

## 7. Involving a pupil's family in supporting learning

Children do their best at school when families take a close interest and provide support for their schooling. It is important to recognise that families can take many different forms beyond the traditional two parent family. Many children are reared by grandparents, single parents (mothers especially) as well as child-headed households. Here we use the term 'parent' to mean any of the individuals with parenting responsibilities for a child.

Partnership between teachers and parents is especially important for children with disabilities. Families are often stigmatised when a child is born with a disability, and this can lead to many other problems. Teachers and schools are well placed to help address many of these problems.

Here are some key messages to bear in mind to help you think about how you can work effectively with pupils' family members:

- Pupils do best in school when teachers and parents work in partnership
- Talking with parents provides an opportunity for you to try to change negative attitudes and nurture positive ones
- Parents can be supported in low-cost ways, e.g. through giving them information, advice and guidance, or arranging contact with other parents
- Parents know their child's likes and dislikes; their talents as well as their weaknesses. This means they can help the school understand how best to support a pupil.
- Pupils spend most of their time with their family, even during term time. This provides a lot of time for families to support pupils' learning.

Parents are a valuable source of advice and support for teachers and other professionals involved with a pupil.



### What can you do in your role as a teacher to involve parents?

- Encourage attendance at parent-teacher meetings
- Invite parents to planning meetings to discuss a child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and progress in school
- Remind parents to assist with their child's homework

## Reference:

Adapted from:

Mariga, L., McConkey, R. and Myezwa, H. (2014) *Inclusive Education in Low-Income Countries: A resource book for teacher educators, parent trainers and community development workers*. Cape Town: Atlas Alliance and Disability Innovations Africa.  
[https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Inclusive\\_Education\\_in\\_Low\\_Income\\_Countries.pdf](https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Inclusive_Education_in_Low_Income_Countries.pdf)

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