

**TEACHER-PARENT COLLABORATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE
SKILLS AMONG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: A CASE OF DORNA CENTRE,
KAMPALA - UGANDA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Nakawesa Swabra, do hereby declare that this research is my own original work. To the best of my knowledge, it has never been presented to any institution of higher learning for an academic award. Any material that is not my original work, authors have been acknowledged.

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation titled *Teacher-Parent Collaboration on the Development of Life Skills among Children with Autism: A Case of Dorna Centre, Kampala - Uganda* was carried out under our supervision and is hereby submitted to the Academic Board in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Master's Degree of Disability Studies and Inclusive Development of Kyambogo University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my family, friends and classmates for their support and guidance.

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ACRONYMS

ASD:	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CDLSA:	Children's Development of Life Skills in Autism
DCHA:	Dorna Centre Home for Autism
ECD:	Early Childhood Development (if applicable based on child age group)
IDLS:	Individual Development of Life Skills
IE:	Inclusive Education
LS:	Life Skills
PCD:	Parent–Child Development
PWDs:	Persons with Disabilities
SPED:	Special Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explored teacher-parent collaboration in the development of life skills among children with autism at the Dorna Centre Home for Autism in Kampala, Uganda. The research was motivated by the recognition that children with autism often require intensive, consistent, and coordinated support across school and home to acquire essential life skills for independent functioning. Given the limited empirical understanding of this collaboration, the study sought to find out the specific social and daily living skills provided, explore the strategies used for collaboration, identify the facilitating factors, and examine the challenges faced. A qualitative research approach using an exploratory case study design was employed, involving ten teachers and ten parents purposively selected from the Centre. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, document review, and non-participant observation, and was analysed thematically. The findings revealed that both teachers and parents actively contributed to developing skills such as communication, self-care, emotional regulation, and interpersonal interaction. Collaborative strategies employed included consistent communication, regular meetings, joint planning, and shared goal-setting. The study established that factors like mutual respect, commitment to children's progress, positive attitudes, and school administration support greatly enhanced effective collaboration. However, several challenges were identified, including limited time, inadequate resources, differing expectations, and communication barriers stemming from a lack of technical autism knowledge. The study concluded that teacher-parent collaboration is a critical determinant of successful life skills development among children with autism. Nonetheless, systemic and interpersonal challenges continue to hinder optimal collaboration. The study recommends the establishment of structured communication channels, the provision of regular capacity-building sessions on autism management, and increased resource allocation. It further calls for the development of clear institutional policies to promote inclusive partnerships and a shared understanding of roles. Strengthening this collaboration is essential for improving learning outcomes and advancing inclusive education practices in Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study examined teacher-parent collaboration on the development of life skills among children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism. Collaboration between teachers and parents is a fundamental pillar in the education and holistic development of children with special needs. For children with autism, whose learning and social experiences often require consistent structure and reinforcement both at school and at home, collaboration between educators and parents plays an indispensable role in fostering communication, adaptability, and independence. This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, scope, and significance of the study.

The increasing prevalence of autism globally and within Uganda underscores the need for effective educational practices that promote inclusion, development, and skill acquisition. The Dorna Centre Home for Autism, located in Kampala, provides a unique learning environment where teachers and parents actively engage in supporting learners' development. However, the degree and effectiveness of such collaboration remain underexplored, especially concerning life skills training, which is essential for promoting autonomy and participation in daily activities. This research seeks to fill that gap by investigating how teachers and parents collaborate to enhance the acquisition of life skills among children with autism.

1.2 Background to the Study

The background to this study is presented under four major perspectives: historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual perspectives. Each section builds an understanding of how teacher-parent collaboration has evolved and its relevance to children with autism in Uganda.

1.2.1 Historical Perspective

The history of collaboration between parents and teachers in the education of children with disabilities dates back to the early 20th century. Initially, children with autism and other developmental disorders were often excluded from mainstream education systems due to societal misconceptions and limited understanding of their abilities. In the 1940s and 1950s, autism was first identified as a distinct developmental condition by Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger, leading to increased awareness of the specialized support these children required (Kanner, 1943). However, educational interventions remained largely institutional and teacher-centered, with minimal involvement from parents.

By the 1970s, with the global rise of the disability rights movement and the shift toward inclusive education, parents began to play a more significant role in advocating for their children's educational rights. Legislation such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (later the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA, 1990) in the United States institutionalized parental involvement as a legal requirement in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). These legal frameworks emphasized that parents are partners in decision-making regarding their children's education, thereby formalizing the concept of teacher-parent collaboration.

In Europe and North America, the 1980s and 1990s saw the integration of structured programs emphasizing home-school partnerships, such as the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children) program, which combined structured teaching with parent participation (Schopler & Mesibov, 1986). These programs demonstrated that consistent

collaboration between teachers and parents could significantly improve functional skills, communication, and adaptive behaviors among children with autism.

In Africa, awareness and formal education for children with autism began to take root in the late 20th century, mainly influenced by international policies such as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), which called for inclusive education for all learners. In Uganda, the establishment of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy in 1997 and the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2006 underscored the government's commitment to inclusive education. However, the practical implementation of teacher-parent collaboration remains inconsistent due to limited resources, lack of awareness, and cultural misconceptions about autism.

At institutions such as Dorna Centre Home for Autism, the recognition of parents as crucial partners in children's development is relatively recent but growing. Over time, the Centre has adopted approaches that emphasize communication, consistency, and reinforcement between school and home environments. Historically, this evolution from isolation to inclusion and partnership reflects a paradigm shift towards community-based support for children with autism.

1.2.2 Theoretical Perspective

This study was guided by two theories: Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory (1994) and Oliver's Social Model of Disability (1983). These theoretical lenses provide insight into how the collaboration between teachers and parents influences the development of life skills among children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism in Uganda.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory emphasizes that human development is a result of reciprocal interactions between an individual and their surrounding environments, which are organized into nested systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Each system plays a unique role in

shaping developmental outcomes and is highly relevant to understanding the context in which children with autism grow and learn.

The microsystem includes the child's immediate environments like home and school, where parents and teachers play key roles in daily life skill development. The mesosystem focuses on the interaction between these environments especially the collaboration between parents and teachers which enhances consistency in skill-building. The exosystem involves external influences, such as parents' work demands or teachers' access to training, which indirectly affect the child's development. The macrosystem reflects broader cultural and societal factors, including prevailing attitudes toward autism and disability in Uganda. Lastly, the chronosystem accounts for the role of time, emphasizing the importance of continuous support and the impact of life transitions and policy changes on the child's growth.

Furthermore, the exosystem consists of broader contexts that indirectly impact the child, such as workplace policies that affect parental availability for school involvement. The macrosystem reflects broader cultural values and societal attitudes toward disability and inclusive education. In Uganda, these cultural factors shape perceptions of autism and influence parental engagement in educational processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The chronosystem introduces the dimension of time, recognizing that developmental outcomes are affected by the timing and continuity of environmental interactions (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Therefore, this theory serves as a structural framework for analysing how collaborative dynamics within and across ecological systems influence the development of life skills in children with autism.

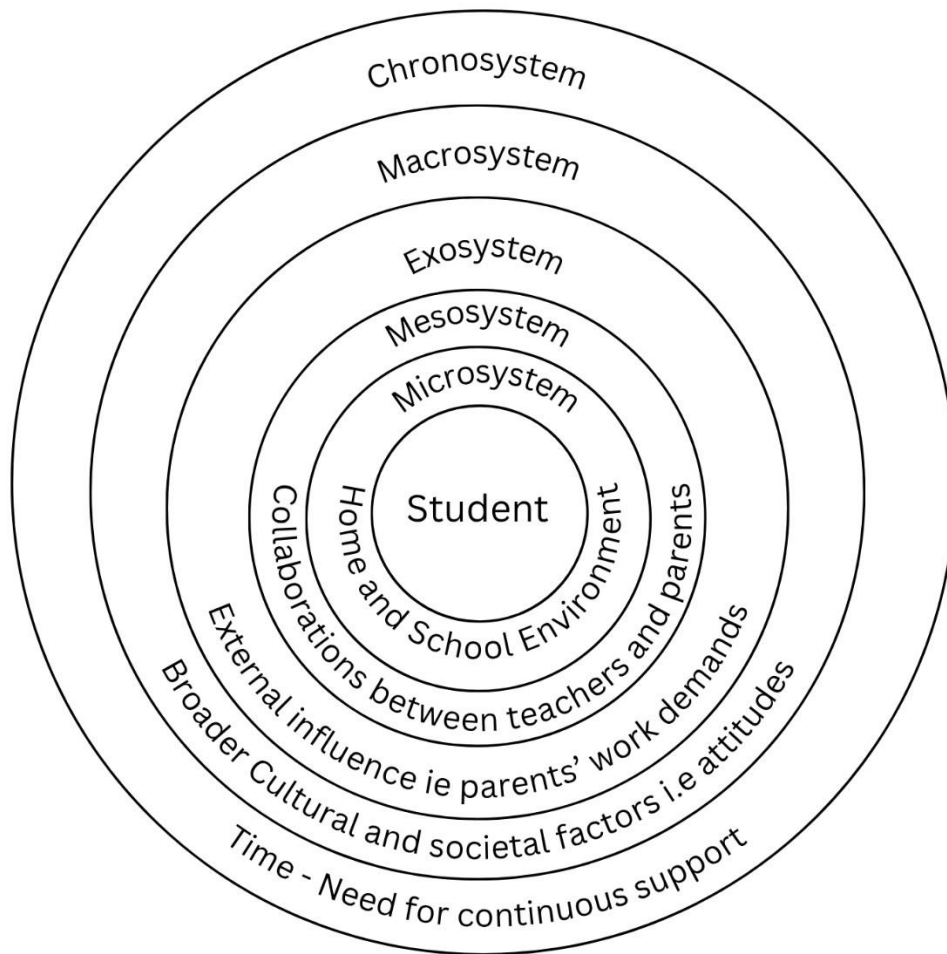


Figure 1: Illustration of Bronfenbrenner's theory

Conversely, Oliver's (1983) Social Model of Disability challenges the conventional medical perspective that views disability as an inherent trait of the individual. Instead, it asserts that disability arises from social, environmental, and attitudinal barriers that hinder participation and access. This model advocates for systemic change and the creation of inclusive environments that empower individuals with disabilities.

In the context of Dorna Centre Home for Autism, this model redirects attention from the limitations faced by children with autism to the constraints posed by their surrounding environments and systems. From this viewpoint, the collaborative partnership between teachers and parents serves as a mechanism for eliminating barriers to life skill development. Such

collaboration facilitates tailored, inclusive strategies that enhance autonomy, communication, and adaptive behavior, thereby enabling children to flourish in both educational and community settings (Oliver, 1983).

By acknowledging that children with autism are more disabled by structural inaccessibility and insufficient support than by their neurological differences, the Social Model emphasizes the necessity for proactive involvement from both educators and families to foster enabling conditions (Zarb and Oliver 1993).

Together, Bronfenbrenner's Bio ecological Systems Theory and Oliver's Social Model of Disability provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and improving teacherparent collaboration in fostering life skills development for children with autism. While Bronfenbrenner's theory highlights the interconnected environmental systems influencing development, Oliver's model focuses on dismantling societal barriers that restrict participation and growth.

Ultimately, these theories highlight the significance of inclusive, sustained, and systemic collaboration. The integration of these perspectives supports an ecological and socially responsive approach to nurturing life skills in children with autism, ensuring that their development is not limited by environmental or societal constraints

1.2.3 Conceptual Perspective

This study has three guiding concepts, which are teacher-parent collaboration, life skills, and children with autism. Teacher-parent collaboration means active, structured and two-way collaboration between educators and parents to contribute to a child's academic, social, and emotional growth. It's where the two people have to communicate with each other, decide together, participate in individualized learning planning and support one another when applying the strategies to learn. Trust, respect, shared responsibility, and regular channels of communication are prerequisites for successful

collaboration (Hornby, 2011). Life skills development refers to the concrete skills needed of successful life as well as the ability to function productively in daily life. Life skills are defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 1997) as adaptive and positive behavior skills for coping with needs and problems in life. Life skills of children with autism involve social skills (talking, interacting and working with others) and personal care and hygiene activities such as bathing, feeding, dressing and self regulation behaviors. These are skills that are essential for their independence and integration into society. Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) face numerous challenges with communication, socialization, and behavioral flexibility. Different children have different capacities, and thus unique needs, meaning that interventions need to cater to an individual based approach that requires intervention in education and family support. Thus, the partnership between teachers and parents represents a pivotal mechanism for creating similar learning experiences in every context. Theoretically, these three constructs are the same because the relationship between them exists as teacher and parent partnership has an effect on the development of those life skills. This partnership is manifested by communication, joint planning and uniformity of at-home and at-school approach. The model suggests a strong assumption supporting the role of collaboration in improving the learning and use of life skills, and ensuring that children with autism become able to become autonomous with inclusion.

1.2.4 Contextual Perspective

Though Uganda is a country that has come to attention regarding the education of children with autism in the past few years, awareness is limited, resources are low, and professional training and skills have not been sufficiently provided. The Dorna Centre Home for Autism is a leading institution focused on autism education, therapy and training available in Kampala. Founded to serve both mainstream education and special needs programs, Dorna Centre's programmes are targeted to support both academic and functional needs. In this

environment, an integrated approach of teacher-parent cooperation is a key tenet of Dorna Centre. Individualized learning programmes for the parents are devised by teachers at the Centre and passed on to them who will be led to reinforce these at home. Parents, who provide insight into their children's progress, behaviour and problems outside of school, in turn. Although there has been a structured relationship, anecdotal data and preliminary evidence provide insight on some of the parent engagement and the persistence of follow up in home environments. Collaboration patterns, also, vary in a Ugandan cultural context. In many communities, misconceptions about autism remain, with some parents initially linking the condition with curses or supernatural causes. These myths can impede earlier intervention and continued parental involvement. In addition, socioeconomic factors such as lack of time and money are generally associated with parents' limited engagement in school programs. In contrast, there is a strong case for the need for improved institutional support with teachers in responding to teachers with heavy workloads, reduced autism-specific teaching practices and insufficient system support. Hence, although the policy framework driven by the Persons with Disabilities Act (2006) and the Education White Paper (1992) promotes inclusive education, the implementation of collaborative approaches within school policies must be bolstered. Dorna Centre serves as an interesting case to examine the practice of teacher-parent collaboration, the difficulties faced and the impact on the development of life skills for children on the autism spectrum in Uganda as it evolves.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The development of life skills among children with autism requires consistent reinforcement and coordinated strategies between home and school. Teachers play a central role in structuring learning experiences, while parents provide continuity and reinforcement of these skills in the home environment. However, despite recognition of the importance of collaboration, evidence from

institutions such as Dorna Centre indicates inconsistencies in teacher-parent engagement. Some parents are deeply involved in supporting their children's development, while others have limited participation due to work commitments, lack of knowledge, or stigma associated with autism. Similarly, teachers may face challenges in maintaining regular communication or adapting teaching strategies to align with home practices.

These inconsistencies contribute to slow progress in life skills development, as children often experience fragmented learning between school and home. The lack of synchronized support reduces the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance independence, communication, and social functioning. Therefore, there is a pressing need to explore how teachers and parents collaborate in promoting life skills development, the strategies they use, the challenges they encounter, and the outcomes of such collaboration at Dorna Centre Home for Autism.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers and parents collaborate in the development of life skills among children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism.

1.5 Specific Objectives

- To examine the types of social and daily living skills developed among children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism.
- To explore the strategies used by teachers and parents in collaborating to develop life skills among children with autism.
- To identify factors that facilitate effective teacher-parent collaboration in developing life skills among children with autism.
- To analyze the challenges faced by teachers and parents in collaborating on the development of life skills among children with autism.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What types of social and daily living skills are developed among children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism?
2. What strategies are used by teachers and parents to collaborate in developing life skills among children with autism?
3. What factors facilitate effective collaboration between teachers and parents in developing life skills among children with autism?
4. What challenges do teachers and parents face in collaborating on the development of life skills among children with autism?

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted at Dorna Centre Home for Autism, located in Kampala District, Uganda. The Centre was selected because it is one of the leading institutions providing specialized education and therapy for children with autism in Uganda and actively involves parents in the learning process.

1.7.2 Content Scope

The study focused on teacher-parent collaboration as the independent variable and the development of life skills (social and daily living skills) as the dependent variable. It covered areas such as types of life skills taught, collaboration strategies, facilitating factors, and challenges encountered in implementing collaboration.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study covered the period between 2020 and 2025, during which Dorna Centre implemented various parent engagement initiatives. This timeframe was chosen to capture recent trends and the impact of teacher-parent collaboration practices in promoting life skills development.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to benefit various stakeholders:

To Teachers: The study will provide insights into effective collaboration strategies that can enhance their engagement with parents and improve instructional outcomes for children with autism.

To Parents: The research will highlight the importance of home–school consistency and equip parents with knowledge on how to reinforce life skills training at home.

To Policy Makers: The study will inform the Ministry of Education and relevant agencies about the need to strengthen teacher-parent partnerships in special needs education policies and training programs.

To Institutions: For Dorna Centre and similar institutions, the findings will serve as a basis for refining programs that promote structured collaboration and holistic child development.

To Researchers and Academics: The study will contribute to the growing body of literature on autism education in Uganda and provide a foundation for further research into inclusive and collaborative educational practices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews literature related to teacher-parent collaboration on the development of life skills among children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The review identifies how collaboration supports the acquisition of social and daily living skills, examines strategies used to strengthen collaboration, analyzes factors that facilitate collaboration, and discusses challenges that constrain effective partnerships. The review compares and contrasts findings across global, regional, and Ugandan contexts, identifies gaps in previous research, and links each theme to the study objectives. The discussion integrates theoretical insights from Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory (1994) and Oliver's Social Model of Disability (1983) to interpret the interaction between families, schools, and societal structures in promoting inclusion and functional independence among children with autism.

2.2 Social and Daily Living Skills Provided by Teachers and Parents to Children with Autism

2.2.1 Social Skill Development

Children with ASD often face persistent difficulties in social communication, joint attention, and perspective-taking (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Parental involvement enhances the acquisition of these competencies through responsive communication, modeling, and reinforcement at home (Smith et al., 2020; Wainer et al., 2021). Teachers, on the other hand, employ structured interventions such as peer-mediated instruction, social narratives, and video modeling, which provide controlled opportunities for practice and feedback (White et al., 2019; Odom et al., 2021).

While these interventions appear complementary, several studies highlight that sustained generalization of social skills occurs only when parents and teachers coordinate approaches (Kasari

et al., 2018; Sam et al., 2022). For instance, home reinforcement of social story themes introduced at school strengthens contextual understanding. However, many programs are implemented in isolation, limiting cross-setting transfer of skills. The literature thus underscores a gap in synchronized intervention planning between home and school environments.

2.2.2 Daily Living Skills and Independence Training

Daily living skills such as self-care, time management, and household routines—represent foundational competencies for autonomy. Teachers embed these within Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through structured instruction, task analysis, and use of visual schedules (Matson & Neal, 2020; Hume et al., 2021). Parents reinforce these skills in natural contexts, allowing for repeated practice and adaptation (Pfeiffer et al., 2019). Studies show that consistency between classroom and home instruction accelerates mastery (Koegel et al., 2019).

Recent evidence emphasizes occupation-based interventions combining sensory integration, motor coordination, and adaptive behavior training (Watling & Hauer, 2018; Boyd et al., 2021). Yet, limited research in Uganda has examined how teachers and parents jointly support these areas. Most interventions remain urban-centered and resource-intensive. Therefore, there is a need for low-cost, culturally appropriate strategies for developing daily living skills in local autism centers.

2.2.3 Critical Evaluation

The reviewed studies consistently affirm the benefits of parental engagement and teacher scaffolding; however, most are experimental or quantitative, emphasizing outcomes over relational processes. Few explore how collaboration unfolds for instance, how disagreements are resolved or how cultural beliefs shape expectations. This highlights the necessity of qualitative inquiry to capture lived experiences of teachers and parents in Ugandan contexts such as Dorna Centre Home for Autism.

2.3 Strategies Used by Teachers and Parents to Collaborate in Developing Social and Daily Living Skills

2.3.1 Communication and Information Sharing

Effective collaboration depends on structured communication systems that ensure both parties remain informed about the child's progress (Hedges et al., 2018). Tools such as daily logs, communication books, and mobile applications enable real-time feedback. While Lo (2018) notes that digital platforms enhance transparency, Tucker and Schwartz (2013) caution that technology cannot replace relational trust. Ugandan studies (Nakayiza & Okello, 2022) report that face-to-face meetings remain essential, especially where digital literacy is limited.

2.3.2 Parent Capacity-Building and Teacher Professional Development

Parent training programs emphasizing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and positive behavior support equip caregivers to reinforce school-taught behaviors (Brookman-Frazee et al., 2021). Similarly, teachers benefit from continuous professional development on family engagement and cultural competence (Shepherd et al., 2018). Comparative research in Kenya and South Africa shows that when both groups receive joint training, alignment of goals and methods significantly improves (Mutua & Kiarie, 2020). Yet, Ugandan programs often focus solely on classroom pedagogy, neglecting collaborative communication.

2.3.3 Joint Goal-Setting and Individualized Education Planning

IEPs offer a platform for shared decision-making. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) argue that meaningful collaboration occurs when parents contribute to goal selection rather than merely approving teacher-drafted plans. Koegel et al. (2019) highlight that joint goal-setting promotes ownership and consistency. Nonetheless, many parents of children with disabilities in Uganda report limited

involvement in educational planning due to time constraints or power imbalances (Ssebuwufu et al., 2021).

2.3.4 Peer and Support Networks

Parent-teacher support groups foster emotional resilience and knowledge exchange (Lai & Goh, 2015). They help normalize experiences and reduce stigma, a critical need in societies where disability is misunderstood. However, such networks are rare in specialized Ugandan institutions. Creating them could help sustain collaboration beyond formal meetings.

2.3.5 Critical Evaluation

The literature reveals that while strategies such as training and communication are effective, contextual adaptability remains limited. Most models originate in Western educational systems that assume resource availability and parental literacy. There is insufficient exploration of community-based, culturally embedded collaboration models in sub-Saharan Africa. This justifies the current study's focus on Dorna Centre to document locally grounded strategies.

2.4 Factors Facilitating Collaboration between Teachers and Parents in Developing Social and Daily Living Skills

2.4.1 Open Communication and Trust

Open dialogue fosters transparency and mutual respect (Blue-Banning et al., 2014). Frequent communication builds confidence, while its absence generates suspicion and disengagement. Syeda and Bruck (2022) found that digital communication tools promote trust when used consistently and complemented by empathy.

2.4.2 Joint Training and Shared Knowledge

Collaborative training sessions enhance consistency in intervention techniques (Ganz et al., 2012). When both parents and teachers learn strategies such as PECS and ABA, children experience uniform expectations across contexts (Hume et al., 2021). Nonetheless, Tissot and Evans (2003) noted that logistical barriers such as scheduling conflicts and transport costs often limit participation—challenges more pronounced in low-income settings.

2.4.3 Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion

Cultural sensitivity remains a decisive facilitator. Families interpret autism through diverse belief systems (Harry et al., 2005). Lo (2018) warns that ignoring these beliefs can alienate parents. MacLeod et al. (2017) emphasize respectful inclusion of family perspectives in decision-making to avoid paternalism. In Uganda, where community perceptions of disability are influenced by spirituality, culturally responsive collaboration is essential to reduce stigma and sustain engagement (Nsubuga & Kintu, 2020).

2.4.4 Institutional and Administrative Support

Leadership commitment shapes collaboration outcomes. Administrators who allocate time for teacher-parent meetings and provide supportive policies create enabling environments (Povey et al., 2016). Shepherd et al. (2018) link administrative support to improved morale and reduced burnout among special-education teachers.

2.4.5 Consistency and Alignment of Interventions

Aligned expectations between home and school settings ensure skill generalization. Tools like visual schedules and behavior charts bridge environments (Koegel et al., 2016). However, many African

schools lack standardized monitoring systems to coordinate interventions, leaving gaps in progress tracking (Hume et al., 2021).

2.4.6 Critical Evaluation

Across contexts, facilitating factors converge around communication, training, trust, and leadership. Yet, existing research rarely quantifies or qualitatively measures how these factors interact to sustain collaboration over time. Moreover, the majority of African studies remain descriptive, lacking theoretical integration. The current study contributes by analyzing these dynamics through Bronfenbrenner's and Oliver's lenses, emphasizing environmental and attitudinal influences on collaboration.

2.5 Challenges Faced by Teachers and Parents in the Development of Life Skills

2.5.1 Communication Barriers

Communication breakdown remains the most cited challenge (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Misunderstandings arise from jargon use, time scarcity, or limited digital access. While email and mobile communication provide convenience, they may reduce the quality of interaction and emotional nuance (Tissot & Evans, 2003). Ugandan parents often prefer verbal or physical communication, yet teachers rely on written reports, causing disconnect (Nakayiza & Okello, 2022).

2.5.2 Divergent Philosophies and Cultural Perceptions

Differences in educational philosophy further hinder collaboration. Parents may adopt protective approaches that prioritize care and safety, whereas teachers emphasize independence and social exposure (Lai & Goh, 2015). Lo (2008) notes that cultural beliefs linking disability to supernatural causes can result in stigma and denial, limiting parental openness. A comparative study by Mugisha

et al. (2021) shows that Ugandan teachers often feel parents are “uninvolved,” while parents perceive teachers as “insensitive,” illustrating mutual misinterpretation.

2.5.3 Time Constraints and Workload

Teachers’ large caseloads and parents’ work commitments restrict consistent interaction (Hedges et al., 2018). Povey et al. (2016) found that lack of institutionalized meeting schedules reduces accountability. Flexible meeting formats such as online conferences could address this issue, though infrastructural barriers persist.

2.5.4 Limited Training and Knowledge Gaps

Both parties frequently lack adequate knowledge of evidence-based interventions (MacLeod et al., 2017). Brookman-Frazee et al. (2009) emphasize that effective collaboration demands shared understanding of pedagogical principles. Without this, interventions become fragmented. Uganda’s teacher-training curricula still provide minimal exposure to family-engagement modules (Namaganda & Ssenyonga, 2023).

2.5.5 Resource Constraints

Financial and material shortages impede sustained collaboration. Rural schools lack specialized personnel and materials (Tissot & Evans, 2003). Parents cannot afford private therapy, leading to reliance on overstretched school systems (Pfeiffer et al., 2019). This structural inequity underscores Oliver’s (1983) argument that disability arises not only from impairment but also from systemic barriers.

2.5.6 Emotional and Psychological Stress

High stress levels among both parents and teachers hinder productive partnerships. Salas et al. (2017) link parental distress to feelings of guilt and helplessness, while Shepherd et al. (2018) identify teacher burnout as a major deterrent to collaboration. Support networks and counselling interventions remain scarce in Uganda, making emotional strain a persistent barrier.

2.5.7 Critical Evaluation

The literature converges on systemic and interpersonal constraints but fails to examine interaction effects, for example, how emotional stress compounds communication breakdowns or how resource shortages amplify workload. Furthermore, few studies adopt an intersectional lens exploring gender, socioeconomic status, or cultural background as mediators of these challenges. Addressing these omissions is vital for contextualized understanding.

2.6 Identified Literature Gap

Although substantial scholarship exists on teacher-parent collaboration in autism education, notable gaps remain. First, most studies treat home- and school-based interventions as separate, ignoring the synergistic potential of integrated programming. Research rarely measures how simultaneous reinforcement across contexts influences long-term skill retention (Hedges et al., 2018). Second, the application of digital technologies in specialized autism centres, particularly within resource-limited settings like Uganda, is underexplored. Investigating digital platforms for real-time coordination could yield practical insights (Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). Third, while emotional and psychological factors are acknowledged, few studies systematically assess their impact on collaboration within institutional contexts (Salas et al., 2017).

Moreover, literature on sub-Saharan Africa, and Uganda in particular, remains sparse and predominantly descriptive, lacking critical engagement with theoretical frameworks. There is limited analysis of how environmental systems (family, school, community, policy) interact to shape collaboration. Existing research also neglects voices of stakeholders directly involved in specialized centres. This study therefore addresses these gaps by exploring the lived experiences of teachers and parents at Dorna Centre Home for Autism, interpreting them through ecological and social-model perspectives to generate context-specific recommendations.

2.7 Conclusion

In summary, the reviewed literature demonstrates that effective teacher-parent collaboration is essential for fostering both social and daily living skills among children with autism. The review critically analyzed existing studies, highlighting consistencies in the recognition of collaboration benefits and divergences in implementation approaches. However, empirical evidence from Uganda and comparable contexts remains limited, particularly regarding culturally adapted collaboration frameworks, integrated home-school interventions, and emotional dynamics among stakeholders. By addressing these areas, the present study seeks to contribute new insights into sustainable, inclusive practices that empower children with autism to achieve greater independence and participation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed in conducting the study. According to Zikmund (2000), methodology is a systematic framework that guides researchers in solving identified problems. The section outlines the research approach, design, area of study, participants, sampling techniques and criteria, data collection methods, data analysis, rigor and trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. The organization of this chapter ensures that each step of the research process is transparent, replicable, and aligned with the study objectives.

3.2 Research Approach

This study used a qualitative research approach. A qualitative approach is characterized by the collection of non-numerical data that capture people's experiences, perceptions, and meanings attached to a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It was appropriate for this study because the research aimed to explore teacher-parent collaboration in the development of life skills among children with autism a phenomenon that involves attitudes, communication, and relationships that cannot be adequately represented through statistics.

The qualitative approach allowed for a detailed, holistic understanding of how teachers and parents at Dorna Centre Home for Autism interact, share responsibilities, and engage in developing children's social and daily living skills. Through open-ended and descriptive inquiry, the researcher was able to capture participants' lived experiences in their natural context, ensuring the findings were rich, authentic, and grounded in reality (Patton, 2015).

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive case study design, which focuses on providing an in-depth account of a bounded system, such as an institution, group, or community, over time (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The design was suitable because it enabled the researcher to examine teacher-parent collaboration at Dorna Centre Home for Autism as a single, comprehensive unit of analysis.

A descriptive case study was ideal for documenting existing collaboration practices, identifying challenges, and explaining contextual factors influencing skill development for children with autism. It allowed for data triangulation through multiple methods (interviews, observations, and document reviews), thereby enhancing the validity of the findings (Stake, 1995). Unlike explanatory case studies that seek causal relationships, this study focused on description and understanding of phenomena as experienced by participants.

3.4 Area of the Study

The study was conducted at Dorna Centre Home for Autism, located in Kampala District, Uganda. The centre provides specialized education and therapy services to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This area was purposely selected because it serves as one of Uganda's most established autism care facilities, integrating both educational and therapeutic programs. The researcher chose Dorna Centre due to its strong emphasis on teacher-parent collaboration in child development, which directly aligns with the objectives of this study.

Kampala District was also chosen because it represents a diverse urban setting with various socioeconomic backgrounds, allowing the researcher to gather insights from both professional educators and parents navigating challenges of raising children with autism in a metropolitan environment. Conducting the study in this context enhanced the potential transferability of findings to other special education settings in Uganda.

3.5 Participants and Sampling

In qualitative research, the term participants is used instead of “population” because individuals provide data through active engagement rather than passive inclusion (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participants comprised 10 teachers and 10 parents of children enrolled at Dorna Centre Home for Autism.

From a total of 60 parents, 10 were purposively selected based on their active involvement in their children’s education and their consistent attendance in parent-teacher meetings and training sessions. These participants were believed to possess valuable firsthand experiences relevant to the study objectives. The teachers were all included using total population sampling because they formed a small, manageable group directly involved in developing life skills among children with autism.

3.6 Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability technique in which participants are deliberately chosen based on specific characteristics that make them information-rich cases (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This approach ensured that the researcher selected participants who were most knowledgeable and experienced in teacher-parent collaboration.

According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposive sampling is appropriate when the aim is to obtain deep, contextual understanding rather than generalizable findings. Therefore, the 10 parents selected were those actively engaged in school activities and communication with teachers. For the teachers, total population purposive sampling was applied since all educators at the centre met the inclusion criteria and played unique roles in life skills training.

The principle of data saturation guided sample adequacy, data collection continued until no new themes emerged (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The final sample of 20 participants was sufficient to achieve in-depth insights and ensure representativeness within the bounded case.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Three qualitative data collection methods were employed: semi-structured interviews, document review, and non-participant observation. Using multiple methods (triangulation) increased credibility and allowed for comparison across data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.7.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews involve using open-ended questions only, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts and experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This method was appropriate because it provided flexibility for follow-up questions while ensuring consistency with the study objectives. The interview guide was divided into sections corresponding to the four study objectives, exploring teachers' and parents' experiences, collaboration strategies, facilitating factors, and challenges encountered in promoting life skills among children with autism.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in a quiet, familiar setting to encourage openness. Each session lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was audio-recorded with consent to ensure accurate transcription.

3.7.2 Document Review

The researcher examined relevant institutional records, progress reports, and communication logs between teachers and parents. According to Mogalakwe (2006), document review enhances understanding of organizational practices over time. Reviewing records from Dorna Centre provided factual evidence of collaboration activities such as parent meetings, skill development plans, and

child progress reports. This supported triangulation by validating information obtained from interviews and observations.

3.7.3 Observation

Non-participant observation was used to record natural interactions during parent–teacher conferences, classroom sessions, and practical skill activities. The researcher observed communication patterns, participation levels, and collaborative problem-solving among teachers, parents, and children. Field notes captured verbal and non-verbal cues, environmental settings, and contextual details (Kawulich, 2005). Observations helped contextualize the data and strengthen findings by linking behaviors to the verbal narratives of participants.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection followed ethical and procedural protocols. After obtaining approval from Kyambogo University and permission from the Dorna Centre Director, participants were approached, briefed about the study’s purpose, and requested to provide informed consent. The researcher conducted interviews and observations over a period of four weeks. Data were collected sequentially: first through document review to understand the context, then interviews to gather perceptions, and finally observation to validate practices.

Field notes and recordings were securely stored and later transcribed for analysis. All data were coded and organized in digital files labeled according to participant category and objective area.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach involved six stages: familiarization with data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up results.

Data from interviews, document reviews, and observations were analysed in relation to each objective. For instance, responses about collaboration strategies were grouped under “strategies used,” while discussions on barriers formed the “challenges” theme. The process ensured systematic coding and alignment of findings with the study objectives.

Themes were verified through comparison across different data sources to ensure internal consistency. Representative quotations from participants were selected to illustrate each theme, enhancing the authenticity and depth of analysis.

3.10 Rigor and Trustworthiness

The study followed Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) framework of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure trustworthiness.

- **Credibility** was achieved through triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking (Birt et al., 2016).
- **Transferability** was ensured by providing thick descriptions of the study context, allowing readers to assess applicability to other settings (Shenton, 2004).
- **Dependability** was strengthened through an audit trail documenting decisions and analytical steps (Nowell et al., 2017).
- **Confirmability** was enhanced through peer debriefing and reflexivity to minimize researcher bias.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was upheld throughout the study. Participants were informed about the study’s objectives, their right to withdraw at any time, and how data would be used. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing data and storing

digital files under password protection. The researcher ensured that participants experienced no psychological or physical harm and that all procedures aligned with Kyambogo University's ethical research standards.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses some findings of the research, which was done on the teacher parent collaboration on the development of life skills of children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism. It presents, discusses and analyses research results in line with research questions. The exploration is structured according to themes and starts with the participant's background and with direct quotations to enhance the veracity. Four thematic areas are examined. Primary theme the social and daily living skills achieved by the teachers and parents and how they provide these to children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism, through learning, working with parents, perceived development and situational challenges. The second comprised of two dimensions of teaching teachers and parents how to work collaboratively to enhance the development of social and daily living skills of children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism; for example, routine communication, coaching, joint goal-setting and informal relationship building. The third was the factors that facilitate effective collaboration between teachers and parents in the development of social and daily living skills of children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism, which was defined as parental commitment as well as institutional support, mutual trust, and the influence of a child's progress. The fourth and final theme presented the challenges for teachers and parents who are working together in the improvement of the social and daily living skills of children with autism at Dorna Centre Home of Autism, which included poor time and financial capability as well as communication barriers, behavioural problems, emotional strain. These themes provide a more thorough understanding of the collaborative approaches and experiences that support the learning of life skills amongst children with autism.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

In line with ethical research standards, all participant identities in this study were anonymised to ensure confidentiality. Real names were not used in this report. Teachers were assigned codes T1 to T10, while parents were assigned codes P1 to P10. The anonymization preserves participants' privacy while retaining relevant demographic and experiential details needed for contextual understanding. The demographic profiles of participants are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Table 4. 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants who are teachers

S/N	Participant Code	Gender	Age	Academic Qualification	Years of Experience
1	T1	Female	21	Diploma in special education	2
2	T2	Female	25	Diploma in special needs education	1
3	T3	Female	30	Bachelor's in Occupational Therapy	6
4	T4	Female	27	Bachelor's in special needs education	5
5	T5	Male	25	Diploma in physiotherapy	3
6	T6	Female	40	Bachelor's in special needs education	10
7	T7	Female	28	Diploma in speech therapy	2
8	T8	Male	26	Diploma in occupational therapy	6
9	T9	Female	25	Diploma in special needs education	1
10	T10	Female	30	Diploma in special needs education	4

Table 4. 2: Demographic Characteristics: Participants who are parents

S/N	Participant Code	Gender	Age	Education Level	Child's Age	Academic Qualification	Duration Dorna (Years)
1	P1	Mother	30	Secondary	10	N/A	4
2	P2	Mother	32	Graduate	8	Bachelors of economics	2
3	P3	Mother	25	Primary	7	N/A	2
4	P4	Father	45	Graduate	17	Bachelors of Computer Science	6
5	P5	Mother	25	Secondary	7	N/A	4
6	P6	Mother	46	Secondary	12	N/A	2
7	P7	Father	35	Primary	15	N/A	4
8	P8	Mother	26	Secondary	5	N/A	1
9	P9	Mother	26	Primary	8	N/A	2
10	P10	Mother	33	Secondary	8	N/A	1

The demographic characteristics were well represented for teachers and parents, so that it was possible to explore collaboration in life skills development in a round-ended study. The teachers came

from a variety of backgrounds, including working with children on the autism spectrum, with individualized education plans (IEPs), and on the autism intervention front, they had received specialist training through the special training for intervention. Parents, meanwhile, were armed with points of view that were colored by daily caregiving, seeking inclusion, and overcoming the challenges of struggling with delayed speech and sensory sensitivities. These diverse experiences added richness and context with respect to autism orientated teaching methods, with particular focus on practical strategies, communication strategies and communication patterns and also supporting the need for consistency between home and school. Looking at all the teachers' qualifications, if it's only Dorna Centre, the teachers are too many for such a centre.

4.3 Social and Daily Living Skills Demonstrated to Children with Autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism

The goal was to clarify the targeted social and life skills that Dorna Centre Home for Autism has given children with autism to teachers and parents.

4.3.1 Teachers' teachings of social and daily living skills

Interview responses from teachers and parents were also collected so as to analyse the type of social and daily living skills taught to children with autism at Dorna Centre. This section opens with input from teachers, as well and with the essential context provided by the teaching of the curriculum and daily instruction. Students with autism were taught by teachers about the value of self-care and interpersonal functioning. Most of the teachers reported that they emphasized fundamental skills like feeding, toileting, bathing, dressing, brushing teeth, and grooming. These were commonly associated with communication and emotional regulation skills.

Some of the teachers stated:

Things like feeding, dressing, bathing, brushing teeth, and the ability, sometimes in basic forms, to ask for help. These in turn help them to be independent. (T3).

We teach kids how to process anger, how to find happiness and show that there is sadness in themselves and in others too. That's part of social living. (T6)

It includes tasks such as washing hands, greeting people appropriately and waiting in line. All of this is a component of social function. (T7)

Two teachers (T2 and T10) also reported the creation of basic time awareness and personal responsibility such as instructing children to clean their personal spaces, organize their belongings, and adhere to normal activities.

Parents' comments supported and complemented these observations. Skills development efforts were recognized by all ten parents, but emphasis differed depending on child progress. Some parents reported improvements in feeding, toilet usage and hygiene, three mentioned dressing and bathing, and two mentioned interpersonal skills. The social and daily living skills parents described for their children were:

Now he knows if he wants to go to the toilet and tells us. When we finished, we showed him how to wash his hands. These are big achievements. (P2)

Now he can say 'hello' and even hug people he knows. In the past, he'd run or cry. (P8)

These responses show the physical and social side of skills teaching.

4.3.2 Gaps and Limitations in the Skill Training of Skills.

Despite its success of teaching basic life skills, some key points remain inadequately covered. Three teachers had areas of grooming and financial education shortcomings reflected in the following responses:

We never have taught shaving or managing their period. We leave this for parents; I don't think we can find a way to make a way for them to do it. (T2)

There's nothing to say for counting money or recognizing coins yet. Maybe they are still quite young, but these things we need somehow. (T5)

Which introduces a very critical question: if teachers are trained to work with children who are cognitively impaired, why do complex but essential life skills get delegated to untrained parents? The responses also suggest that assumptions about the children's abilities may be restricting the scope of instruction, as suggested by an anecdote told the educator:

Some of them can actually achieve more than we think they can. We just do not always try those skills. (T2)

These responses suggest a way forward for increasing the number of higher-level, independent living skills into the curriculum in an inclusive way.

4.3.3 Parent-taught social and daily living skills

In keeping with the study objective to investigate the teaching of social and day to day living skills in parents and teachers, parents were involved in continuing these activities at home. Instead of merely encouraging home schooling, parents taught basic daily functions for people, including personal hygiene, toileting, dressing, feeding and face-to-face communication on their own. All ten parent participants have made ongoing efforts to weave

these skills into their daily routines; as primary facilitators in their children's development. This home-based instruction aligned with what children learned at school providing an ongoing and affirming educational base.

P3 explained:

The teachers are teaching me how to go through the training at home. For example, when they teach him how to bathe, they show me how to guide him step by step.

P2 articulated a modelling strategy:

I don't just tell him to brush his teeth; I do it with him. We do that every day together.

The effect of the improvements was mainly in the ability of the children to gain independence and control their emotions. Parents described overt change in their children's behaviour and level of ability to operate.

P4 stated:

Now, he could feed himself without spilling food. He even recalls wiping his mouth afterward.

P9 went on to describe similar growth:

And before he would scream when he was asked to shower. He currently bathes with little assistance and even picks his towel.

T5 observed:

They become calmer. Others increasingly request things politely rather than crying or hitting.

The results reflect findings from previous literature which suggest that structured life skills training is necessary for learners with autism. According to Odom et al. (2021), life skills play a critical role in inclusion and dependency management. This focus on daily routines, emotional regulation, and social etiquette echoes Lee and Carter (2020)'s research findings that evidence of sustained, homeschool collaboration leads to dramatic improvements in social adaptation and independence. From a Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems approach to child development, the interaction between home (microsystem) and school environments demonstrates that multiple environments can act together to shape a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Such a dynamic relationship between teachers and parents is reflected in this study of life skills in various contexts. Moreover, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes the significance of guided participation and scaffolding in learning. More knowledgeable others acted as teachers and families, modeling and practice helped the children help. That gradual shift from dependence to independence in activities from bathing to greeting others illustrates just how this theory can be utilized. Teachers and parents will collaborate in preparing children to acquire those skills that best serve them, according to their developmental needs according to the findings. The skills include personal hygiene (hand washing and grooming), providing nutrition (using utensils), toileting (such as proper use of the toilet and hand washing after), dressing (putting on or taking off clothes), basic communication (speaking a word or sign), and socialization with peers and adults. These targeted methods seek to enhance opportunities for social interaction and independence in the students.

4.4 Techniques implemented by Teachers and Parents to collaborate in developing children's social and daily living skills among children with autism, Dorna Centre Home for Autism

In this section, we discuss the way we use common strategies for teaching teachers and those that support their work to support children with autism to develop social and daily living skills.

4.4.1 Strategies of instruction and Programmes and Instructional Programs

Instructional strategies, according to report teachers found by teachers were very explicit structures of teaching was highly structured and responsive to that of an as very structured for what it would be best suited for each child as a given. Approaches utilised were applied through Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), visual supports, visual supports, task analysis, task analysis, physical modeling on stage, modelling and prompting and rewarding.

T5 explained:

I provide visual aids, from drawing out picture cards and visual aids to graphic organizer charts. They work best with non-verbal children.

T7 discussed task analysis in greater depth.

Let's break down a task such as brushing teeth into steps: get the brush, smear paste, brush, and rinse, wipe mouth and teach you a part by part how it works.

And therapeutic interventions, such as teaching language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy in a way that fit into the everyday of people's lives.

T4 described:

Occupational therapy allows them to coordinate the movements required to get dressed or use cutlery. It helps with even basic speech.

T6 and T7 also said they incorporated social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies to support regulation of behaviour.

We integrate sessions for anger management, for example waiting, sharing, and tolerating discomfort, for each child stated T6.

We help them see how others feel through stories and role play. Added T7.

These observations represent a holistic, multi-faceted teaching method that is underpinned by behavioural as well as developmental perspectives.

4.4.2 Effective Collaboration or Joint Goal Setting

In addition to communication, the participants pointed to several collaborative practices that facilitated the partnership between the teachers and parents. These were: joint goal-setting, consistent involvement in school-organized workshops and continued attendance training courses.

T6 remarked:

Joint goal setting and effective communication.

T8 further explained:

Working together on workshops or training sessions, does offer trainings now and then and we get more time spent with my son's teachers.

Teachers said working together encouraged greater understanding of the child's needs and a more coordinated approach to developing skills. Training sessions and workshops not only allowed for knowledge sharing but also ensured that school and home expectations and methods were aligned.

Moreover, T4 noted:

We talk to the parents, we are in conversation, we set goals for each child ...

Parents understand what is going to be trained and so they also work with us.

These co-designed planning events demonstrated the importance of the collective responsibility and contribution to the developmental development of a child.

4.4.3 Teaching at home to support parent's capacity of developing at home skills.

One of the key strategies discussed by parents and teachers was that of school-driven support for carrying learning through and in homes. Instead of adding new materials, this approach emphasized the encouragement of parents to extend and practice skills that they learned through school. Teachers gave each parent a home visit with customized schedules, instructional materials, and demonstrations which the parents enjoyed very much.

P1 and P9 shared:

They'll make a schedule I keep at home to keep training my kid and they even come to visit us at home. The teachers occasionally visit my home and instruct me in how to do training for my child at home. This is usually done during the holidays.

This hands-on support provided parents with confidence and the resources needed to consistently strengthen a child's skills, decreasing uncertainty about home-based practices

and promoting continuity between settings. Teachers' ability to help parents find their direction in the natural home environment was found to be useful for adapting interventions to families' routines and contexts.

4.4.4 Teaching of Parents and Directing Activities

The training of parents found itself to be a key ingredient for encouraging partnership and enabling parents to take a lead role in the care-giving of the child. The majority of parents indicated they had received training on behavioural and communication management, massage therapy (Kigong), and nutrition.

P2 observed:

I received training on positive reinforcement, and I have found this to be effective for my son. Whenever he does something right, I compliment him and tell him to repeat.

P8 also described:

I was trained in communication and language support. My son is nonverbal and we need to communicate through a variety of means.

Teachers verified that child's sessions tended to take place during parental training sessions, so parents could review and practice what was being done in tandem with the child's sessions.

T7 explained:

They're trained on how to facilitate their child's communication and learn to assess the various non-verbal cues.

This capacity-building strategy not only increased parents' skills in this practical area but also instilled emotional readiness and confidence, assisting parents to become more confident in assisting their child's development.

4.4.5 Family and parental support in preparation and decision-making

The involvement of parents in planning was erratic with some parents participating in setting goals, and some preferring the professionals to oversee the planning process. P3 shared: They usually ask me what skills I want my son to develop, and then they teach him to work on them.

In contrast, P5 explained:

I am not involved. I do not follow them to make him train, because that is the professionals.

The critical role of parents as co-developers of individualized plans was emphasized by teachers for T10, who referred to parents as:

Key decision makers in the process, demonstrating a high level of respect for the lived experiences of parents as partners with their children.

Teachers T3 and T7 confirmed that joint-goal setting was a common process which allowed members of both parties to be able to identify issues needing intervention and design interventions accordingly. However, differences in parental involvement also indicate that more formal frameworks are necessary to facilitate inclusion and ongoing parental involvement in planning.

4.4.6 Monitoring and Tracking Progress skills acquisition

It was up to the teachers to track the progress of the children and the teacher's job was to provide assessments and review with the parents. P2 explained:

The school will submit us a planning sheet at the start of the year. I follow that to determine if this is happening or not.

P6 added:

We generally have a progress meeting with his teachers and we tick off areas in which he has progressed and also come up with a plan on how we can better help him.

Despite this systemisation, several of the parents revealed that they saw very little active tracking at home, with few informal follow-up through formal means, such as verbal updates from teachers. This reliance on oral reporting indicates a need for parent monitoring tools that promote in-home involvement of parents in tracking their child's progress if it is addressed. Looking through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the techniques implemented demonstrate connection among the child's microsystems, family and the school, as well as a mesosystem level interconnectivity (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). When they communicate, set goals together and have teacher-led home support, coordinated systems facilitate skill enhancement in order to develop skills. Teachers utilise a number of strategies to support skill reinforcement at home, such as regular progress meetings, IEPs, home-school communication books, and modelling of behaviour. Parents, on the contrary, facilitated collaborative process by participating in training, setting up home schedule, keeping in touch with teachers and being able to express feedback about their children's engagement in non-school activities. The findings show that there is a wide range of communication tools,

cooperative planning, training, mutual support in place for collaboration between teachers and parents. Both sides acknowledged the importance of working together to promote regular skill acquisition across school, and home environments. Variations in parental involvement and the practices for monitoring progress provide opportunities to improve the level of involvement and inclusiveness of partnership and collaboration.

4.5 Supporting the Engagement of Teachers and Parents in Developing Social and Daily Living Skills

This purpose identified aspects of the collaboration between teachers and parents that provide a conducive environment for successful use by the teachers and parents in developing social and daily living skills of children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism in school.

4.5.1 Positive beliefs of the parents and support.

One major cause of cooperation was parents' attitude and internal commitment to help foster their own child's growth. Many parents are strongly motivated to engage with their teachers in a personal and positive way on account of the importance of the partnership.

For example, P1 emphasized:

I know some of the upsides of working correctly with teachers. When you care and invest, a teacher might be able to muster the courage and morale to teach your child.

P5 also highlighted their dedication:

I am determined that my son will get the skill sets he needs to live a fairly normal life. Because of this, I am also forever looking forward to working together with the teachers.

This commitment was also recognized in teachers as critical, as T1 commented on the synergy between parent involvement at school and home:

When adults show concern and effort, it inspires us teachers to continue to work for the progress of the child.

4.5.2 Institutional Support

Institutional support is essential for enhanced collaboration, teachers said. Among the ideas to consider in this context were, increasing IEP (Individualized Education Plan) visits, institutional home visits more often, and using flexible communication options (e.g. with students via WhatsApp groups for real-time interaction). T3 advocated:

IEP meetings could be conducted more often.

T6 recommended:

More flexible channels of communication, such as messaging apps.

T10 highlighted:

Teachers must also be educated on talking with the parents to create more inclusive collaboration.

Other informal social events and parent groups were mentioned as effective ways to build trust and camaraderie, collaborative culture, beyond formal school interaction.

4.5.3 Family Support and Involvement

In addition to these individual attitudes, extended family participation emerged as an important facilitator supporting parental capability to work consistently with teachers.

Participants referred to helping with routines and strengthening skills instructed in the school with spouses, siblings and grandparents.

P4 explained:

I'm from a large family, which helps me take care of my son, so we're always working on what the teacher tells us to do at home.

Similarly, P8 portrayed another supportive factor that her son's father played in her life:

My son's father is very supportive. He sometimes comes to school with me so we can learn together how to help our child.

4.5.4 Availability of Time

Time as another important factor facilitating collaboration, was the amount of time parents had for engagement. Those who were self-employed, unemployed or employed on flexible working schedules exhibited more teacher contact, more participation in school meetings, and greater consistency in implementation of in-home interventions. P3 shared:

I also have time to speak with my son's teachers as I am self-employed and miss work when a meeting or training is called for.

There was evidence that collaboration became more regular and significant when parents were available, as they helped distribute information and to provide effective interventions at the right time.

4.5.5 Child's Progress

Parents found their child's tangible progress in all areas reinforcing the motivation to collaborate. P6 described the potential benefit of seeing progress:

The visible improvement that my son has inspired me so much. Now he feeds himself without any kind of assistance.

These improvements could be attributed to the degree of parents' trust in teachers' authority, as stated by P2

I trust my child's teachers because they know how best to do the best thing for my child. So I collaborate with them to provide ways for them to educate me on supporting him.

In addition, teachers indicated how this type of motivation motivates parents to stay involved despite challenges, creating a healthy feedback loop between the development of the child and the collaborative effort that is being done with the parents.

4.5.6 Communication should be uniform and used a variety of channels

Another key contributing factor was that parents and teachers could stay in frequent, multi-modal contact. The main mode of communication for participants was telephone call, face to face meetings, record of progress made by written reports, seminars and home visits. T1 noted:

We call and talk in real life as much as possible.

T8 elaborated:

In practice, the school will make occasional sessions to conduct workshops to give the parents and the teachers opportunity to converse. Or we phone the parents or text them when you need to share something.

T3 emphasized progress reports as a tool for sharing structured information:

Progress reports that are shared with parents, thus informing parents, are how we communicate with parents. From those papers, we share the progress of the children, and to do so we make reports.

Institutional norms, support and systems are often mentioned as key enablers of collaboration. The school's function as a formal venue for communication, training and feedback was also cited as important. As illustrated by P7

Teachers communicate with me at the start of the year; they then produce an entire year's scheme which is then shared with me. Using this plan I could follow my child's progress.

P9 also mentioned the worth of workshop sessions:

The lectures we give at school: I mean, these have really helped us. I interact with the teachers freely, and I learn also from them.

Teachers did, too, note that the school facilitated the development of these arrangements. T1 stated:

It gives us time and what we need to help successfully collaborate so...they let us do a house visit, but also call the parents when we need them.

T2 added:

So parents and teacher training are great opportunities to cooperate. The school usually brings autism experts to teach the parents and teachers a few technical things that matter when caring for the children.

Such institutional support gives clarity, resources and legitimacy to collaborative efforts and makes these efforts more enduring. These communication strategies highlight the value in having solid school-home communication that promotes trust, trustworthiness, and continued commitment in special education.

4.5.7 Trust, respect and understanding of each other

Respect and trust among parents and teachers for one another formed a cornerstone for an effective partnership. The importance of honoring each other's roles and of incorporating feedback on both ends was articulated by teachers, the authors said. T2 observed: Parents need to respect the teachers and their authority, and to do what they said they should be doing. And the teachers need to do the same, as well as listen to what the parents say.

This mutual respect creates an environment where collaboration is encouraged, conflict reduces and joint decision-making is possible with their child's development.

4.5.8 Joint Goal-Setting

Cooperation through cooperation was enhanced by joint goal-setting practices that established realistic, achievable objectives for children's development by parents and teachers. T4 said:

Both teachers and parents need to set goals that they can achieve together. Once they've set goals with all parties, once parents and teachers are aligned, it is easy to follow them.

Teachers and parents, however, reported that consistent goals for both teachers and parents served to set strong expectations and to define a common path for skill acquisition. It also viewed parental participation as essential in strengthening skills at home.

T1 explained:

Involved parents are able to maintain skills at home and from other experiences.

Such perspectives also highlight collaborative setting goals collaboratively and involving parents in the decision-making and engagement is one of the key building blocks of a successful inclusive education framework and it is essential to these findings.

4.5.9 Home visits and informal involvement

Informal support networks and casual dialogue in the form of home visits and conversation between teachers and parents also were referenced as significant for the deepening of collaboration based on building trust and understanding to be facilitated via informal contacts between teachers and parents beyond the formal school building.

T4 added:

“It’s the nature of the school year: Dorna Centre offers us a chance to go to the homes... so we can meet with the parents here... which means we get to meet the parents’ and the children’s home life.

This has further enhanced the working relationship of parents and teachers. Other informal events like school parties and field trips also helped to break down barriers.

T8 said:

Non-formal meetings like going with the children and the parent to a field trip, to an end-of-year party makes collaboration easier.

These informal meetings help to facilitate rapport and minimize hierarchy distance and promote open communication and collaborative problem-solving.

4.6 Challenges Faced by Teachers and Parents as They Collaborate in the Development of Skills for Children with Autism

This objective explored the multifaceted challenges experienced by teachers and parents in their collaborative efforts to develop social and daily living skills among children with autism at Dorna Centre Home for Autism.

4.6.1 Inadequate time and conflicting schedules

Parents reported frequently that as a result of their jobs they could not attend school meetings, training or keep in constant contact with teachers.

P8 lamented:

I'm working and with that doesn't make me get the time to even be at the school or talk to the teachers. In general, I miss the school trainings and meetings.

This conclusion was confirmed by teachers who noted that the limited access to parents made continuity of the reinforcement of skills challenging. T6 noted:

Some parents don't show up typically for a meeting or training. However, this makes it hard for us to guarantee that learning is carried on in the home.

Thus, the competing demands on parents' time thus became a primary barrier to effective collaboration.

4.6.2 Environmental and contextual barriers which hinder the cultivation of skill.

Despite improvement in teaching practice, barriers reported by both teachers and parents in adopting consistent skills were described as critical. One big challenge was to provide specialized teaching materials. T1 noted:

We don't have enough sensory devices, that are weighted blankets, adaptive eating utensils. This makes it hard to teach.

P10 shared this limitation internally:

We're educated on how to train them but without the resources we can't do it well. Beyond the lack of material, cognitive and behavioural difficulties were challenging.

T3 described:

Sometimes short attention span means we could only complete five-minute sessions. We need to repeat skills over and over again for weeks.

T6 added:

At times teaching even one thing like hand washing takes up a whole term. We only teach it down the term.

Skill generalization was also slowed by parental inconsistency and environmental stress. T7 noted:

Some parents are not in the same routine, so the child forgets the skill. For some families, social stigma, and lack of familial support were key.

P1 said:

His father continues to treat him as a curse. That attitude affects the child.

These accounts highlight that skill development is not a task of skill training in a vacuum, but requires the assistance of parents. Accordingly, this analysis concluded that social and daily living skills at Dorna Centre are not developed without some form of organisation of a child and their development; rather, they are developed through a structured and collaborative approach with both the individual teacher and family. The core skills taught are widely acknowledged by both teachers and parents, and provided with evidence-based instructional methods.

4.6.3 Financial and Logistical Constraints

One big challenge was financial difficulty that stifled parents' support of their children's learning and their conversation with the teachers. Parents complained about money not being available to send the child to school, to provide the child with the essential help and to manage the household. For example, P5 expressed:

Not being able to pay for the support equipment that the teachers are generally recommending. Adaptive cups and forks, for instance.

These economic considerations constrained parents' ability to develop strategies discussed in trainings and fostered irregular interaction with educators. Absence of material resources

leads to a disconnect between school interventions and at home practice resulting in loss of continuity of skills.

4.6.4 Communication Barriers and Language Difficulties

Communication obstacles were also identified as a significant factor limiting collaboration. A large number of parents (in many cases, lower levels of education) are unable to comprehend the instructions given mainly in English. P3 stated:

I don't speak very good English and the majority of the trainings are in English.

I can not understand most of it anyway. The response from the teachers was inconsistent, as was the view by some parents in their assessment process.

P9 told his/her story:

They are naturally not generally open to communication. You call a teacher and they don't tell you what you need to know.

Teachers recognized language differences and attempted to rely on translators or spoke other familiar languages to ensure that they were available. T1 explained:

Language barriers are common. We frequently have translators who help us communicate with parents who don't speak English very well.

Despite inconsistent contact, the absence of consistent communication and a wide variety of communication methods which included phone call, WhatsApp and face-to-face meetings made for challenging efforts on keeping the conversation going. T5 emphasized:

Many parents do not make calls or attend meetings, making it difficult to share important information.

4.6.5 Limited Technical Skills and Parental Confidence

The parental barrier was also noted as low technical knowledge and lack of confidence in copying at home methods. The parents struggled to use the complex or expert techniques demonstrated by the teachers from their training series to practise despite the education. P10 confessed:

The teachers taught me to train my child's teacher. However, I still find the activities difficult. The same goes for my child's training the way the teachers train it; I can't train him a proper way.

Similar to P3, I've also said:

I don't know how to teach them, the skills I learn so from teachers. So I fail or just throw in the towel.

Teachers identified this gap and advocated that parents be given more tailor-made, practical training programs, which could equip parents with the necessary skills.

T4 observed:

We attempt to train parents, too, but there are times when one session fails them.

We have to come up with methods to have them continually supported.

4.6.6 Child-Related Behavioural Challenges

Parents often cited some disruptive habits of their children as an obstacle to proper skill building. Problems with participation, aggression, and attention were a hindrance in preparing for that training. P8 explained:

My son is really aggressive. He's always doing something bad to hurt himself.

It is tough to train at home, my son.

P7 spoke of disengagement as a struggle:

He does not want any particular exercises. He enjoys watching TV, and that's how he spends the day. When you try to take him away from the TV, it only triggers tantrums.

These behavioural problems warrant further interventions, such as behavioural counselling for caregivers or intervention with specific children to manage these disruptive behaviours. In the absence of such support it can make parents feel overwhelmed and lost.

4.6.7 Emotional Strain and Burnout

The emotional impact of care management and partnership was brought up again and again by parents and instructors. Parents reported being tired, frustrated by the work, and disheartened or demotivated in general, especially when it was slow or otherwise subtle.

P9 remarked:

It's exhausting, both physically and emotionally, just as well. When you do the same thing every day and don't notice much to no progress... it can sometimes lead to depression.

Similarly, P7 said:

I am so demotivated... So sometimes I end up not training him like I should.

Teachers also noted parental burnout and emotional distress that complicated sustained inclusiveness.

T9 noted:

Parents are frequently so overwhelmed.

We are encouraging them, but it's a burden on an emotional level. It illustrates the need for psychological support services including peer and respite support groups to maintain parental well-being and involvement.

4.6.8 Lack of Parental Commitment

Variability of parental commitment was perceived by teachers as equally important obstacle to working together. On the other hand, some parents appeared either disengaged or minimally involved just dropping kids off at school. T1 remarked:

The unwillingness of the parents to cooperate with the teachers. Parents will not take the time or effort to cooperate with the teachers. This makes it difficult for us to work with them.

T5 echoed this observation:

Some parents show no interest in the education of their children, it seems they are simply being pushed. They drop off the kids at school and do not come back till the end of the school term.

Educating and stimulating parents who played a crucial part in the study was the direct objective of teachers' actions, though follow-up was inconsistent, suggesting improvement needs strategies for enhancing parental involvement. This includes flexible training formats, increasing home support, easy communication, involving parents adequately in planning, and psychological and peer supportive services for caregivers. The majority of the challenges experienced by teachers were time constraints and lack of technical knowledge for working within autism specific interventions, as well as difficulty coping with children's difficult behaviors in practice. Parents, however, were principally concerned about economic and logistics issues and emotional cost of being caregivers. Communication barriers and mismatched expectations between teachers and parents complicated coordination and

consistency of interventions. Together, these compounded barriers limited cooperation and negatively impacted the quality and sustainability of capacity-building strategies aimed at children with autism.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines a chapter five summary of the findings of study drawn, connected with Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological Systems Theory and Oliver's (1983) Social Model of Disability. The conversation illustrates the role teacher-parent interaction plays in teaching life skills to children with autism as students of the Dorna Centre Home for Autism. The chapter includes conclusions, research-based recommendations, and prospects for future research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 The Social and Daily Living Skills of Teachers and Parents

Teachers and parents in the research have been found to be highly supportive for children to acquire key life skills including personal care, toileting, feeding and dressing, grooming, communication and emotional control. Structured approaches that were adopted to be part of the educational intervention by teachers included ABA, visual schedules, task analysis and modelling to support skill gain (Wong et al., 2015; Hume et al., 2021). In line with Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, these skills were reinforced at home by parents through daily routine. From Bronfenbrenner's ecological point of view, the child's microsystem has a significant impact on skill development. Teachers and parents constantly engage in practices that work together to facilitate beneficial microsystem alignment, resulting in positive developmental outcomes. Oliver's social model stresses the impact of the child on the community, because often the barriers to participation come from environmental and social factors. Lack of focus on advanced skills, specifically menstrual hygiene as well as economic

education, is a symptom of a more systemic approach to training and support as well as a barrier for individuals and families in this domain that could help intervene.

5.1.2 Collaborating Techniques Used by Teachers and Parents to Advance Life Skills

Collaborative initiatives involved frequent communication (meetings, home-school diaries, telephone calls), and practical demonstrations. Educators then demonstrated methods and parents acted upon them at home, generating feedback that maintained the practice of life skills (Epstein, 2011; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013; Stahmer & Pellecchia, 2015). Sharing of decision-making and goal orientation were also enabled through IEP support (Turnbull et al., 2015). Using Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem as a lens, these interactions show interconnections between microsystems which connect one microsystem to another to continuity of learning. Given how informal the collaboration is, the implication of this is a need for systemic support at an exosystem level to facilitate the continued and continuous adoption, like policy and institutional practices, for its maintenance and sustainability. Oliver's model further emphasizes the significance of enabling parents to be agents of change over environmental restrictions, where this level of empowerment would contribute to fair access to opportunities for skill development available in all groups.

5.1.3 The factors that facilitate effective teacher-parent collaboration

All these factors are enablers for effective collaboration. These included mutual trust among parents and teachers, commitment to the child's progress, regular updates to staff members on progress, institutional support from the Dorna Centre, and regular updates. The alignment in school staff and parents about the goal of the school promoted collaboration and mutual accountability (Turnbull et al., 2011; Dunst et al., 2007), as well as agreement on goals for children or parents' development. The experience of disability in the personal life encouraged

empathy and flexibility that promoted inclusive approach (Olsson et al., 2015; Movahedazarhouli & Banerjee, 2021). These findings are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's theory, which is that strong interactions within the microsystem, as well as supportive policies in the exosystem have a positive impact on a child's development. Oliver's model, likewise, holds that overcoming social and organizational obstacles via training, organized communication, and availability of resources, results in children with autistic status playing their part to make meaning with educational experiences.

5.1.4 Difficulties encountered in the collaboration between teacher/ parents and teachers

Barriers cited included time constraints, a lack of autism-specific training, a lack of resources, variable parental support, stigma of autism by society, and stigma against parents (Hedges et al., 2014; Hornby, 2011; Boavida et al., 2016). Teachers found it difficult to deal with workload, and no adaptable materials were available, parents suffered with low resources and were concerned about maintaining daily routines at home. When viewed within Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework, these challenges illustrate microsystem constraints (gaps in home-school interaction) as well as exosystem forces (resource limitations, policy deficiencies). Oliver's model reveals that participation is restricted by systemic barriers instead of the inherent characteristics of the child. These needs need structural solutions, such as training of teachers and parents, formalizing of policy and allocation of resources.

5.2 Conclusion

This study concludes that:

Social and daily living skills: Key to independence, teachers and parents support foundational skills together. But high-level life skills still under-develop because of inadequate training and institutional vacuums.

Collaboration strategies: Adhering to informal strategies like the use of tools, like communication, shared routines, collaboration and the like work well but have no institutionalization, causing inconsistency.

Facilitating factors: Mutual trust, shared commitment, and institutional support strengthen collaboration.

Issues: Less education, inadequate resources and societal shame prevent smooth cooperation. In general, at Dorna Centre the teacher-parent partnership has a positive effect toward life skills development, however, formalised policies, organized training, and the backing of resources should be the basis for the sustainability and complete acquisition of skills.

5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations below are actionable and based on the study findings.

5.3.1 Suggestions for Teachers and Parents

To Teachers:

Strengthen structured communication: Create regular meetings and progress reviews among parents to make interventions consistent.

Offer skill demos: Provide workshop and class demonstrations to empower parents with skills as demonstrated by other teachers.

Provide some life skills that the kids never touched: Menstrual hygiene, making decisions, doing chores at home, etc.

To Parents:

Practice skills up-home: Teach from school work in day-to-day life.

Share home feedback: Provide teachers with ongoing input to inform interventions.

Participate in peer support networks: Engage in parent groups for emotional and practical aid.

Joint Recommendations:

Collaborate to develop Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs): Tailor ILPs to individual needs and progress.

Encourage collaborative learning: Support horizontal learning from each other through two-way knowledge sharing to improve learning results.

5.3.2 Suggested actions or recommendations for Dorna Centre administrators

Structure collaboration policy around it: Formalize policy on collaboration with written collaboration policies identifying who is doing what, the number of meetings, how meetings are scheduled and the process for getting feedback.

Training in practice continuously: Provide teachers training in the classroom, in addition to hands-on training for parents.

Provide Adaptive Resources for Classrooms: Ensure that sensory implements, visual support, and communication tools are ready in classrooms.

Evaluate results of collaboration: Checklists and progress reports for monitoring life skill acquisition.

5.4 Areas for Further Research. Future studies could:

Assess the long-term effect of teacher-parent partnership on life skills retention.

Investigate the practice of institutionalizing collaboration models in special education.

Explore scaling approaches to advance life skills training for adolescents with autism.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I am Nakawesa Swabra, a final-year student at Kyambogo University pursuing a Master of Disability Studies and Inclusive Development, conducting research on *“Teacher-parent collaboration on the development of life skills among children with autism: the case of Dorna Centre Home for Autism.”*

I invite you to participate in this study by agreeing to this interview. The information you provide will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any penalty.

Thank you for your time and contribution.

Yours sincerely,

Swabra Nakawesa

Confirmation of Acceptance

I have read and fully understood the purpose of the study and hereby consent to participate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Rationale for Biodata (Demographics): Biodata (age, gender, education, experience) is included to contextualize participants’ perspectives and experiences, enabling the researcher to analyze patterns and variations in teacher-parent collaboration across different demographic profiles.

APPENDIX II: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to disclose
3. Education Level: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree or above
4. Years of Experience Working with Children with Autism: ☐ <1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–7 years ☐ 8+ years

Section 2: Interview Questions

A. Social and Daily Living Skills Provided

1. Describe the types of social and daily living skills children with autism (CWA) are expected to develop.
2. What social and daily living skills do you teach at Dorna Centre Home for Autism?
3. How do you involve parents to reinforce these skills at home?
4. What challenges do you face teaching social and daily living skills?
5. What methods do you use to teach these skills?
6. How do you assess children's progress?
7. What social and daily living skills are not acquired, and why?

B. Strategies for Teacher-parent Collaboration

1. In what areas of life skills development do you collaborate with parents?
2. What strategies promote collaboration?

3. How often do you meet parents to discuss progress?
4. What role do parents play in planning?
5. Which strategies are necessary for effective collaboration?
6. Do you provide parent training or workshops? If yes, in which areas?
7. How can alignment between teachers and parents improve?
8. How can Dorna Centre support collaboration?
9. What methods do you use to communicate with parents?
10. How can feedback mechanisms be improved?

C. Facilitating Factors

1. What factors facilitate teacher-parent collaboration?
2. How does parental involvement aid skill development?
3. How do you communicate with parents?
4. How often do you interact with parents regarding progress?
5. What resources or training have strengthened collaboration?

D. Challenges

1. What challenges do you face collaborating with parents, and how do you address them?
2. Have parents resisted teaching methods? How?
3. What challenges arise in aligning parent expectations with teaching goals?
4. Explain communication barriers and resolutions.
5. Recommendations for improving collaboration?

APPENDIX III: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Section 1: Demographics

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to disclose
3. Education Level: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree or above
4. Relationship with child: ☐ Mother ☐ Father ☐ Guardian
5. Duration at Dorna Centre Home for Autism: _____

Section 2: Interview Questions

A. Social and Daily Living Skills Provided

1. What social and daily life skills do you teach your child at home?
2. How do you ensure these skills are practiced daily?
3. What role do teachers play in skill development?
4. How do you work with teachers to reinforce skills?
5. What improvements have you observed due to collaboration?
6. What environmental factors affect learning?

B. Strategies for Collaboration

1. How often do you communicate with teachers?
2. What methods do you use to share information?
3. Which strategies have been effective?
4. How do teachers support skill development at home?

5. What training or guidance have you received?
6. How are you involved in planning your child's skill development?
7. How do you track your child's progress?

C. Facilitating Factors

1. What personal or family factors affect collaboration?
2. What motivates you to collaborate?
3. How does time availability influence communication?
4. What resources or support strengthen collaboration?
5. How does your child's progress influence collaboration?

D. Challenges

1. What difficulties do you face in communicating with teachers?
2. What challenges arise in implementing strategies at home?
3. Do you find it difficult to follow teachers' recommendations? Why?
4. What barriers hinder collaboration?
5. What support would improve collaboration?
6. Suggestions for overcoming collaboration challenges?
7. Challenges in teaching life skills at home?

APPENDIX IV: DOCUMENT REVIEW GUIDE

Documents Reviewed:

- Dorna Centre meeting minutes (teacher-parent meetings, topics discussed)
- Training and workshop reports for parents
- Records of observed challenges affecting collaboration
- Teaching strategy documents (e.g., use of visual aids, modeling, reinforcement)
- Skill development lesson plans (peer interaction, role-playing)
- Parental role documentation in reinforcing skills at home
- Child progress reports reflecting teacher-parent collaboration
- Recommendations documented for improving collaboration

Rationale: These documents provide **verified evidence** of teacher-parent collaboration, strategies used, challenges, and progress of children in social and daily living skills development.

APPENDIX V: OBSERVATION DATA COLLECTION GUIDE

A. General Information

- Date of Observation: _____
- Location (Classroom, Home, Therapy Room, etc.): _____
- Duration: _____

B. Observed Issues

1. **Communication:** Frequency, clarity, and openness between teachers and parents regarding child progress.
2. **Joint Planning and Goal Setting:** Evidence of shared goals for skill development.
3. **Parental Involvement:** Engagement in teaching social and daily living skills.
4. **Consistency:** Alignment of strategies between school and home.
5. **Teacher Engagement:** Methods to promote skill development.
6. **Parent Participation:** Involvement in sessions or workshops.
7. **Collaboration Strategies:** Documented teacher-parent strategies.
8. **Challenges:** Observed difficulties during collaboration.
9. **Children's Skill Acquisition:** Eating, dressing, personal hygiene, toileting, and other life skills.

Scoring System: Behaviors and collaboration strategies are **rated on a 3-point scale:**

- 0 = Not observed
- 1 = Partially observed
- 2 = Fully observed

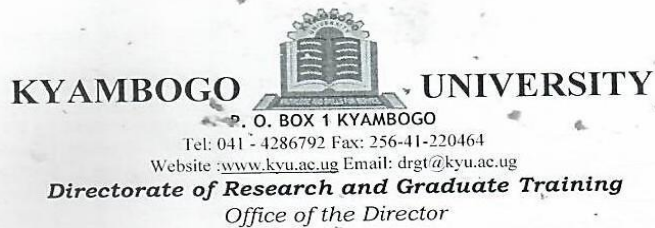
Objectives Covered: Observation addresses all four study objectives: (1) skills provided, (2) collaboration strategies, (3) facilitating factors, and (4) challenges in teacher-parent collaboration.

This version:

- Adds rationale for biodata.
- Clarifies documents reviewed for documentary analysis.
- Includes a scoring system and links observation to all four objectives.
- Maintains the original word count while aligning with APA 7th guidelines.

APPENDIX VI

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



APPENDIX 8: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Date: 16th May, 2025

To

The Director
Dorna Centre Home for Autism
Ntinda, Kampala, Uganda
Email: ndorothy2013@gmail.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Swabra Nakawesa

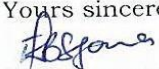
This is to introduce to you the above named student Reg: No **23/U/GMDS/1015/PE** pursuing a masters in disability studies and inclusive development, Department of Community and disability studies, Kyambogo University.

She intends to carry out research on **“Teacher-Parent collaboration on the development of life skills among children with autism: A case of Dorna Centre Home for Autism”** in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of a degree of master of disability studies and inclusive development of Kyambogo University

The purpose of this letter therefore is to request you to grant her permission to carry out her study in your institution.

Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

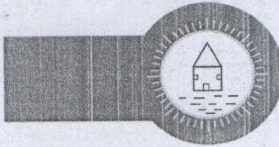
Yours sincerely,


Prof. Bosco Bua
AG. DIRECTOR



APPENDIX V

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

 **DORNA CENTRE
HOME FOR AUTISM**

Plot 33 Semawata Road, Off
Muwafu Curve - Ntinda, Kampala
Tel: +256788726032 /
0703598815
info@dornahomeforautism.org
www.dornahomeforautism.org

Date: 28/05/2025

RE: ACCEPTANCE FOR VOLUNTEERING ^{internship} AT DORNA CENTRE HOME FOR AUTISM.

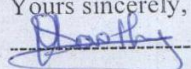
The Dorna Centre is a home for children living with autism. Autism is a lifelong developmental disorder and occurs in every 1 out of 42 boys and 1 out of 189 girls. It's a complex developmental disorder and occurs in every 1 out of 42 boys and 1 out of 189 girls. It's a complex developmental disorder.

Dorna Centre home for autism is a non-governmental organization registered under the Ministry of Gender labour and Social development with a great conviction and passion to helping, identifying and transforming the lives of autistic children in Uganda.

This is to accept on behalf of the Dorna Centre home for autism management that Ms. NAKAWESA SWARRA Reg. No. 22/4/1015/23/4/GMD/1015/PE

Is undertaking a course at KYAMBONO University which will add more skills to his/her future career as he/she takes care and understands children with special needs education especially with autism in Uganda.

We shall provide you the necessary information and support about Autism while at Dorna Centre home for Autism.

Yours sincerely,

MS NAMBI DOROTHY
Executive Director
Dorna Centre home for Autism

