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement. Together, these frameworks provide both a contextual and practical understanding of the complex interactions that shape student learning and development.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory posits that a child's development occurs within a series of nested environmental systems—the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem—that interact dynamically to influence growth and behavior. The microsystem includes the child's immediate settings, such as home and school, where direct interactions occur. The mesosystem represents the connections between these settings, such as communication between parents and teachers. For students with SCD, these systems are especially significant, as effective collaboration between family members, teachers, and healthcare professionals can determine the consistency and quality of support a child receives.

This theory emphasizes that parental involvement is not an isolated act but part of a broader, interdependent network of relationships and environmental influences. Factors such as school policies, community resources, socioeconomic status, and cultural beliefs all affect how parents participate in their child's education. Therefore, improving outcomes for students with SCD requires coordination and alignment across these systems. Bronfenbrenner's model provides a lens through which to examine how the interaction of these multiple environments contributes to or hinders the educational development of children with severe cognitive disabilities.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community) complements Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach by providing a structured, actionable model for understanding and assessing parental engagement. This framework recognizes that parents contribute to their child's learning in diverse ways—ranging from creating supportive home environments and maintaining communication with teachers to participating in decision-making processes such as Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

For students with SCD, Epstein's model is particularly relevant because it acknowledges that meaningful parental involvement extends beyond academic support. It includes ensuring access to therapeutic services, facilitating adaptive skill development, and advocating for appropriate accommodations and inclusion. The framework helps identify specific domains where parents can engage effectively, and how schools can foster these partnerships through collaboration, training, and communication.

By integrating Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement, this study situates parental engagement within both its systemic context and its

practical manifestations. Bronfenbrenner's theory underscores the importance of environmental interactions and contextual influences, while Epstein's framework translates these influences into concrete behaviors and roles parents can assume. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive foundation for investigating the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance among students with severe cognitive disabilities. They also inform the design of the study's data collection and analysis procedures by highlighting key domains of environmental interaction, collaboration, and parental engagement that are most influential in supporting educational progress.

Methods

This study employed a **quantitative research approach** utilizing a **descriptive–correlational design** to examine the relationship between parental involvement and the academic performance of students with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD). The descriptive component aimed to present a clear profile of the extent of parental involvement and the level of academic performance among students with SCD, while the correlational aspect sought to determine the degree and nature of the relationship between these variables. This design was deemed appropriate because it allows for the analysis of naturally occurring relationships without manipulating variables, thereby providing an accurate representation of existing conditions within the educational setting.

The **respondents** of the study were **30 special education teachers** from **Prince George's County, Maryland**, who were directly involved in teaching and supporting students diagnosed with severe cognitive disabilities. These teachers were selected using purposive sampling, as they possessed specialized knowledge and firsthand experience relevant to the study's objectives. Their insights were essential in providing reliable data on both the level of parental involvement and the corresponding academic performance of their students.

Data collection was conducted through standardized survey instruments. Two main tools were utilized:

1. The **Academic Performance in Special Education Questionnaire**, adapted from Kushwaha and Ahmad (2024), which assessed key dimensions of student academic progress including communication, functional literacy, adaptive behavior, and task engagement.
2. The **Epstein Parental Involvement Questionnaire**, based on Epstein's (2018) Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement, which evaluated the extent of parental participation in domains such as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration.

Both instruments underwent expert validation to ensure content relevance and clarity prior to data administration. Ethical considerations were also observed, including obtaining informed consent from participants and maintaining the confidentiality of all collected information.

Data analysis involved the use of **descriptive and inferential statistical methods**. Measures of central tendency—specifically the **mean** and **standard deviation**—were used to summarize and describe the levels of parental involvement and student academic performance. To determine the presence of a significant relationship between these two variables, the **chi-square (χ^2) test of independence** was employed. This statistical test was appropriate for identifying associations between categorical variables and assessing whether variations in parental involvement corresponded with differences in student academic outcomes.

Results

This section includes presentation of results based from the data collected from the respondents of the study.

Table 1. Academic Performance of the Students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
Functional Academic Skills	3.85	0.56	High
Communication Abilities	3.47	0.62	High

Classroom Engagement and Participation	3.23	0.71	Moderate
Behavioral and Social Development	3.65	0.58	High
Progress Toward IEP Goals	3.90	0.52	High
Overall Academic Performance	**3.62**	**0.60**	**High**

The overall mean score of 3.62 with a standard deviation of 0.60 indicates a high level of academic performance, suggesting that, in general, students with severe cognitive disabilities are demonstrating positive progress in key functional areas under the guidance of their teachers. Among the five indicators, Progress Toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) Goals received the highest mean rating of 3.90, interpreted as high. This finding implies that despite the severity of their disabilities, many students are demonstrating steady progress toward achieving their individualized educational goals. Such progress likely reflects the effectiveness of structured interventions, evidence-based instructional practices, and targeted support strategies that are specifically designed to address their cognitive, behavioral, and adaptive needs. It also suggests that teachers and support staff are successfully implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that emphasize personalized instruction, consistent reinforcement, and close collaboration with parents and specialists. Moreover, the observed improvement may indicate that multi-tiered systems of support and specialized therapeutic services—such as speech, occupational, and behavioral therapies—are contributing positively to students' academic and functional development. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of sustained, data-driven, and collaborative approaches in promoting meaningful educational progress among students with severe cognitive disabilities.

Notably, Classroom Engagement and Participation obtained the lowest mean score of 3.23, which is interpreted as moderate. This result suggests that, while some level of participation is evident, maintaining consistent attention and active involvement among students with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD) remains a persistent challenge. Students with SCD often experience difficulties with sustained focus, task initiation, sensory processing, and social communication—all of which can hinder full engagement in classroom activities. These findings underscore the complexity of promoting active learning within this population and highlight the critical need for differentiated instruction, multisensory learning approaches, and individualized behavioral supports that can enhance motivation and participation.

Furthermore, the moderate rating may also indicate that teachers require additional resources, training, and collaborative support to effectively implement engagement-focused interventions. Strategies such as visual schedules, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools, task segmentation, and positive reinforcement systems can be instrumental in promoting participation. Collaboration between teachers, therapists, and families can further ensure consistency in engagement strategies across home and school environments. Overall, this finding emphasizes the importance of designing adaptive, student-centered learning experiences that align with each learner's abilities and interests, thereby fostering greater inclusion, active participation, and academic growth among students with severe cognitive disabilities.

Table 2. Parental Involvement in Special education of the Students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Home Support for Learning	3.75	0.61	High
2. Participation in School Activities	3.42	0.68	High
3. Communication with Teachers and Staff	3.88	0.55	High
4. Advocacy and Decision-Making	3.56	0.59	High
5. Consistency and Collaboration Between Home and School	3.34	0.66	Moderate
Overall Parental Involvement	**3.59**	**0.62**	**High**

The overall mean score of 3.59 with a standard deviation of 0.62 indicates that parental involvement is

generally high, suggesting that most parents are actively engaged in supporting their children's education—particularly in domains that directly influence learning, behavior, and developmental outcomes. This finding reflects a positive home–school partnership and underscores the value many parents place on their child's educational progress despite the challenges associated with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD). High parental engagement may also indicate strong awareness among families regarding the importance of collaboration, advocacy, and continuity of support in promoting meaningful educational outcomes for students with SCD.

Among the indicators, Communication with Teachers and Staff obtained the highest mean score (M = 3.88), interpreted as high. This suggests that parents frequently engage in open and regular communication with teachers, therapists, and other school personnel. Such communication is crucial for aligning instructional goals, sharing updates on student progress, and ensuring consistency in behavior management and teaching strategies between the home and school environments. Frequent contact also enables early identification of challenges, timely interventions, and collaborative problem-solving—factors that are particularly vital for students requiring highly individualized educational support.

Home Support for Learning followed closely, with a mean score of 3.75, also interpreted as high. This finding implies that many parents are providing instructional, emotional, and motivational support within the home setting. Activities such as assisting with communication practice, reinforcing academic concepts, and promoting self-help or adaptive skills contribute significantly to their child's progress. This high level of engagement at home demonstrates parents' commitment to reinforcing classroom learning, aligning with Epstein's (2018) framework which emphasizes the pivotal role of family–school partnerships in student development.

Similarly, Advocacy and Decision-Making (M = 3.56) and Participation in School Activities (M = 3.42) were both rated as high, indicating that parents are not only supportive at home but also play active roles in school-based initiatives. This reflects their willingness to collaborate with teachers in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, attend meetings or training sessions, and advocate for appropriate accommodations and services for their children. Such advocacy ensures that students receive the necessary resources and individualized attention to address their unique learning and developmental needs.

In contrast, the lowest rating was observed in Consistency and Collaboration Between Home and School with a mean score of 3.34, interpreted as moderate. This suggests that while communication channels exist, there may be difficulties in maintaining consistent implementation of strategies, routines, and behavioral expectations across both settings. This inconsistency could stem from factors such as limited time, lack of alignment between parental and school priorities, or insufficient guidance on how to extend school-based interventions into the home environment. Inconsistencies between home and school can hinder the generalization of learned behaviors and skills, reducing the overall impact of intervention programs and the effectiveness of the IEP process.

Overall, these findings highlight the strength of parental commitment and ongoing collaboration within the educational framework for students with SCD, while also revealing areas that require enhancement. Strengthening home–school collaboration through regular feedback loops, parent training sessions, and joint planning of intervention strategies could help bridge existing gaps. By fostering a more seamless partnership between parents and teachers, schools can enhance continuity, promote skill generalization, and ultimately improve academic and developmental outcomes for students with severe cognitive disabilities.

Table 3. Significant relationship between the academic performance of the students with severe cognitive disabilities and the parental involvement in special education as perceived by the special education teachers

Variables	Statistical Test	Computed Value	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Academic Performance vs. Parental Involvement	Chi-square Test	10.45	0.031	Significant Relationship	Reject Null Hypothesis

The computed chi-square (χ^2) value of 10.45 with a p-value of 0.031, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicates a statistically significant relationship between academic performance and parental involvement among students with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD). This result suggests that variations in students' academic outcomes are meaningfully associated with the degree of parental engagement they receive. In other words, higher levels of parental involvement correspond to better academic performance, as perceived and reported by their teachers.

This finding reinforces the long-standing view in educational research that active parental participation plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning and development, particularly for children with special needs. Consistent with Epstein's Framework of Parental Involvement, families who maintain regular communication with teachers, provide home-based learning support, and participate in decision-making processes contribute significantly to improved student motivation, engagement, and achievement. Within the context of SCD, where individualized and intensive interventions are required, sustained parental involvement ensures greater continuity between school-based instruction and home reinforcement—an essential factor for the generalization and retention of learned skills.

Furthermore, this significant relationship aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that child development is influenced by the dynamic interactions between various environmental systems, particularly those within the microsystem such as the family and school. The finding underscores that when these systems operate collaboratively—through shared communication, aligned expectations, and mutual support—students with SCD are more likely to experience positive academic and behavioral outcomes.

The statistical significance of this relationship also highlights the practical importance of fostering strong home–school partnerships. Schools may enhance student performance by implementing structured programs that promote parental engagement, such as training sessions on supporting learning at home, regular progress meetings, and accessible communication platforms for parents. Conversely, limited or inconsistent parental involvement may hinder the effectiveness of individualized education programs (IEPs) and reduce opportunities for skill reinforcement beyond the classroom.

In summary, the chi-square analysis provides empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis that parental involvement is a key determinant of academic success among students with severe cognitive disabilities. This underscores the need for teachers, administrators, and policymakers to strengthen initiatives that empower parents as active collaborators in the educational process, thereby fostering more holistic and sustainable learning outcomes for this population.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD), as assessed by their special education teachers, demonstrate a high level of academic performance across key learning domains. The overall mean score of 3.62 (SD = 0.60) supports the assertion that structured support systems, individualized instruction, and evidence-based interventions positively influence student learning outcomes. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of tailored educational programs in improving both academic and adaptive functioning among students with significant cognitive impairments (Kushwaha & Ahmad, 2024; Ma, Liu, & Li, 2022).

Most notably, the domain of Progress Toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) Goals achieved the highest mean score (M = 3.90), highlighting that individualized and goal-oriented instruction continues to serve as a powerful framework for fostering measurable academic growth in students with severe cognitive disabilities. This suggests that when instruction is systematically adapted to students' unique strengths, needs, and learning profiles, meaningful progress can be attained even among students with substantial cognitive challenges. The strong performance in this area reflects effective collaboration among teachers, therapists, and families in implementing and monitoring IEP goals—a key tenet of high-quality special education practice.

However, the domain of Classroom Engagement and Participation received the lowest mean score (M = 3.23), interpreted as moderate. This finding underscores one of the most persistent challenges in special education: maintaining the sustained attention, motivation, and active involvement of students with severe

disabilities in classroom activities. Factors such as limited attention span, behavioral difficulties, communication barriers, and sensory sensitivities may contribute to reduced engagement levels. This trend highlights the need for teachers to implement innovative, differentiated, and multisensory instructional approaches—including the use of visual supports, technology-assisted tools, movement-based learning, and interest-driven activities—to enhance participation. Additionally, consistent use of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and individualized reinforcement strategies may help increase student responsiveness and participation over time.

In relation to parental involvement, the study revealed an overall high engagement level with a mean score of 3.59 (SD = 0.62). This suggests that parents of students with severe cognitive disabilities are highly committed to supporting their children's education and collaborate actively with teachers. The highest-rated dimension, Communication with Teachers and Staff (M = 3.88), indicates that parents maintain regular, open, and constructive communication with school personnel. This interaction is vital for ensuring continuity between school-based and home-based interventions and aligns with Epstein's (2018) framework, which identifies communication as a foundational component of effective family–school partnerships.

Furthermore, high ratings in Home Support for Learning (M = 3.75) and Advocacy and Decision-Making (M = 3.56) suggest that parents not only reinforce learning at home but also play proactive roles in ensuring their children receive appropriate accommodations and services. Such engagement is essential in the context of SCD, where parental advocacy often drives access to specialized supports, therapy services, and adaptive technologies. The finding reflects a growing recognition among parents of their role as co-teachers and advocates within the special education process.

Despite these positive indicators, the area of Consistency and Collaboration Between Home and School was rated as moderate (M = 3.34). This implies that although communication may be frequent, the alignment of educational strategies, behavioral interventions, and learning routines between home and school environments may be inconsistent. This lack of alignment could limit the generalization of learned skills across settings—a crucial aspect of learning for students with severe cognitive disabilities. To address this gap, schools may consider establishing structured collaboration mechanisms, such as home–school communication journals, regular IEP review meetings, parent coaching programs, and family training sessions designed to help parents apply school-based strategies at home. Enhancing this bidirectional collaboration can create greater consistency in expectations, reinforce skill transfer, and promote holistic student development.

Importantly, the chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 10.45$, $p = 0.031$) revealed a statistically significant relationship between academic performance and parental involvement, confirming that higher levels of parental engagement are associated with better academic outcomes among students with severe cognitive disabilities. This finding provides empirical support for the central role of parental involvement as a determinant of student success and aligns with both Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement. Within Bronfenbrenner's framework, this relationship illustrates the powerful influence of interactions within the microsystem (home and school) and the mesosystem (linkages between them) on child development. Within Epstein's framework, it validates the importance of comprehensive parental engagement across multiple domains—including communication, learning at home, and decision-making—in fostering positive academic outcomes.

Overall, these findings emphasize that academic achievement for students with severe cognitive disabilities is not solely dependent on school-based interventions, but is significantly enhanced when parents and teachers function as collaborative partners. Strengthening this partnership through consistent communication, mutual goal-setting, and shared accountability is essential for sustaining student progress. The study thereby reinforces the need for systemic support structures that empower parents, equip teachers, and ensure the continuity of individualized learning across all environments in which the child learns and develops.

Conclusions

This study concludes that students with severe cognitive disabilities (SCD) are capable of achieving meaningful and measurable academic progress when provided with structured, individualized, and

supportive instruction. The consistently high ratings in the domain of Progress Toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) Goals highlight the effectiveness of targeted instructional strategies and evidence-based interventions in addressing each learner's unique cognitive and adaptive needs. These results affirm that when instruction is intentionally aligned with students' strengths, goals, and learning profiles, it fosters greater engagement, skill acquisition, and confidence in their ability to learn.

However, the relatively lower performance in Classroom Engagement and Participation indicates that maintaining active and sustained involvement among students with SCD remains a persistent challenge. Factors such as limited attention span, communication barriers, and sensory processing difficulties may hinder participation. This finding underscores the necessity for teachers to adopt innovative, flexible, and multisensory instructional methods that promote motivation, autonomy, and sustained attention. Integrating assistive technologies, visual supports, movement-based activities, and interest-driven learning opportunities can enhance engagement while accommodating diverse learning needs.

The study also established that parental involvement among families of students with SCD is generally high, particularly in areas of communication with teachers and home support for learning. These findings affirm the essential role of parents as active partners and advocates in the educational process. Frequent communication and collaboration between parents and teachers help ensure the alignment of instructional strategies and behavioral supports across home and school environments. Such engagement not only enhances academic progress but also strengthens the emotional and social development of students with severe cognitive disabilities.

Despite these positive indicators, the moderate ratings in Consistency and Collaboration Between Home and School suggest that gaps persist in maintaining seamless coordination between settings. This inconsistency may result in fragmented learning experiences and reduced generalization of skills outside the classroom. To address this, schools should implement systematic collaboration mechanisms, such as structured parent–teacher conferences, home–school communication journals, regular progress updates, and family training sessions to equip parents with strategies for reinforcing learning at home. Ensuring consistent expectations, communication, and intervention practices across environments is essential to maximizing the effectiveness of individualized education programs.

Most importantly, the study found a statistically significant relationship between academic performance and parental involvement ($\chi^2 = 10.45$, $p = 0.031$), confirming that higher levels of parental engagement are associated with better academic outcomes. This finding reinforces the interconnectedness of instructional design and family participation as key components of student success. It also validates the principles of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Epstein's Framework of Parental Involvement, both of which emphasize the vital role of collaborative environmental systems—particularly the interaction between home and school—in shaping a child's developmental and educational trajectory.

In essence, the study highlights that the academic success of students with severe cognitive disabilities is most effectively achieved through a unified partnership between teachers and parents. Schools and families must work together to create consistent, supportive, and responsive learning environments that transcend classroom boundaries. Future educational programs and interventions should continue to build upon this synergy by developing parent-focused engagement initiatives, teacher training on family collaboration, and inclusive policy frameworks that prioritize communication, shared decision-making, and joint accountability. Through these efforts, the education system can more effectively empower students with severe cognitive disabilities to reach their full potential and participate meaningfully in their learning journeys.

References

1. Armstrong, D. (2020). Power and partnership in education: Parents, children and special educational needs. Routledge.
2. Davis-Lee, E. D. (2024). Parental Involvement of African American Male Students with Cognitive Disabilities Transition to Adulthood Post-High School (Doctoral dissertation, Grand Canyon University).
3. Greenway, C. W., & Eaton-Thomas, K. (2020). Parent experiences of home-schooling children with

special educational needs or disabilities during the coronavirus pandemic. British Journal of Special Education, 47(4), 510-535.

4. Havrylkevych, V., Podkorytova, L., Danylchuk, L., Romanovska, L., Kravchyna, T., & Chovgan, O. (2021). Psychological Correction of Parents' Attitude to Their Children with Special Educational Needs by Means of Art Therapy. BRAIN. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience, 12(1), 156-171.
5. Kushwaha, R. K., & Ahmad, S. (2024). Parental Influence on the Academic Performance of Children With Mild Intellectual Disability. US-China Education Review, 14(5), 319-328.
6. Ma, L., Liu, J., & Li, B. (2022). The association between teacher-student relationship and academic achievement: The moderating effect of parental involvement. Psychology in the Schools, 59(2), 281-296.
7. Oranga, J., Obuba, E., Sore, I., & Boinett, F. (2022). Parental involvement in the education of students with intellectual disabilities in Kenya. Open Access Library Journal, 9(4), 1-18.
8. Sengonul, T. (2022). A Review of the Relationship between Parental Involvement and Children's Academic Achievement and the Role of Family Socioeconomic Status in This Relationship. Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction, 12(2), 32-57.
9. Whitley, J., Matheson, I., Specht, J., & MacCormack, J. (2021). Perspectives of parents of children with special educational needs: Self-efficacy and school supports during COVID-19. Exceptionality Education International, 31(1), 97-114.
10. Yadav, M., & Yadav, M. B. (2024). The Impact of Parental Involvement and Awareness on the Academic Progress of Students with Learning Disabilities: Case Studies In Ranchi District. BSSS Journal of Education. https://doi. org/10.51767/je1307.