



Universitat
de les Illes Balears

Title: Parental Implication in Children's Education: Benefits and Influential Factors.

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Master's Thesis

Master's degree in Teacher Training

(With a speciality/Itinerary of English and German)

at the

UNIVERSITAT DE LES ILLES BALEARS

Academic year 2016-2017

Date 02/06/2017

UIB Master's Thesis Supervisor: Cristina Suárez Gómez

Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to analyze the benefits of parental implication in children's education and see how it helps students to be successful at school and also in other areas of their lives. Furthermore, it is also important to consider all the factors, variables, and familiar situations that can have a significant influence on how parents decide to engage in education and the different ways of doing it. The most direct way is playing an active role in the diverse tasks that children perform at school. For this reason, it is also worth analyzing and designing distinct activities that require parental help and hence, promote their involvement in their children's school life.

Through the design of a didactic project specially intended to increase familiar support and assistance to students, the establishment of stable, solid, and trustful relationships among parents and children are fostered. In addition, the relationship between parents and teachers is also more likely to be satisfactory, creating a respectful working network in which all the members are actively involved and benefit students' academic success, which is the ultimate purpose of the present project.

Keywords: parental involvement, trustful relationships, students success, education, benefits.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Justification

Parental implication in children's education is highly beneficial for students' success in school (Child Trend Data Bank 2013, 2). They can take a great advantage from their parents' involvement in their educational processes and hence, their academic situation is affected positively.

For this reason, it could be very interesting to analyze and consider the different ways in which parents can become a substantial part in the education of their sons and daughters. Not only would it be worth exploring how families can help their children at home with the diverse tasks they have to carry out, but also how they can be part of their children's education at school, participating in different workshops or meetings to become really aware of the daily routine of students in class.

By acknowledging the positive influence of parental involvement in children's education, their implication can be promoted by providing a better educational system bearing in mind parents and families in the educational processes of the students. Moreover, it could be useful to look at the different ways in which this parental participation in diverse areas and tasks at school benefit children and their academic achievements. By raising awareness among parents and school staff of both the advantages of parental implication as well as the factors that have an impact on the degrees of implication, the whole community can work on prepare better students to be successful in education and also in their future lives. Children who feel accompanied by their parents and family in different aspects of their life, including education, are more likely to succeed in diverse areas of such and complete their academic studies (Child Trends Data Bank 2013, 2). Moreover, if both children and parents perceive that schools welcome them to participate in activities and exercises carried out in class, good relationships are established not only between parents and children, but also between parents and school members, and also students and teachers. This is something to bear in mind when it refers to education, as it

involves more than just teachers and school members. Instead, it should include parents and if possible other members of the community to design and develop a solid and stable network suitable for the education of children in our society.

In conclusion, then, I consider that this could be an interesting topic to explore and analyze due to its importance and relevance. Having a good educational system that includes teachers, parents and other members of the community helps children become successful in school and their future. However, to achieve a greater degree of implication on the part of all these members, it should be convenient to know the different factors and variables to take into account to be able to make them all participate.

1.2. Objectives

The fact of having parents involved in their children's education facilitates their learning progress and educational success. Schools have a crucial role in promoting parental implication in students' learning. They should facilitate opportunities for parents to have an active role at school and also communicate regularly with them to let them know how the education of their child is progressing (Tsurkan 2016, 390). It could be said, then, that it is very important how parents participate in their children's school life and the degree of their implication. For those students who have more difficulties to keep up with the normal teaching and learning processes of the lesson, having their parents involved in their school activities and learning may become determining for their success. For that reason, attention should be paid to how parents are implicated in their children's education and to what extent, and also how their involvement could be enhanced by school staff.

Thus, the main objective of this paper is to analyze, apart from the different benefits of parental involvement in children's education, the different ways in which parents can participate in school and how this can be promoted by community and school members, creating a network in which everyone is implicated. Moreover, it would be worth analyzing the diverse factors that have

an impact on parents' decisions to become involved and the degree of this involvement.

To do so, it would be interesting to carry out some projects and activities in which both parents and children, together with teachers, are involved. The idea of implementing workshops in which families gather together to talk about any topic that is of interest and do some projects or to guide parents on how they can help their children at home, not only with their homework, but also with their attitude towards the importance of education could be beneficial. Also raise awareness among parents on sharing with their sons and daughters good ethical values and respect towards school, the rest of classmates, and teachers.

On the other hand, as many of the concerns by parents are about the fact that they cannot help their children at home due to the complexity of contents, it could be helpful to implement some crash courses for parents in the subjects and areas they have more troubles with. Although it could be time-consuming for teachers and school staff, it would probably make parents feel more comfortable and secure with their abilities and capacities to help their children. Moreover, parents would also feel that schools really want them to be implicated in students' learning processes, which would definitely enhance relationships between parents and schools, and eventually with children, who would benefit from the fact of belonging to a strong network that helps them be successful in their education.

2. Background information

2.1. Theoretical background

Several authors and researchers have studied the different ways in which parental involvement in children's education can benefit students' progress and final success in school. According to the Child Trends Data Bank Institute:

Students with parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance, and are more likely to complete high school than students whose parents are not involved in their school (2013, 2).

However, there are different factors and variables that should be taken into account when trying to increase the degrees of implication by parents and families. Firstly, it is very important that schools become aware of their relevance in determining in which levels parents are involved and how they decide to be involved. According to Tsurkan, schools should communicate frequently with parents to let them know how their children are progressing at school and, what is more important, provide the appropriate opportunities for this communication to happen and suggest parents about the role they should play in their children's education. For this reason, parents should be welcomed to make decisions that could affect both themselves and their children's academic life. Schools which are successful in facilitating parental involvement in education focus on "building trusting collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members", which creates a sense of "partnership where power and responsibility are shared", and "recognize, respect, and address families' needs" (2016, 390).

Laureau, A. (1989) recommends that schools should also pay attention to different variables that can be significant in determining parental involvement, such as their own education, income, and marital status among others. However, there are three major reasons for families, and especially parents, to become involved in children's education according to Tsurkan: the first one is the parental role that parents construct of themselves, their personal sense of efficacy for helping their children be successful in class, and finally how they react to the opportunities and demands that both their children and the school can present (2016, 390-391).

Regarding the first reason why parents become involved, it has to do with the fact that parents associate the parental role with something that should include their involvement in their children's education. That is:

[W]hat parents believe they are supposed to do in relation to their children's education. This defines the activities that parents feel are important, necessary, and permissible to be involved in on behalf of their children (Tsurkan 2016, 391).

This is affected by the quality of the relationships, either between parents and children, or parents and schools. For this reason, depending on factors such as culture and class context, the connections established between families and schools can be very different and hence, influence on how parents engage in their children's school life.

Tsurkan's second major reason for parents to become involved in education has to do with their personal sense of efficacy when it comes to helping their children with tasks or issues related to school. According to him, this is based on four sources: the most powerful one is a direct successful experience in what they are interested. However, it is worth mentioning that other indirect experiences are also useful for their sense of efficacy. Also, verbal persuasion of others and parents' emotional arousal, that is, parents who are "emotionally concerned about their children's educational success" are more likely to be high in efficacy (2016, 390). All these are related to parents' perceptions about whether they are prepared and have the necessary skills to help their children, and if not, whether they can find alternatives of knowledge that help them increase their involvement.

Finally, the third reason for parental involvement in children's education is related to the parents' "reaction to the opportunities and demand characteristics presented by both their children and their children's school" (Tsurkan 2016, 390). This makes reference to the decision by parents to take part in their sons and daughters' school life depending on whether they perceive that both the school and their children give them the right opportunities to become involved. For instance, a child might be interested and enthusiastic about his parents participating in school activities and task or talking about his day at school. This would likely promote parents' participation at school. On the contrary, if a child is not willing to talk about school events or their parents going to visit and talk to teachers, they will probably not feel comfortable about their implication in their children's education. According to authors Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), the key question to be examined when analyzing the factors that encourage parents' involvement is: "Do the parents perceive that

the child and the school want and are interested in their involvement?”. This shows how important it is for parents to be taken into account by their children and the school to be eager to engage in their children’s education. In addition, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler propose some facts that are influential in making decisions about participation, such as “the child’s age and developmental level, overall level of performance, personality, qualities, and the general enthusiasm about parents’ involvement at school” (in Tsurkan 2016, 391).

However, Dolores Peca’s study in an elementary school in 2000 in Texas showed that many other factors also have a significant impact on parental involvement in children’s education. Those are the language spoken at home, whether it is the same as the one spoken at school or a different one; the level of education of parents; the school staff’s attitudes towards parents being involved in the school life –it is very important to gain the trust of parents and to inform them about any concerns or children’s progress; cultural influences; and other issues such as childcare. Apart from that, the study also gave parents the opportunity to suggest different ways to increase their degree of implication. First of all, they agreed with the idea that they need to feel more welcomed by the schools. Sometimes they can have the feeling that schools do not try to make them feel comfortable and hence, they do not feel at ease when engaging in their children’s school life. Another issue they talked about was the need of school staff of changing their attitudes in order to recognize the benefits of teachers and families or parents working together. According to the Child Trends Data Bank Institute, “[p]arental involvement in school, and positive parent-teacher interactions, have also been found to positively affect teachers’ self-perception and job satisfaction” (2013, 2). Then, not only is parental involvement beneficial for parents and children, but also for teachers and their professional self-esteem. It should be also taken into account family situation and different factors that can be significant such as the culture, the level of education or the language the family speaks at home, and what is more, school staff should take all this into consideration when planning activities in which parents are asked to be involved or help. Related to that, parents also agreed with the fact that teachers are not given much time to plan activities or tasks in

which parents can be engaged. For this reason, parents feel they do not have an actual opportunity to engage and be involved in their children's education. Moreover, they suggested that schools and teachers should provide them with useful tools and knowledge to be able to help their children and be involved in their educational progress. Finally, parents asked schools to recognize that their help to their children is a significant and valuable contribution even if they are not able to be present at school and do it from home.

Based on Joyce Epstein's, a professor at the Johns Hopkins University, table about the types of parental involvement, Tsurkan explained the different features that characterize each type of involvement. The first one is called parenting, and makes reference to "expressing expectations about student's education", "limiting television viewing", and "supervising time use and behavior". Regarding communicating, the second type, it refers to "parent-initiated contacts about academic performance", and "school-initiated contacts about student's academic program". Supporting school is another type that relates to the fact of "volunteering at school and fund-raising". Learning at home is related to taking "academic lessons outside school", "music or dance lessons" as well, and having "discussions about school and plans for future". The fifth type of involvement implies decision making or "taking part in parent organization" and finally, collaborating with community, which refers to "using community learning resources (like museum visits", or "taking part in community groups (scouts, sports)" (Tsurkan 2016, 391).

Apart from these six types of parental involvement, there are three major mechanisms that have a positive influence on children's educational progress and success. Those are modeling, reinforcement and direct instruction by parents in children's school tasks or activities. However, these mechanisms are not enough, according to Tsurkan, and must

play a role in the context of other variables that have important influences on education outcomes, such as child variables (e.g., abilities, learning style, developmental level), teacher and school variables (e.g., teaching effectiveness, curriculum appropriateness),

and broader sociocultural variables (e.g., cultural attitudes that may limit or enhance the opportunities available to any given child) (2016, 392).

It is then that parent involvement is a variable that increases children's educational success and creates more opportunities for them to acquire knowledge more successfully and achieve their goals at school. This is due to the fact that parental involvement becomes crucial when the normal teaching in a classroom is not enough for a child to learn (Tsurkan 2016, 392).

In 2013, the Child Trends Data Bank Institute collected data from the U.S. Department of Education that supports many of the already mentioned diverse factors that are influential in determining the degrees of parental implication in education. As reported by the study, the most common way for parents to engage in their children's school is by attending general meetings, followed by the attendance to scheduled meetings with the teacher, school or class events and finally, volunteering or being a member of a school committee. The statistics show that, although not much, the percentages decrease in 2012 indicating that the amount of parental involvement reduced with respect to 2007. Apart from that, other variables that the study analyzed were the differences by grade, differences by race, differences by economic level, differences by parental educational attainment and parents' languages among others. Next, each of these variables will be explained:

Regarding differences by grade, "parents are more likely to attend school meetings and events or to volunteer in their child's school when their children are in primary school" (Child Trends Data Bank 2013, 4). The study shows that parents are more engaged in their children's education from kindergarden to fifth grade, and the more advanced the education requirements or the level, the fewer parents participate in meetings or activities. Hence, the percentages of parent involvement are reduced over a ten percent in ninth through twelfth grade. However, data reveals that parental attendance to school events or activities increases when children are coursing in more advanced levels.

Differences by race are also proved to be significant in the U.S when determining the role of parents in education and their implication. The research shows that white students are more likely to have their parents involved in their education, while black or Hispanic students' parents are not that involved in the educational progress of their sons and daughters. Although it is not such a relevant and significant difference, the percentage of white students' parental implication ranges between 3 or 20 percent more –depending on the type of meeting or event- than in the case of Hispanic or black students' parents.

The other factor that is worth analyzing when describing the degrees of parental involvement in their children's education is parents own educational attainment. "Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to be involved in their children's schools" (Child Trends Data Bank 2013, 5). The differences in percentages of parents with higher studies being involved in their children's school life and parents with less than a high school certificate engaging in education are quite significant, being the latter almost a thirty percent lower with respect to the first one. According to the study, "[t]his gap is even wider when it comes to volunteering" (Child Trends Data Bank 2013, 5), as the difference is of over a forty percent less in parents who did not complete high school and did not graduate.

Regarding differences by poverty level, it is more frequent that families or parents that are above the poverty line engage in children's education than families under the poverty line. Although percentages are not very high in general, almost a twenty percent less of families under the poverty level attend school meetings or engage events in their children's schools.

The research shows that parents who do not speak the same language that is spoken in the school are less likely to be involved in their children's education. In this specific case, it refers to parents speaking English versus non speakers of English and there is a significant difference –over a twenty percent- when it comes to parental involvement between children with none of their parents speaking English and children whose father and mother speak English.

The Child Trends Data Bank Institute mentions the *No Child Left Behind* legislation as a way of promoting and increasing the degrees of parent implication in children's education. This law was passed in 2002 and aims at providing all children with the necessary skills and knowledges to succeed in education and in their future lives. One of the necessary aspects that the law recognizes is

that parents be informed on how they can be involved in school improvement efforts, and be provided with report cards on schools in their district, to help guide their involvement. Schools and education agencies are required to disseminate literature on effective parent involvement, and schools receiving Title I funding must have written policies, annual meetings, and training on parental involvement, and re-evaluate and revise their strategies when needed (2013, 6).

It is then that the establishment of a good relationship between parents or families and schools is essential to help children be successful in their education. The school is students' second learning environment, being their homes and families the first one. According to Amelia R. Granda-Piñán, from the University of Valencia, schools give children the opportunity of putting into practice their home values and test if they are useful in the real world and for real purposes, learning how to cope with them in the meanwhile. Moreover, schools provide students with two levels of experience: "the controlled experience [...] related to the one students acquire during the teaching-learning process that takes place inside the classroom and within an adult plan" and the one children acquire during "spontaneous situations [they] need to handle; those which have lack of control or aim, such as the ones happening in the playground or leisure time" (2013, 100-101). As children face two levels of experience at school that might be demanding for them, it is essential that families and teachers or school staff come to an agreement and take decisions that are coherent, consistent and unified. Like this, children will not get confused and in conflict when it refers to their moral values and principles. As stated by Granda-Piñán:

Children and teenagers are very sensitive to incongruities and incoherencies, possible causing them crises that, depending on the intensity, may get expressed as personal or

academic crisis, both closely related. Therefore, to give a correct education and foundation, there should be as few incoherencies as possible between the family and the school, what involved close collaboration between the two parties (2013, 101).

For this reason, teachers should understand that parental participation and involvement in their children's education is, apart from beneficial, a right that they have. To exercise this right of collaboration, it should be supported by the school by orientating parents and helping them find different ways in which they can be part of the teaching-learning process to help their children be successful in their education.

The fact that parents or families collaborate in school means that they also need to fulfill their duties. First of all, parents have to promote study in their sons and daughters and provide them with a suitable place so that they are able to concentrate and do their homework. Secondly, they also have to provide their children with all the necessary resources to successfully study and attend lessons. In addition, parents should make sure that their children attend school and are punctual. Another very important aspect is that families are respectful to schools and teach their children to also be respectful with their teachers, classmates and other school members. Finally, it is the parents' duty to incite, motivate and encourage their sons and daughters to go to school, study and learn. For this reason, and according to Granda-Piñán's article

Spanish education legislation considers parents as the agents with the main responsibility in matter of education. This is the principal point we must take into account when defining their implication in the educational system [...]. Parents must know what they are obliged to do in order to support their child's education and what they can ask others to do (2013, 105).

It is very important, then, that parents are very sure about their role in their children's education to be able to provide them with all the tools necessary for their development and improvement in the education process. Like this, students will be more likely to be successful both in education and later in life, as parental involvement is considerably beneficial for them.

In their paper, Cotton and Wikelund (1989) talk about some of these benefits and effects of parental implication. They state that children are more likely to achieve learning if their parents engage in their education, and the more active the implication is, the more achievements students benefit from, regardless their learning style or age. According to the authors, “the most effective forms of parent involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home” (1989, 3). That is, students whose parents participate more actively in their tasks and assignments show really remarkable results. In addition, not only is it beneficial for them to have their parents helping them at home, but also being active when it refers to school activities or meetings, either inside or outside the classroom.

Another aspect that research considers important for children to better achieve school goals is the fact that parents engage in their education as early as possible. The sooner the parents get involved in their children’s schools, the more effective and productive the effects will be, no matter the type of involvement and engagement. Indeed, “the schools with the most successful parent involvement programs are those which offer a variety of ways parents can participate” (Cotton and Wikelund 1989, 3). Schools that are aware and understand differences between families such as availability, willingness, ability, etc., provide many more options for parents to participate.

Regarding the effects and benefits of parental involvement on children’s attitude and behavior, it refers to the attitude towards schools and school staff, subjects, their behavior in class, the time they spend doing their homework, self-concept and expectations for their future, motivation, absenteeism and retention. In this specific case, all forms of parent involvement seem to be effective in one way or another. Even if parents’ participation is more passive than active, students seem to benefit from the fact of parents being involved, no matter the degree of involvement or how they do it. However, not only children benefit from this participation, but also school systems and parents take advantage of the relationship that is established when being engaged in their child’s school. According to Cotton and Wikelund,

[s]chool personnel benefit from the improved rapport that generally accompanies increased parent involvement. This rapport is often expressed in parents' increased willingness to support schools with their labor and resources during fundraising activities or special projects. And certainly, the many ways in which parent involvement benefits students' achievement, attitudes, and behavior have a positive impact on school staff (1989, 4).

Concerning parents, they also improve their attitude towards school and the fact of engaging in their children's education as their involvement increases. At the beginning, they are reluctant to think that their contribution to school is going to be effective and have so many benefits for their children. However, they end up very glad to discover what their involvement supposes to children and their success in education, as their learning, behavior and attitude are improved regardless of the income and educational level of parents and whether they are employed or not, showing that "all parent involvement works and works well" (Cotton and Wikeland 1989, 4).

As already shown in the research carried out by the Child Trends Data Bank Institute, Cotton and Wikeland's paper also analyzes the many differences between parental involvement in middle school and secondary grades. Both papers agree with the fact that the degree and type of involvement vary as children move to upper grades, making parents be less engaged in their children's education when they reach high school levels. Some of the reasons for that are the following: high schools are much bigger and farther from home, which makes it more difficult for parents to go so continuously; the curriculum and the contents students see in class are more demanding; in high schools there are many different teachers, usually one per subject area, which difficult communication; parents of students in high school are more probable to be employed; and finally, students start to define their own personality and hence, they become more independent from their parents. Notwithstanding, there are still many different forms in which parents can participate and help their sons and daughters in their educational process. For instance, Cotton and Wikeland suggest that parents can monitor and help students with their homework, help them make plans for the future and for university, agree with schools on

rewarding students' behavioral improvements and achievements, have regular communication with teachers about how their children are progressing in their education, and attend some activities and meetings done by the school (1989, 5).

This report focuses also on the benefits of parental involvement in disfavored children whose familiar socioeconomic status is low and, in consequence, it can make them face more inconveniences and problems in their education. Families with a low income are usually an underrepresented category when talking about parent involvement due to many different causes, such as:

[Their] lack of time or energy (due to long hours of heavy physical labor, for example), embarrassment or shyness about one's own educational level or linguistic abilities, lack of understanding or information about the structure of the school and accepted communication channels, perceived lack of welcome by teachers and administrators, and teachers and administrators' assumptions of parents' disinterest or inability to help with children's schooling (Cotton and Wikelund 1989, 5).

In spite of that, teachers and schools should take into account low-income parents as they are proved to be highly beneficial for their children's educational progress and success. The key point is that they need to receive the adequate training and help in the diverse types of parent engagement activities and help their children in education. As stated before, parental involvement is highly advantageous for children regardless of many parental variables and factors. For this reason, disadvantaged students make a lot of profit from parental involvement, no matter the familiar income and social status.

Apart from students who belong to families with low income, other disadvantaged students benefit greatly from parental engagement. "[S]pecial education, gifted, limited English proficient, and other student groups also experience achievement and affective benefits when their parents are involved in their learning" (Cotton and Wikelund 1989, 6).

Going one step further, the report analyzes the effects that parent involvement have in school governance, that is, in the decision making processes about school programs. The opportunities for parents to take part in such processes are given when they are school board members, when they participate in advisory committees or councils, or even when they are members of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). However, the fact that parents are involved in school governance creates a lot of controversy as teachers and school members are reluctant to let them become part of the school decisions, even if they would like to have a more active role.

The administration also supports the idea of parents being involved in schools up to the point that they should be able to make important decisions in school governance. It even affirms that school staff should train, help and encourage parents to engage in their children's education and school decision making. Nevertheless, teachers "disapprove of parent involvement in administrative areas such as teacher and principal selection and evaluation, and are less enthusiastic than parents regarding the utility of parent participation in other activities" (Cotton and Wiklund 1989, 7). These activities refer to the decision of which type of materials should use, which activities students should do and also, on what school budget should be spent.

Regarding the benefits of parental involvement in school governance, these include the following: the elimination of wrong assumptions that both parents and school staff have about one another; the parents' ability growth that serve as influence and resources for children's psychological, social and academic development; the expansion of parents' own confidence and skills that makes them be a better influence for their children; and finally, the increasing number of parents helping as supporters for the school. Like this, parents are able to better understand the structures and systems of their children's school and how the school staff works. According to the authors, "[t]hese experiences can expand parents' knowledge and increase their credibility with school staff as they move into decision-making roles" (1989, 7).

Despite all that, the major form in which parents get involved in their children's education is through their homework. It is one of the best tools for "letting parents and other adults know what the child is learning, giving children and parents a reason to talk about what's going on at school, and giving teachers an opportunity to hear from parents about children's learning" (Walker et al. 2004, 1). Thus, as homework appears to be highly significant for children's success in education, Walker et al.'s article provides parents with different strategies for promoting and helping student motivation and accomplishment of their homework.

The first strategy refers to the fact of interacting with the school or asking the teacher any doubts about homework. Very often, parents are enthusiastic about helping their sons and daughters in their education. However, they hesitate about how to help or engage in their children's school life. According to Walker et al., parents should at any moment "be encouraged to contact the teachers if they have questions about students' homework" (2004, 3). Depending on the age of the child, questions may vary significantly, but still, parents should be able to ask their children's teachers about any concerns they might have. The research recommends having written directions and purposes about homework so they can resort to them whenever necessary. Moreover, having an orientation meeting with every teacher –as in secondary education students have many different teachers- is also very helpful to verify his or her style when giving and correcting homework. Having this type of information will help parents guide their children when doing homework in many different ways, such as which skills should be prompted, which learning goals should be pursued, etc. Parents may also be encouraged to make any comments they feel are needed about homework or assignments so that both the teacher and the family have feedback on how the student is progressing at school and the difficulties he or she can have when doing the tasks.

Another strategy to help children perform their homework is, according to Walker et al., establish "physical and psychological structures for students homework" (2004, 3). These structures may vary depending on family context

and variables, the age of the students and the developmental level, and other personal characteristics, both of the parents and the child. What is important to take into account when establishing structures for homework is time and space organization. Parents should “create a comfortable, quiet environment and maintain consistent rules for homework completion” (2004, 4). They can also ask teachers for some advice to avoid having children distracted when doing their homework. As the research suggests, external distractions such as TV, cell phones, etc. should be turned off until children finish the homework. In addition, positive reinforcement is also an important way of motivating them to do the homework and letting them know that the effort they are making is valued.

The third strategy makes reference to the supervision of parents during the homework process. Parents need help to understand how to monitor homework and the best ways to do it depending on their children’s needs. This way, teachers can provide parents with some advice about how to increase parental monitoring effectiveness. The examples that Walker et al. provide are the following:

homework sign-off sheets for parents, requests for comments or questions about homework performance, or suggestions for detecting and responding to signs of distraction or frustration. Helpful monitoring may also include efforts to focus student attention by posing questions or comments [...]. Adults may also help students avoid unnecessary time on assignments (e.g., if students are to draw a picture of a math problem, they should be encouraged to focus on how the drawing depicts the problem, not the colors to be used in completing the work (2004, 4-5).

In other words, teachers should supply parents with many different resources to be able to usefully monitor their children’s homework, depending on their specific educational needs and the context and style in which the family is able to help the students with the tasks.

The last strategy to which Walker et al. refer is the response to how students perform their homework. It is highly beneficial for children to be given positive responses to their homework performance. To be able to give such

positive responses, parents need to be very aware of different factors such as the concepts that should be addressed in homework, information about how the homework should be performed and information about the goals of that specific homework task, since “[t]he more specific and knowledgeable parents can be in offering feedback and reinforcement, the stronger the impact on learning and student self-efficacy is likely to be” (Walker et al. 2004, 5). Parents are also in charge of motivating their sons and daughters when doing homework. When this is not properly done, they should give suggestions on how to get the homework better instead of highlight what is incorrect.

All in all and after having revised the most relevant literature about parental involvement in children’s education, it is undeniable that having parents engaged in their child’s school and education is highly and significantly beneficial for students’ educational progress and success, either at school and in their future lives. There are many different variables and aspects to take into account when analyzing how parents can participate in the school life of their children, regarding families, schools and the students themselves. However, it has been proved that any type of involvement is advantageous for children and their educational progress.

3. Development of the proposal

3.1. Didactic proposal

3.1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this didactic proposal is engaging parents in their own children’s school by making them participate in different tasks and projects that their children have to carry out. Based on all the literature that has been analyzed throughout this paper (Section “Background Information”), it can be said that parental involvement is a key factor for students to be successful in their education and later in life. For this reason, an effort should be made to develop new ways of involving parents and making them participants in the education of their sons and daughters, irrespective of their ages, their language,

their familiar and marital status, etc. Several researchers agree that any type of parental involvement is highly beneficial for students, regardless of all the factors that have been mentioned that can influence how parents can participate in different tasks either inside or outside the classroom, and the opportunities they have to do so. It is for this reason that schools, teachers and other members of the community should foster the engagement of parents in their children's school life, facilitating in every way possible their implication in projects and activities that their children are asked to do.

Thus, the main aim of the present proposal is to design a project through which parents must participate in the different and diverse activities proposed in order to create and reinforce parents-children relationships. By making them work in teams to carry out the tasks proposed by the school, both parents and their children create bonds that are not only beneficial for students' education progress and success, but probably for their relationship at home too. Taking into account that the most powerful environments that influence a child are the school and their home (Evanthia Patrikakou 2004), the combination of both could be relevant to create special bonds with their families and view the role of teachers and schools from a more positive perspective. As parents would be aware of what their sons and daughters' school life is like, they would be more likely to understand and comprehend what students' tasks are about and the different processes their children undergo during school years. This could probably be helpful when facing these types of processes and changes at home, and children and teenagers would probably feel more supported in a trusting relationship.

In addition, teachers can also take advantage of parents being involved in classroom activities and, in general, in their children's education in any way possible. As already mentioned, Cotton and Wikelund (1989) affirm that school members also benefit from the relationships that are established when parents engage in education and become involved with school staff to help students in their educational progress. The fact of having parents collaborating with teachers when preparing activities, performing them in class, playing an active

role in children's tasks –either at home or in the class-, giving suggestions to increase their own involvement, sharing experiences that can be beneficial and influential for children, among others, reinforce teachers' self-esteem and increases their professionalism due to the good and trusting relationship they establish to work on the students' behalf. Moreover, teachers are likely to feel that parents understand and value their work, as having parents present while they are teaching, probably make families understand better what their job is about and what it implies, and more importantly, the consequences and benefits it has for their children.

In conclusion, the objective of this innovative proposal is to achieve the creation of a trusting and respectful relationship between schools, parents and children to benefit students in their educational process and eventually, be successful at school and in their future. Through a didactic program designed specifically for parents and children working together in a classroom, the aim is to give parents the opportunity to be part of their children's education by making them participate in the activities and projects intended to create a good basis for a stable and solid relationship. Like this, parental involvement in education is promoted regardless of already mentioned factors such as income, marital status, or language spoken at home, and it is likely to become something natural if it is fostered at early stages of children's life. This would also help parents become familiar with what is expected from them and learn step by step how to do it from the beginning. Moreover, if children have their parents engaged in their education already in early stages, that will probably help them see it as something usual and essential, which will not be a problem when parents want to know and help their children in higher educational levels. Teachers will also have a very important role in this proposal, as they will be the main mediators between children and their parents or families throughout the whole process. They will be in charge of providing guidance and assisting parents at every moment they need, and also students. It will be the teachers' task to inform parents about the aims and objectives of the program and what they are expected to do to help their children and become an active part in this project. Moreover, they will have to listen to and understand parents'

suggestions and opinions to facilitate their engagement and make them feel that their contributions regarding their sons and daughters' education are highly valued. Teachers and also other members of the school should be available for any concerns and questions parents might have during the process. Like this, a good and successful working network will be created and parents, as well as children and teachers, will satisfactorily work together and in agreement.

3.1.2. Explanation

The didactic proposal of this paper consists of a program specifically designed to increase parental involvement in children's schools by planning some activities, tasks and projects in which both parents and their child have to participate.

It will be divided into six lessons of about one hour each. When planning it, several things must be taken into account. First of all, schools should provide an informative talk for parents to let them know everything about the program. It is important that in this talk all the questions and suggestions that come out are solved so that everything is clear before starting. At the same time, parents have to be asked several questions to know them and their characteristics to design the project. It would be ideal to have this informative talk at the beginning of the course so that the school can plan and design the project throughout the whole year and put it into practice before the end of it.

Regarding parental factors that can be important when planning the unit, a questionnaire could be the best idea to know their specific features and their familiar situation. In addition, it is probably a good method for parents to provide their personal information in a less intimidating manner, as they can write about their situation without having to share it with the rest. Questions such as their timetable and availability to assist to the lessons and meetings, their marital status to know who will accompany the student during the project, which of the two parents is going to be more likely to engage in the project –or if both of them will participate-, which language or languages are spoken at home, whether they understand the language that is spoken at school, if they have

more children to take care of and whether someone else can look after them during the hours that the workshop lasts, etc. Like this, schools would be able to organize themselves depending on the familiar characteristics that identify them in a more satisfactory and comfortable manner for parents and children. In this specific case, it would not be necessary to ask parents about their educational attainment as the project consists of a culinary workshop that is accessible to all parents regardless of their academic status. As the Child Trends Data Bank (2013) states, parents with higher educational levels are more likely to be involved and participate in different school tasks or activities with their children. And when their educational attainment is not so high, they might feel reluctant and embarrassed when it comes to helping their sons and daughters. For this reason, a basic culinary workshop in which they have to cook a simple recipe with their children and that does not require very advanced levels of education would possibly be the best option to engage all parents and help them feel comfortable. Ideally, it is a workshop designed to be suitable for all families, no matter age and other conditions, for this reason they would be asked about any relevant aspect possible to make it easy for them to assist with their children and enjoy it.

Apart from that and as Tsurkan affirms, all members of the community should be aware of the importance of children's education and "understand that the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise" (2016, 392). Taking this into account and although it might be difficult to achieve, it should not be a problem for parents to communicate to their respective jobs that they have to attend a workshop with their children at school. We all as a society should take a step towards the idea that parental participation at school is really significant and important for children and hence, a solution should be found to increase it as much as possible. With this, the present proposal intends to facilitate parents' their attendance and participation in the project, providing families with all the necessary tools and justifications to show in their jobs. Of course, the main aim would be to set the lessons during hours in which parents are available and do not have any problem in attending them. However, there can be some families with busier schedules and working

hours, which would mean that they would probably need to justify their work absenteeism for a few hours –not many though as the lessons last for one hour. On that basis, parents should be told the schedule of the workshop in advance to be able to notify at work. Teachers and school staff should be aware that parents' are usually employed and some of them work several hours and with complex working hours. They should make it as easy as possible for families to engage in the project and more importantly, enjoy the time they are spending with their children doing the tasks that are required. For this reason, it could be a good idea to plan a culinary workshop instead of any other type of activities that could be much more demanding for parents and time-consuming at home if they happen to help their children.

The project is called "Enjoy your meal", and as already mentioned, it will consist of a culinary workshop divided into six lessons. The first one would be an informative lesson in which families and children will team up to look for different recipes, create a new one and finally cook it together. It is mainly destined to children doing first of ESO, basically to promote parental involvement once their children get to high school and a higher educational level. A normal class of first of ESO includes from 20 to 25 students, so this would approximately be the number of students participating in the program, together with their parents or at least a member of their family. The six lessons will be carried out in three weeks; twice per week and one hour long each. This will be previously informed. They will be scheduled taking into account what families answered in the questionnaire that was handed in in the first meeting at the beginning of the course. The main aim or objective of the workshop is to engage parents' in their children's education by having them work together at school. This way, parents will be able to experience what their children's school life and projects are about, and more importantly, they will have the opportunity to spend time with their children and do things together –sometimes parents are too busy and do not realize that their sons and daughters need to have a closer relationship with them and spend much more time in their companionship. Moreover, parents will also be able to see the work teachers do to prepare

classes and projects for their students and probably value a bit more their profession.

Other objectives that should be achieved during the process of the didactic unit are, first of all, to learn how to work in a team and be an active member of it. As it is required that parents and their children work together, both parts should be actively involved in the project and do their best to participate and help in the elaboration of all the tasks, including written tasks, oral tasks and manual or more active tasks. It is very important that both parties understand their role and help each other, sharing responsibilities when it comes to performing one task. Parents will have to learn to share responsibilities by facilitating children's participation as much as possible. They should be more a guidance for children to take the responsibility of doing the tasks.

Another important objective to achieve is that children value the work their parents do for them and their help. It is essential that students understand and comprehend the significance of having their parents engaged in their school lives. This provides them with a very powerful help that will be highly beneficial for their academic performances and success, which in turn will benefit them for their future life. Although this objective might seem somewhat difficult to achieve, children need to realize and be aware of their parents' efforts to help them. For this reason, this didactic unit intends to make parents and children work in teams so that children learn to appreciate and respect their parents or family's interventions to assist them.

Regarding teachers and according to Tsurkan, the main aims for them should be that they "make parents feel more welcomed", "recognize the advantages of teachers and parents working together", "[t]ake parents' interests and needs into consideration when planning activities", and finally "[p]rovide parents with knowledge about how to be involved in a range of involvement opportunities" (2016, 391). All these characteristics are perfectly applicable to the present didactic proposal, as teachers should be in charge of making parents feel comfortable and confident when helping their children and

engaging in the project. By the end of the workshop, parents should feel that their intervention was worth it and that they really helped their children and were involved in their sons and daughters' education. The role of teachers, then, is significantly important to assist parents and give them advice on how to participate and support students so that they benefit from it as much as possible. It is also very important that they always bear in mind parents suggestions and considerations when planning the activities or while performing them. It should be taken into account that both sides, parents and teachers, are adults working together as a bigger team to benefit children in every aspect possible. Especially in front of students, they should show respect for the other's opinions and capacities, valuing and appreciating each other's efforts. Working in agreement is a crucial aspect to create a comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere in which children, parents or families, and teachers have a really good time and learn from others' contributions, opinions and points of view.

The first step to follow when planning the didactic unit is to inform parents. At the beginning of the course the school would plan an informative talk to let parents know about the project or workshop the school wants to carry out. In this informative talk, teachers and other school members would be present to explain in detail all the characteristics relevant for parents and what the workshop is going to be about. As previously said, it will consist mainly of a culinary workshop in which parents and their children have to prepare a recipe and then cook it. They, together with their children, will face activities related to getting to know more their sons or daughters –what they like, the subject or subjects they like the most, if they enjoy going to school, if their relationship with teachers is satisfactory or if they have any problems they would like to comment on, if they are happy that their parents are there to help them in the project, if they like cooking, what dishes they would prefer to cook, etc. They might seem quite obvious questions, but it would be good for parents and children to have this type of conversation in an environment which is not their home and once they know they are going to work together on a project. Moreover, if there are busier parents or families that do not usually spend much time with their children for reasons of work or others, this would probably be a suitable

opportunity for them to establish a deeper and closer relationship. Other activities they will perform are related to their children's self-confidence and reliance on themselves and their parents or families. Children have to be sure that having their parents at school with them doing a project together will be an incredible experience that will contribute a lot to their school performances, progress, and success. The feeling of reluctance by children to have their parents engaged and involved in school must be avoided to be able to work in a comfortable environment and carry out the project with success. Finally, the rest of activities will be destined to the elaboration of the recipe and its cooking.

3.1.3. Structure (see Annexes)

3.1.3.1. Lesson one: informative talk

The first informative talk will be also relevant because it will allow teachers to know parents' characteristics and family factors. In order to plan the workshop as best as possible, teachers and school staff have to know the essential characteristics of each family to adapt the unit and make it accessible to all of them. School staff would hand out some questionnaires or applications with different questions for parents to answer trustworthily. All these questions are very relevant for schools and teachers to elaborate the didactic unit satisfactorily and with success. Moreover, they all should be truly considered to make parents or families, and also children, feel comfortable and welcomed.

One of the first things to ask parents about is their availability, that is, the hours when they would be more accessible or willing to attend the workshop. Depending on their working hours, or whether they have other commitments or obligations, etc., the schedule of the course would be adapted as much as possible. Another possibility would be teachers and school members contacting parents' jobs to justify their absence if necessary. Another important issue would be the marital status of parents. This would be relevant for teachers to know which member of the family would be attending the workshop with the child. Anyone would be welcomed to the project, whether it is a single mother, a single father, a legal tutor, both parents –no matter if they are married or

divorced. The important thing is that the person accompanying the child is a member of the family that is responsible for him or her, and with whom he or she has some sort of relationship.

The next thing to ask about would be the language or languages that are spoken at home to see if it is the same that the one spoken at school or a different one. If it is not the same, it should be convenient to ask parents or the family member if they understand the language used at school. Related to that, it could also be important to know about the cultural background of the family to be aware of some relevant characteristics of it if it is necessary. Teachers have to take into account that it is a culinary workshop, which means that depending on the cultural background, some families might have some restrictions regarding food that must be respected. Apart from dietary restrictions related to culture, other aspects can also be important regarding food. Children or parents might have some illnesses that prevent them from eating a specific food, or intolerances and allergies, special eating habits –such as vegetarianism or veganism for instance- etc. In addition, it should be considered if parents have other children to take care of, and if so, whether anyone else could look after them while they are attending the workshop. Finally, space would be given for parents to make any other relevant comments or give any other information necessary for teachers to know, and of course, to make some pertinent suggestions.

After analyzing the questionnaires, teachers together with other school members would start to plan the workshop bearing in mind all the answers from parents or families. It is worth mentioning that the planning might vary throughout the course, as some familiar situations can change and other suggestions can arise. However, the final planning of the workshop should be made in advance so that both families and teachers can be prepared and think of their schedules. Once the final planning and schedule of the workshop is established, another informative talk would take place to inform parents about it and see if it fits everyone, taking into account all possible last minute changes and consequently, alterations of the schedule.

It is important to remember that the workshop is done to reinforce parents-children relationships mainly in education. For this reason, all parents' needs should be considered to make them feel welcomed and appreciated. Finally, the last informative talk would take place before the course starts and it would be one of the six lessons of the didactic unit, reason why both children and parents would have to attend it. In this informative talk all the details, final schedule –which parents would have been informed about previously via email, message or a circular letter-, the project to be carried out, and some of the activities they are going to do will be explained. The main aim of this last informative session is to start introducing the project to children and parents together so that they can start to think about it in terms of team work. In addition, if they have any questions or doubts as a group, it is an opportunity for them to ask and solve them.

3.1.3.2. Lesson two: reinforcement of relationships

To begin with the second session, the one after the informative talk, families and their children would start with the first set of activities related to the reinforcement of their relationship –obviously some families, maybe the majority, will have a very good relationship, but it could still be beneficial for them to do this type of activities. With these exercises, families will get closer to their children and have the opportunity to have conversations in an environment that is probably not the one they are used to. The activities of the second session would be the following:

- First of all a simple set of questions that would be given to children to ask their parents about themselves. The objective of this exercise is to see how much and what parents know about their sons and daughters, and specially to make parents realize about this fact. It is just an activity to reinforce their relationship by having the opportunity to know their child a bit more. It is very important to clarify that the purpose of that is not to judge anyone, but to have parents and children working in a natural and comfortable atmosphere in which they maintain conversations and help each other in the different tasks they have to do. Some of the questions

would relate to what children like to do, the subjects they like the most, if they enjoy going to school, about their relationship with teachers in general, if they have any problems at school or outside the school, the name of their best friends, their favorite food, etc. In general, they are relatively simple questions that would make parents know a bit more about their children and their likes and dislikes.

- Another task would be drawing an activity that the parent –or parents if both attend the workshop- and the child usually do together. In pairs or groups, they have to do a drawing explaining and depicting their favorite way of spending time together, whether it is reading, watching TV, going on excursions, going to the beach, having lunch or dinner, having talks at home, etc. The idea is that they reflect what they like doing by drawing together and helping each other in the design and the painting, respecting the other’s opinion and taking into consideration the diverse suggestions of the other.

- Finally, the last activity will be presenting in their groups or in pairs their drawings to the rest of the class. The idea of this activity is that both parents and children gain confidence as a group in front of the others. They will keep working in these groups for all the workshop, so it is very important that they feel comfortable in the group to carry out all the activities. Moreover, this is a very good way for parents to see and experience the feelings children may have when doing an oral explanation in front of their classmates. For instance, the fact of parents putting in their children’s shoes and having to empathize with them might reinforce even more their relationship and make them comprehend the feelings of their children. Having had this experience will help parents learn how to support their children when they face an oral presentation or a similar task. Another relevant aim of this activity is the sharing of ideas between parents. If every one of them presents what they usually do with their children, other parents or family members can get ideas on how to

spend more time with their sons and daughters, or how to help them in different areas of their lives.

With this second lesson, then, and by having participated in these three different tasks, parents and children will have had the opportunity to get closer and know a bit more about each other, specially parents about their children. By conversing about what they like or do not like and the things they do together, their relationship is likely to be reinforced and strengthened even more. Moreover, they can learn new ways of spending time together and having fun in a family setting by listening to other families' stories. Teachers, on the other hand, will have a more passive role. They would play the role of instructors and guides to help families and answer their questions or doubts when doing any of the tasks. They can also assess and assist families and children whenever they need it. However, during the whole didactic unit the main role will be played by parents and children, who will have the major responsibility in the performance of the tasks and activities.

3.1.3.3. Lesson three: increase of self-confidence

The third session is intended to increase and reinforce students' self-confidence and reliance on their families. In some cases, children can feel reluctant to have their parents involved in their education and at school. This situation should be avoided, and one of the best ways could probably be by doing some activities that show students the importance of their parents engaging in their education. At the same time, they would feel more confident when it comes to work with their family and hence, their self-confidence is also likely to increase. It should be taken into account that some students might have some self-esteem problems and insecurities. If they feel accompanied by their parents or family in every area of their lives, their security and self-reliance could be increased. Moreover, if they establish a good relationship with their parents to trust them enough, it will be much easier for them to talk about any problems or uncertainties they might have. Thus, as this aspect is really important, some of the activities to reinforce it could be the following:

- “What I do right”. It consists of both children and parents writing in a piece of paper four characteristics they think they do right. Then, they have to share their cards with the rest of the class; parents with other parents or family members, and children with other students. This way, the rest of the members in the class can have a look at other ideas and strategies parents can have to raise their children, or in the case of students, they can see what others do to help their parents at home and with household chores. At the end of the activity, the card returns to its owner and parents share it with their own children and vice versa. This activity is a really good method for both parents and children realize the tasks and housework both parties do to help each other. Sometimes it might be difficult for families to see what others do to help at home or with the different duties they have. This activity probably helps increase self-esteem, either on the part of parents or on the part of children, as they see and comprehend the point of view of the other and all they do to help.
- Another useful activity to establish a good and trusting relationship between parent and child could be “guide the blind”. It consists of covering the eyes of the partner and guiding him or her around the room by only using words. In turns, first children would have their eyes covered and parents would be the guides, and then the other way round. The main aim of this activity is to learn to trust others and rely on what they say. It is very important that both parents and children listen to their partner in order to reach the target place safely.
- In relation to that, there is another very similar activity that is called “the Titanic”. The class is divided into two, in this case parents and students, and both groups are set in the opposite extremes of the classroom. One of the two groups, either children or parents, will also have their eyes covered and then their partners have to guide them from the other extreme to arrive where they are. Both activities, “guide the blind” and “the Titanic” are probably perfect examples for families to see that it is

essential to feel confident and trust others to achieve the different goals and objectives in life, whether at school or in other areas. In addition, children can reach the conclusion that relying on their parents and sharing their ideas, opinions, doubts, and problems with them is one of the best options to establish a trustful relationship in which they can benefit a lot.

- Finally, the last activity of this session would be the description of a drawing. It would consist of giving a drawing to each of the children which they have to describe to their parent or parents. Obviously, they cannot see the drawing or have a look at it, so they have to fully trust their children and try to draw the picture as faithfully as possible according to what their child is describing. At the end of this activity, both drawings would be compared to see if they are similar or not. Like this, every pair or group would be able to analyze the quality of their communication and if they are able to understand each other. Communication is a key factor for families to be helpful and useful to others, and this activity could provide families with the occasion to verify if their communication is good or in which aspects they need to improve and change.

Ideally, in this third session parents and children should have learned the importance of trusting each other and the benefits of having a trustful and solid relationship in which communication is essential to live in a comfortable and happy atmosphere. Moreover, they learn it in a relaxed environment and while having fun and playing games, which could facilitate even more the fact of noticing how useful it is for children to have their parents engaged in their education. Hence, the feeling of reluctance would be more likely to disappear and children could really appreciate parental involvement in their education.

3.1.3.4. Lesson four: design of the project

In the fourth session of the workshop, every pair or group of parents and child would start to decide and define their recipe. They have to come to an

agreement and decide which dish they prefer to talk about and why. Of course, every team can choose the type of food they want to prepare and explain, whether it is their favorite meal, or one traditional meal from their culture, etc. They have to take into account that first they have to elaborate the recipe, writing all the ingredients that are needed for the elaboration of the dish, the quantities and finally the steps to follow to cook it. After that, they will have to cook it at home with the help of the other member of the group, which will be the parent or the child. It is very important that when they cook the dish, they do it together and help each other. It is also important that they spend some quality time in family to do the project. To demonstrate that, they will have to take some pictures to then show in class and demonstrate that they worked in teams to cook their recipe.

During the design and elaboration of the recipe, parents and children will be given time to decide the dish they want to cook, look for information on the internet –some computers will be provided to look for examples-, write the recipe with all the ingredients and its elaboration, decorate it if they want to add some pictures, etc. It is during this process that parents and children will have to put into practice all the characteristics and qualities that they have been learning in the two previous sessions. As the elaboration of the recipe and its eventual preparation is what constitutes the final project of the didactic unit, here they have to show the features that characterize them as a team. They have to agree on the dish they want to explain and cook, on the design of the recipe, respect the other's opinion and suggestions, mutually help each other, rely on the other's advice, etc. They have to bear in mind that in the next session they will have to present their recipes, so different stationary items – such as paperboard, colors, pens and pencils, and scissors among others- will be available for them to make a nice design of the written cooking directions.

The main objectives of this fourth session are, first of all, have parents and children work together, comfortably and enjoying the other's companionship. However, it is worth mentioning that this part of the workshop is one of the best opportunities for parents to better experience the school routine

of the students. By having to think, plan, make drafts and write down the final version of the project, parents can have a clearer idea of what their children are asked to do at school and the work and effort that is expected from them. They will probably understand and comprehend children's feelings when it comes to doing a project –especially in groups in this case-, and have to present it in class in front of the rest. According to Tsurkan, this is a very important aspect to take into account and promote:

Applied to parental efficacy, [...] parents who are emotionally and directly concerned about their children's educational success, or whose personal sense of adequacy is emotionally connected to success in helping one's children be successful, will be more likely than those with lower emotional investments or arousal to be high in efficacy (2016, 390).

Then, if parents are able to empathize with their sons and daughters and recognize the different emotions that their children undergo, they will be more likely to help them be successful in their educational progress and their involvement and engagement will be much more beneficial for students and their relationship.

3.1.3.5. Lesson five: presentation of the project

The fifth session will be dedicated to the presentation of all the recipes that families and their children have done in the previous lesson. All parents together with their sons or daughters would have to present their project to the rest of the class. In this presentation they should give information regarding the dish they have chosen to cook, the reason to choose it, any curiosities worth mentioning about it –whether it is because of religious or cultural reasons, because it is the child's favorite food or a dish he or she has cooked before, etc.

The aim of this oral presentation is to get parents and their children to work cooperatively on something they have previously planned and practiced. Moreover, it can also become a cultural exchange in which families expose their special dishes from their cultures, or family recipes, or a new recipe they found on the internet from a place they have never been to but they would like to

taste, etc. When doing the oral presentation each pair or group should take into account that there is no a spokesperson in charge of giving the whole speech. Instead, both parents and children should share responsibilities and equally divide the information each is going to give.

3.1.3.6. Lesson six: conclusions about the workshop

Finally, the sixth and last session will consist of a little and familiar meeting to have a snack and finish the workshop. Every team of parent and child will bring to class the dish they have previously cooked at home together. Together with it, they will have to bring some pictures of the cooking process to show that they did it together and helped each other. Moreover, they will be also asked to bring the recipe in case anyone wants to copy it after having tasted the dish. This last session is intended to provide parents, children and also teachers with a feeling of success after having worked hard to carry out the project. The effort made by all parties must be recognized and rewarded by everyone, especially school staff and other community members. It is very important that teachers understand the significance of parental involvement in children's education and share the responsibility of this education with them. In addition, it is also crucial that children see and comprehend how useful and beneficial it is to be helped by their parents or family members and have them engaged in their schools.

Apart from that, this last lesson will also be useful to gather information from parents and children. After having tasted all the dishes brought to class, all the participants will sit forming a circle to share with the rest their experience. The aim of this meeting is to know which aspects should be improved and which aspects made families feel comfortable, relaxed and enjoy the workshop. First of all, some questions would be asked out loud and everyone in the circle would answer them when it is his or her turn. Some of the questions would be the following: in general, what they think about the workshop and the experience; if they enjoyed the time they spent with their children and other families; what they think about the job teachers did; if children enjoyed the time they spent with their parents or family member; if they think it has been useful

for them to do this project with their parents and why; what they think about the activities that were done in the first two sessions and about all the activities in general; and finally, any other suggestions they might have –whether parents or children- to improve the workshop and the job done.

As has already been mentioned, it is very important that parents are able to make any suggestions they might have regarding the education of their sons and daughters (Cotton and Wikelund 1989). They are an essential part for the education of their children and future success. For this reason, part of the last session should be destined to the parents' and also children's suggestions, as the workshop intended to engage them all in different collaborative tasks to promote communication and trustful relationships among families. Moreover, if parents feel that their suggestions are well received and appreciated, they will probably feel more welcomed and satisfied with the workshop and their implication in their children's education. Like this, a solid and stable network that includes parents or families, children, teachers, and also other members of the community is starting to be established and recognized. Through this workshop, all the participants will ideally understand and comprehend the importance of working together and sharing responsibilities when it comes to helping children be successful in their education and consequently, later in life.

4. Conclusions

As it has been proved so far, parental involvement in children's education is a very significant factor for their educational progress and eventual success, whether at school or in other areas of their present and future life. In consequence, it has many important and notable benefits for them at any stage in their lives.

As the Child Trends Data Bank states (2013), children who have their parents engaged in their education are more likely to be successful in their studies and get to higher educational levels without behavioral problems or other related issues. For this reason, it is very important that parents, teachers, and other school members become aware of it and establish trustful

relationships to work together in order to construct a good and effective working network. Moreover, the sooner the families and teachers recognize the importance of parental implication in schools, and hence, participate in different tasks and activities, the more effective and productive the effects will be, no matter the type of involvement and engagement (Cotton and Wikelund, 1989).

On the other hand, not only is parental involvement beneficial for students, but also for teachers and parents themselves. When parents and teachers establish a good and respectful relationship in which they share responsibilities regarding students' education, both parties value much more the other's work and efforts. Teachers' self-esteem, professionalism and satisfaction with their job are increased as they feel their attempts and objectives are achieved and fulfilled. In addition, parents' self-confidence is also increased as they see that, regardless the type of help they provide their children with or the degrees of engagement in school, their implication and effort are appreciated and beneficial for their children (Cotton and Wikelund 1989). It is on the students' behalf, then, that parents and teachers should be respectful and considerate to each other, giving importance to coherence and reach an agreement when it comes to making decisions about school and education. Students are quite sensitive to incongruences and disagreements, and if they do not feel that the two most important ambits of their lives –schools and homes- are in consonance, they might experience some crises prejudicial for them. Teachers should bear this in mind and recognize parental implication at school as their right. However, it is also families' duty to provide children with the best education possible by providing a suitable place for them to work; giving them the right and necessary tools and resources to go to school and work at home; make sure that they attend school and are punctual and that they also respect school, teachers, and other school staff; and finally it is very important that they motivate students and encourage them to study and be successful in their education (Granda-Piñán 2013).

Although several researchers agree that, no matter familiar factors or situations, all types of parental involvement are beneficial and useful for children

(Cotton and Wiklund 1989), many studies analyze multiple and diverse factors or variables that can have a significant impact on how parents engage in schools and the degree of involvement they decide to invest. One important aspect for parents to take into account is whether they perceive that both the child and the school want them to participate in education and welcome them to take part in school life. This is a very decisive factor for parents, as they need to feel comfortable and welcomed to be able to help their children and have an active role in their education. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) agree that there are some variables that are important when determining the decision of parents to be involved. First of all, the enthusiasm of the child when it comes to receiving help from their parents and have them participate in school activities is crucial; also their age and the level of development together with the child's overall level of performance, personality, and qualities.

Related to this, Tsurkan (2016) states that one major factor for parental involvement is the opportunities they have to engage at schools and the demands presented by school members and children. That is, whether they feel that schools and their sons or daughters give them the opportunity to be present at school and help them in their educational process. For this reason, schools should design special events, workshops, programs or activities that include parents and make them actively help their children in the tasks they have to carry out.

In the example provided in this paper, both parents and students have to participate in a culinary workshop in which they have to help each other to finally achieve the objectives of the project. Through the performance of different tasks or activities, the aim is that families and children reinforce their relationships, increase their self-esteem and self-confidence –and also reliance on the other-, they design a project in pairs or groups, respect diverse points of view and suggestions, and are welcomed to participate and give their opinion to improve the type of involvement and help provided to children. Moreover, the project seeks to give families an opportunity to engage in their sons and

daughters' school life and be an important part not only for their educational success, but also personal development.

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Annexes

Session	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
Duration	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour
Participants	Teachers, parents and students.	Parents and students.	Parents and students.	Parents and students.	Parents and students.	Teachers, parents and students.
Objectives	Know parents' characteristics and family factors: availability, language, cultural background, any relevant information.	Reinforce parent-child relationship. Reinforce parents' and children's self-confidence	Increase children self-confidence and trust on their parents.	Design the final project: a recipe.	Presentation of the projects: the recipe done in the previous session.	Finish the workshop with satisfaction and ask about parents' and children's perceptions about the program.
Tasks	Complete a questionnaire and solve doubts.	-Questions which children ask to their parents about themselves. -Draw an activity that parent and child do together. -Present the drawings.	-"What I do right". Write four characteristics both parents and children think they do right. -"Guide the Blind". Guide the person with the eyes covered. -"The Titanic". Guide the partner to cross the room with the eyes covered. -Description of a drawing to the partner.	Parents and children have to design and elaborate a recipe they choose.	Each couple or groups of parents and child present their project to the rest of the class.	-Eat the different dishes families have cooked together with their children. -In a circle, all the members will talk and give his/her opinion about the program.
Results	Plan and design the project according to families' characteristics.	Create solid and stable bonds between parents and children.	Communication between parents and children to help each other and complete the tasks.	Parents and their children work together to elaborate a project.	Do an oral presentation together and parents can empathize with children and experience what it is to do a project.	Gather information about the success of the program and things to improve.