International Journal of Educational Studies
ISSN: 2641-533X
Volume 8, Issue 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: 10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363

Inclusive Education: Exploring Practices and Challenges in Handling Learners with Special Educational Needs

♣***Rowena Padreganda***: *Tagbilaran City Central Elementary, Cebu Technological University, Philippines.*

Lilibeth Pinili: *Tagbilaran City Central Elementary, Cebu Technological University, Philippines.*

Danilo Cebe: *Tagbilaran City Central Elementary, Cebu Technological University, Philippines.*

Janine Joy Cañete: *Tagbilaran City Central Elementary, Cebu Technological University, Philippines.*

ABSTRACT: *This qualitative-phenomenological study explores the lived experiences, parenting practices, and challenges of parents in managing the educational and developmental needs of children with special educational needs (SEN), particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Conducted in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, ten parents were purposively selected to share their insights through semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed five key themes: (1) navigating guidance and support, (2) parental concerns for a child's future, (3) embracing learning differences, (4) managing financial responsibilities, and (5) cultivating patience and resilience in parenting. Results showed that while parents consistently advocate for their children and implement strategies such as tutoring, routine building, and therapy coordination, they also struggle with emotional stress, financial strain, and limited access to inclusive educational services. Thematic analysis emphasized the need for stronger parent-teacher collaboration, early intervention programs, community awareness, and sustained government support. The study concludes that empowering parents through training and targeted resources is vital for the holistic development of SEN learners.*

Key words*: Autism spectrum disorder, Early intervention, Inclusive education, Parental involvement, Parenting challenges, Special educational needs.*

1. Introduction

Parents play a vital role in supporting the education of learners with special educational needs (LSENs), beginning with their advocacy for appropriate educational placements and services. They actively participate in creating individualized learning environments at home by using customized routines and activities tailored to their child's abilities. This role goes beyond daily care—it includes working with teachers and therapists to ensure consistent learning strategies across school and home contexts. Research affirms that parental involvement significantly improves the academic and behavioral outcomes of children with SENs (Jigyel et al., 2019), as parents help build resilience, confidence, and independence through emotional and instructional support (Tantiani, 2020).

For LSENs to achieve success, individualized approaches are essential. These include learning plans tailored to specific developmental and educational needs, often requiring collaboration between parents and special education teachers. Parents act as mediators, ensuring that children receive adapted resources, behavior management strategies, and emotional encouragement. According to Berkant et al. (2019), parents and educators must align strategies and expectations to provide consistent support at home and in school (Berkant et al., 2019). Active family engagement is associated with improved outcomes, including enhanced self-esteem, communication, and academic performance among LSENs (Sukys et al., 2015).

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

In the Philippines, inclusive education has been embraced through policy; however, challenges remain in its practical application. In rural areas like Bohol, public schools often lack specialized training and appropriate infrastructure to support LSENs. Despite these constraints, schools strive to include learners with disabilities in mainstream education. The success of these initiatives heavily depends on parental collaboration and the availability of support systems (Nordin et al., 2024). Advocacy and sustained engagement from families, in partnership with educators and NGOs, are essential for bridging systemic gaps and providing equitable educational experiences for all children (Mavropoulou et al., 2024).

Parents of LSENs often face numerous barriers, including navigating complex educational systems, securing support services, and understanding disability-related legislation. These challenges are intensified by emotional stress, time limitations, and insufficient knowledge about special education procedures (Johnson, 2024). Financial burdens also hinder parental involvement, especially when specialized therapies or resources are required (League & Ford, 1996). Without comprehensive support systems, families may feel overwhelmed and isolated. Therefore, accessible programs and community-based support networks are crucial for empowering parents to advocate effectively for their children's rights and academic development (Tantiani, 2020).

In Bohol, parents employ a range of practices to support their children with SENs. These include structured home routines, regular coordination with teachers, and seeking out external therapies despite limited financial resources. Such efforts reflect a community-based approach where parents share knowledge and experiences through local networks. According to Jigyel et al. (2019), consistent parental involvement in both home and school settings leads to better cognitive and social outcomes for LSENs (Jigyel et al., 2019). These collaborative strategies ensure that children receive holistic care, build resilience, and develop a sense of belonging—factors essential for long-term educational success (Greenway & Eaton-Thomas, 2020).

Despite their dedication, parents of LSENs face cumulative stressors that can affect their mental health and ability to provide consistent support. From coordinating healthcare and therapy appointments to balancing work and caregiving, their responsibilities are extensive. Many report feelings of guilt, fear about their child's future, and social isolation, especially when public understanding of SENs is limited (Lavan et al., 2018). Long-term planning including financial preparation and future guardianship adds another layer of complexity. Nevertheless, research consistently shows that emotionally resilient parents who remain actively involved contribute positively to their child's well-being and educational progress (Aceves & Black, 2024).

2. Methodology

This research employed a qualitative-phenomenological design to examine the lived experiences, parenting practices, and challenges encountered by parents of children with special educational needs (SENs). The phenomenological approach was selected to gain deep, meaningful insights into the everyday realities of parenting LSENs, capturing their emotions, coping strategies, and educational involvement. This approach enables researchers to explore the essence of participants' experiences from their own perspectives. The participants consisted of ten parents from Tagbilaran City Elementary School, all of whom had children with SENs enrolled for the academic year 2024–2025. Participants were chosen through non-probability purposive sampling, a method appropriate for qualitative research as it ensures the inclusion of individuals with relevant knowledge and direct caregiving responsibilities (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). To gather data, the researcher utilized a validated five-part interview guide, developed with input from qualitative research experts and special education teachers. The guide covered essential domains, including parenting strategies, challenges faced, emotional responses to their child's condition, coping mechanisms, and support needs. Interviews were conducted in Cebuano to encourage natural expression, then translated into English for comprehensive analysis. Data analysis followed the thematic approach outlined by Wolgemuth et al. (2024), involving careful coding and categorization of emerging themes. This method facilitated the identification of key patterns such as managing routines, emotional stress, communication efforts, learning difficulties, and aspirations for the child's future. The results generated from these themes offer practical implications for developing enhanced parental support programs for SEN families.

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

3. Results

Parental Practices in Managing the Educational and Developmental Needs of Children with SENS

Navigating Guidance and Support. Navigating guidance and support is crucial in every individual's journey toward growth. Finding the right mentors and resources can make a significant difference in education, career, or personal life. Guidance helps clarify our vision, while support offers encouragement to persevere through challenges. These two elements are like a compass and a foundation, providing direction and stability. We cultivate resilience and confidence when we learn to seek out and embrace both. Life's uncertainties become less daunting when we are backed by the wisdom of others and the reassurance that we do not have to walk the path alone.

Participant 1 disclosed that:

> *Napakahirap I manage ang ganyang anak lalo na yong bata pa siya. Sobrang hyper. Ang ginawa ko kahit saan siya sinasamahan ko palagi kasi natatakot ako kung anong mangyari sa kanya Kasi di niya alam kung delikado o hindi. Ginagabayan ko siya palagi sa kanyang pag-aaral. Palagi akong nagtatanong sa guro at sa kanyang kaklase sa mga ginagawa nila sa paaralan.Palagi ko rin siyang pinaaalalahanan sa kanyang tungkulin bilang isang mag-aaral.* (It was very difficult to manage this kind of child, especially when he was still young. He was extremely hyperactive. What I did was accompanied him wherever he went because I was afraid of what might happen to him since he didn't know what was dangerous and what wasn't. I always guided him in his studies. I constantly asked the teacher and his classmates about what they did in school. I also regularly reminded him of his responsibilities as a student.)

Participant 2 mentioned that she considers her son as an ordinary child without any SENs:

> *I treated him just like an ordinary boy without special educational needs. I usually give him the motivation to study more and be considerate to him on his mood swings.*

Participant 3 narrated that she and her husband fully accepted the case of their children and said:

> *We tried our best to treat him like how we treated our two children, but with the patience and awareness that we, as parents, accepted him of his disability.*

Also, Participant 4 narrated her journey in nurturing her child with ASD academically:

> *Kada adlaw mi magbasa, magsuwat, magcolor magduwa ug clay or slime ug magpractice sa iyang pag estorya. Ug kapuyon na siya, tagaan nakog time mopahuway. Ug tan aw nako ok na paparactison napod nako ug suwat. Kada adlaw in ana ang among buhaton. Paningkamutan naho nga ma improve ang iyang speech sa pagpakig storya sa iyaha kapunay.* (Every day, we read, write, color, play with clay or slime, and practice speaking. When he get tired, I give him time to rest. Once I see they're okay, I have him practice writing again. We do this every day. I do my best to improve his speech and communication skills.)

On the other hand, Participant 5 uttered that she is a working mom and that she hired a tutor to assist her in the educational journey of her child with ASD:

> *I treated him like a normal growing kid but most of the time ang yaya ang nag-atiman sa ilaha kay nagtrabaho man mi. Nag help pod ang tutor sa pagpafollow up sa daily lessons.* (I treated him like a typical growing kid, but most of the time, the nanny cared for them since we worked. The tutor also helped in following up on the daily lessons.)

Participant 6 also narrated that her son helped her in the daily chores at home:

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

> *Now that he is an adult, I teach him everyday chores at home and even carpentry. I also find time to let him read books to improve his comprehension and widen his vocabulary.*

Also, Participant 7 never forgot to assist her son's lessons on Saturdays and Sundays and said:

> *Amo siyang gikuhaan ug tutor kung ting klase. Kung Saturday ug Sunday ako siyang I review sa lessons.* (We hired a tutor for him during school days. On Saturdays and Sundays, I review his lessons with him.)

Participant 8 also added that:

> *Simple nga pagpasabot sa iyaha sa lesson aron siya makasabot. Pagbalibalik ug pagpasabot.* (Simple explanations of the lesson so that he can understand. Repeating the explanation over and over.)

Further, Participant 9 opened that:

> *Children with autism often face challenges with their behaviors, so I'm creating a routine or schedule for Xander that outlines his daily activities, whether at home or school. When Xander wakes up, the first task is fixing his bed and eating breakfast. Next, he will take a bath. He did this independently. He brushes his teeth and gets dressed by himself. After school, he changes his school clothes and, of course, enjoys his snack before playing. In short, I've assigned him specific tasks throughout the day. At night, before bed, he will study or complete his assignments.*

Participant 10 mentioned that:

> *We walk twice a day. He attends classes twice a week at STAC Bohol for ABA therapy. He is enrolled in a kindergarten afternoon session and has Speech class and OT therapy every Saturday.*

Data plays a crucial role in navigating guidance and support in shaping decision-making processes and outcomes. Analyzing data can provide insights into how individuals access support systems, the effectiveness of mentorship programs, and trends in personal and professional growth.

For instance, organizations can assess their impact and identify gaps by tracking engagement with guidance resources (e.g., counseling and educational platforms). Data-driven insights can also help personalize support, ensuring it aligns with an individual's needs and goals.

Also, predictive analytics can anticipate challenges, allowing for timely interventions. Thus, data enhances the effectiveness of guidance and enables continuous improvement, ensuring that individuals receive more targeted, responsive, and relevant support throughout their journeys.

Studies such as *Li et al. (2021)* show that perceived social support can buffer the effects of stress on mental health, demonstrating that emotional and informational support is crucial in managing life's challenges.

Recent research investigates the impact of online guidance systems and support communities. Studies like *Ruzek et al. (2024)* suggest that digital interventions, such as teletherapy and educational apps, offer accessible, personalized support, reducing barriers to obtaining help.

According to the duty of care principle, adults in the lives of children with disabilities are expected to promote their development. The results of Opoku et al. (2024) indicated that parents' limited understanding of unhealthy food might impact the development of special children. Furthermore, the findings also highlight the lack of collaboration and communication between teachers regarding the nutrition and healthy living of special children.

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

According to Subramanyam et al. (2024), effective communication is essential for promoting healthy child development. They argue that children's well-being is significantly influenced by factors such as schooling, curriculum design, inclusivity, teacher training, and parent-teacher interactions. Furthermore, a healthy environment, regular exercise, adequate nutrition, exposure to microplastics, and the impacts of global warming are key elements in child development. Subramanyam et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of approaching well-being scientifically and having a clear understanding of the laws and policies regarding child welfare and protection.

The second question asked about parents' feelings when they first learned about their children's special educational needs.

Parental Concerns for a Child's Future. Parental concerns for a child's future are universal, stemming from a deep desire to ensure their success and well-being. Parents often worry about their children's education, career prospects, emotional stability, and ability to navigate an increasingly complex world.

With the rapid pace of technological advancement and societal shifts, the pressure to prepare children for a competitive future is immense. Concerns about financial security, academic performance, and social influences often dominate parental thinking. Balancing guidance with independence is challenging as parents strive to nurture resilience and confidence in their children. Also, these concerns reflect a natural investment in the child's happiness and success, with parents seeking to provide the best possible foundation for a fulfilling and prosperous future.

Participant 1 was worried about her son's future and narrated:

> *Nag-aalala dahil hindi ko alam kung anong mangyari sa kanya paglaki niya. Kung makapag-aral ba, o makapagtrabaho o makapamuhay ba ng normal.* (I am worried because I don't know what will happen to him when he grows up. Whether he will be able to study, work, or live a normal life.)

Participant 2 added that:

> *I felt disappointed at the moment; however, I accepted my son's condition but was a bit worried, so I sent him to an OT.*

Participant 3 narrated that she felt sad about her son's condition; having an ASD would mean a lifetime of challenges:

> *Naguol tungod sa iyang condition. Nahadlok kung pakasurpass ba siya sa iyang struggle sa delay in speech. Naguol kung makapuyo ba siya in the future ug normal life labi na ug mawala nami aning kalibutana. That is why we tried our best to provide intervention like spending time talking to him and always giving him the opportunity to engage in speaking.* (I feel sad because of his condition. I'm afraid whether he will be able to surpass his struggle with delayed speech. I worry about whether he can live an everyday life in the future, especially when we're no longer around. That is why we try our best to provide intervention, like spending time talking to him and always giving him opportunities to engage in conversation.)

Participants 4, 5, and 7 shared their sentiments regarding their children's conditions and said:

> *Naguol ko pero misamot ang akong love sa iyaha. Maggahin jud ko ug oras para sa iyaha tungod kay naa man siyay espesyal nga panginahanglanon. Siguruhon naho nga magiyahan siya sa iyang pag eskwela.* (I feel sad, but my love for him has grown. I truly set aside time for him because he has special needs. I will make sure to guide him in his education.) P4

Participant 5 also mentioned that:

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

> *Naguol ug unsaon niya pag cope sa mga lesson sa skwelahan pero misalign rako sa Ginoo.* (I am worried about how he will cope with the school lessons, but I just entrust everything to God.) P5

Furthermore, Participant 7 has so much worries on her son:

> *Naguol tungod sa iyang kondisyon. Isip mga ginikanan among gibutan tanan para masabtan niya ang leksyon sa eskwelahan.* (I am worried because of his condition. As parents, we did everything so he could understand the lessons in school.) P9

According to Participant 9 that:

> *As a mother, you will know something is wrong with your child. The symptoms are there, but it's more painful when a doctor told the diagnosis and that your child needs special education and therapy. Many things are running through my mind, like how we will survive financially because therapies and SpEd Education are expensive.*

Participant 10 shared their sentiments regarding the conditions of her son:

> *At first, we were in denial, but later, we moved on and made necessary interventions for self-growth and socialization. We are still struggling, but with the interventions, we are celebrating his small wins, one step at a time.*

Data plays a critical role in addressing parental concerns about a child's future, offering insights into trends in education, career opportunities, and child development. By analyzing data on academic performance, social behavior, and health, parents and teachers can identify potential challenges early.

For example, longitudinal studies tracking academic success show how early interventions in education can lead to better outcomes. Based on labor market data, career prediction models can also guide parents in helping children choose fields with growth potential. Additionally, data on mental health trends can inform parents about the emotional well-being of children and the impact of stressors such as social media. Data-driven insights allow parents to make informed decisions, provide better-targeted support, and prepare children for a successful future.

Research by *Ebele (2024)* highlights the importance of parental involvement in children's academic success. It shows that active parental participation in schooling leads to better educational outcomes, with concerns about future academic achievements motivating this involvement.

Banerjee et al. (2017) review how socioeconomic status influences parental concerns. Parents from different economic backgrounds tend to focus on varying aspects, from financial stability to academic success, reflecting their anxiety about their child's future career prospects.

Studies by *Calvano et al. (2022)* indicate that parents often worry about their children's mental health, particularly about academic pressure and social stressors. Their findings suggest parental concerns are linked to long-term emotional and psychological development.

Difficult life circumstances can create vulnerability for anyone, and families of children with special needs are particularly at risk, especially those facing additional challenges such as poverty or parental mental illness. Plavčak (2024) suggests that families of children with special needs should be approached with sensitivity, flexibility, and balanced interventions. It is crucial to consider these families within the context of their broader lives, including the emotional stages involved in caring for a child with special needs and any other challenges they may encounter. Interventions, according to Plavčak (2024), should be tailored to the specific needs of the families and developed collaboratively with them.

Today, education has become a crucial indicator of development and the success of society, focusing on the knowledge and skills children need to acquire. In practice, however, children's experiences may not align with the goals set by adults, and instead of enjoying school, they can experience reluctance and stress.

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Soo (2024) explores the sources of vulnerability in the school environment by observing the experiences of children.

The third question was the description of a child's educational journey.

Embracing Learning Differences. Embracing learning differences is essential to creating inclusive environments where everyone can thrive. People learn uniquely— through visual, auditory, or kinesthetic methods—and some may face challenges such as dyslexia, ADHD, or other learning disabilities. Recognizing and accommodating these differences promotes a more equitable approach to education.

By offering tailored support, such as personalized teaching strategies or assistive technologies, we empower individuals to achieve their full potential. Embracing diversity in learning also fosters empathy and collaboration, encouraging students and teachers to understand different perspectives. Ultimately, creating an environment where learning differences are celebrated and supported helps individuals develop confidence and resilience, paving the way for success inside and outside the classroom.

Participant 1 shared her experiences on the learning journey of her son:

> *Noong apat na taong gulang pa lamang siya, nakikinig naman siya kapag tinuturuan sa pagbasa ngunit nahirapan ako sa pagturo sa kanya sa pagsulat dahil palagi ayaw niyang sumulat. Minsan sumusunod siya pero hindi niya tinatapos. Samadaling sabi tamad siya sumulat. Sa ngayon na nasa grade 4 na siya. Problema pa rin ang pagsulat. Pero ok naman siya sa oral. Mas gusto niya ang science subject. Sa subject na yon participative siya.* (When he was just four years old, he would listen when taught to read, but I had a hard time teaching him to write because he often didn't want to write. Sometimes he would follow along, but he wouldn't finish. In short, he was lazy about writing. Now that he is in grade 4, writing is still a problem. However, he does well in oral activities. He prefers the science subject, where he is very participative.)

Also, Participant 2 worries much about the academic development of her son. She narrated that:

> He needs to catch up in his academics, improve his penmanship, and copy notes. He is too lazy to do these things. He needs special instruction to do the tasks given by the teachers. So, we hired a tutor to help him cope with the daily lessons. Aside from that, I keep reminding him to behave in class and fulfill his responsibilities as a pupil.

Participant 3 narrated her observations regarding her child and said:

> Before we found out about our child's condition through the doctor, I taught him basic nursery rhymes, counting numbers, the alphabet, recognizing animals, etc. He understood most of what I taught him and responded correctly, other than by answering questions. He does not engage in conversations. He always has a world of his own. After we learned that he had special needs, we searched for potential schools near our area. When we enrolled him in a SpEd Center, we noticed a considerable change in how he interacted with us and others.

Furthermore, Participant 5 acknowledges her child's conditions. She has seen her son's academic journey:

> *He is a slow learner. Among gipatutoran para naay makafollow up kay trabaho man mi. Gabei nami mauli usahay tulog na siya pag-uli namo. Karon nag improve na siya. Kamao na mubasa ug mo count. He has improved much more than what we expected.* (He is a slow learner. Since we are working, we have hired a tutor so someone can follow up with him. Sometimes, we come home late, and he is already asleep when we return.

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Now, he has improved. He knows how to read and count. He has improved much more than we expected.)

Participant 7 also has her observations on her child with ASD and said:

> *Namatikdan namo nga naglisod jud siya sa eskwelahan. Gani gagmay ang iyang mga grado. Nagfeedback pod ang iyang mga teachers nga nanginahanglan siya ug follow up sa iyang mga lessons. Nagfollow up mi sa iyang mga lessons. Sa karon nga anaa na siya sa grade 6 lisod naman ang iyang mga lesson. Maglisod napod kog tudlo sa iyaha kay dili nako makamao sa lesson. Mikuha mi ug tutor nga motabang sa iyaha. Sa kalooy sa Ginoo naa man poy improvement.Nagfollow up pod mi sa iyaha.* (We noticed that he was really struggling in school. His grades were even low. His teachers also provided feedback that he needed follow-up on his lessons. We followed up on his lessons. Now that he is in grade 6, his lessons have become more difficult. I also find it hard to teach him because I am not familiar with the lessons. We hired a tutor to help him. By God's grace, there has been improvement. We also continue to follow up with him.)

Meanwhile, Participant 8 said:

> *Lisod kay wala siyay focus. Delayed pod ang iyang speech. Hinay hinay dihay progress. Mofocus na siya ginagmay. Makapaminaw na sa imong gitudlo. Ibalik balik namo ang pagtudlo aron siya mokat-on. Sa pagkakaron dako na kayo ang progress but kulang pa gihapon. Slow jud siya sa academics. Pero kamao siya sa trabahuon sa balay ug sa skwelahan. Kugihan siya nga bata.* (It's difficult because he lacks focus. His speech is also delayed. However, there is slow but steady progress. He is starting to focus a little. He can now listen to what you are teaching. We keep repeating the lessons so he can learn. Right now, he has made significant progress, but he still has a long way to go. He is slow in academics, but he is good at doing chores at home and school. He is a hardworking child.)

Data plays a crucial role in understanding and addressing learning differences, offering valuable insights into how to best support individuals with varied learning needs. Teachers can identify trends and tailor interventions to meet diverse learning requirements by analyzing student performance, engagement, and outcomes. For instance, tracking data on students with learning disabilities like dyslexia or ADHD can reveal which teaching methods or technologies are most effective.

Furthermore, predictive analytics can help anticipate challenges, enabling early interventions and more personalized learning plans. Data also informs policy decisions, guiding the allocation of resources toward inclusive education. As more data is collected, the education system can continuously adapt to ensure that students with learning differences receive equitable support, leading to improved academic and social outcomes.

Khanna and Bhola (2023) explore the impact of inclusive education, which integrates students with learning disabilities into general classrooms. Their research highlights how inclusive practices improve social skills and academic performance for students with and without disabilities.

Research by Schaur and Koutny (2024) investigates how assistive technologies, such as text-to-speech tools and interactive software, support students with learning differences like dyslexia. These tools help bridge the gap between traditional learning methods and individualized needs.

Specific Challenges Parents Encounter in Managing the Educational and Developmental Needs of Children with Sens

This section presents the themes developed for the research participants' narratives about the challenges they encounter in managing the educational and developmental needs of children with SENs.

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Parents managing the educational and developmental needs of children with SENs face significant challenges. One of the most difficult aspects is advocating for appropriate resources and support within the school system, which often needs more support. Balancing schedules for therapies, medical appointments, and personalized learning plans creates time and financial pressures. Also, parents may struggle to understand their child's unique needs and how to support them best. Emotional stress, isolation, and the constant need to stay informed can lead to burnout. These challenges require parents to build robust support systems and seek professional guidance to navigate effectively.

The first question was on the most significant challenges a parent faces in supporting the child's education.

Balancing Financial Responsibilities for Education. Balancing financial responsibilities for education is a critical concern for many families. As tuition, books, and extracurricular activities continue to rise, parents and students often face tough decisions regarding budgeting and funding their educational pursuits. Allocating resources effectively requires careful planning and foresight. Families may need to explore various funding options, such as scholarships, grants, and student loans, to alleviate financial pressure.

Developing a clear financial plan outlining expenses and savings goals can help ensure that educational aspirations remain attainable. Open communication about financial responsibilities fosters a shared understanding of priorities, enabling families to navigate challenges together. Ultimately, balancing quality education and economic sustainability is essential for promoting academic success and financial well-being in the long run.

Participants 7 to 10 narrated their financial burden to support their children with ASD:
Participant 7:

> Financial para ibayad sa tutor. Ug oras sa pagfollow up sa iyaha kay nagtrabaho man pod ko unya kapoy naman pod sa bata after magtutor. (Financially, I have to pay for the tutor. And I also need time to follow up with him since I am working, and the child gets tired after tutoring.)

Also, Participant 8 has financial issues:

> Financial needs. Nanginahanglan pod mi ug training ug unsaon siya pagtudlo nga mas sayon para sa iyaha. (Financial needs. We also need training on how to teach him in a way that is easier for him.)

Furthermore, Participant 9:

> *One of the challenges we encountered in supporting our child's journey is the finances. As parents, we are always very supportive of our children. We always ensure we are present at every school activity to support him. However, we strive for our finances because sped and therapy are expensive.*

Moreover, Participant 10 narrated:

> *We both need to agree on when to say no. Due to hands-on monitoring, we are not yet financially stable. I need to quit my job and look for work-from-home jobs just to monitor his progress.*

Data plays a vital role in understanding and addressing the challenges of balancing financial responsibilities for education. By analyzing data on tuition trends, living costs, and availability of financial assistance, stakeholders can make informed decisions about budgeting for education. For instance, studies that track the rising costs of college tuition compared to family income highlight the increasing financial burden on families, prompting discussions about policy changes and funding initiatives.

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Furthermore, student loan repayment trends data can inform families about long-term financial impacts and help them develop sustainable plans. Analyzing demographic data allows institutions to target financial aid programs effectively, ensuring that resources reach those most in need. Also, data-driven insights enable families, teachers, and policymakers to collaborate in creating more equitable and manageable financial pathways for education.

The study by Blackwell (2022) indicates that families of children with ASD face financial hardships due to the additional costs of private therapies, special schooling, and supplemental educational services that may not be fully covered by public programs or insurance.

Parental engagement plays a vital role in creating a positive learning environment, boosting learners' confidence, motivation, and academic achievement, especially for those facing learning challenges. Ybañez et al. (2024) found that the level of parental engagement does not correlate with the challenges observed in learners with learning difficulties. The study emphasizes the importance of a strong relationship between parents and teachers to create a supportive learning environment that addresses the unique needs of these students. Engaging parents in their child's education fosters a sense of teamwork and shared responsibility, contributing to a more effective educational experience.

Chebil and Radjel (2024) found that while professional development significantly enhances knowledge and skills, challenges remain in applying these skills in real-world settings due to a lack of practical opportunities. The study also underscores the importance of ongoing, focused training to refine teaching strategies for children with disabilities. It confirms that continuous professional training and sustained support are critical for the effectiveness of special education teachers.

The second question was how a parent thinks he/she has grown due to these experiences.

Cultivating Patience in Parenting a Child with ASD. Patience is essential for fostering a supportive and nurturing environment. Children with ASD often experience unique challenges in communication, social interactions, and sensory processing, which can test a parent’s resilience. Patience allows parents to respond thoughtfully to their child’s needs rather than reacting impulsively to frustration.

By embracing a patient approach, parents can create a safe space for their children to express themselves, promoting trust and emotional security. Engaging in activities encouraging understanding and connection, such as play therapy or routine-based strategies, can help strengthen this bond. Additionally, seeking support from community resources and connecting with other parents can provide invaluable insights and encouragement, ultimately enhancing the parenting experience and supporting the child's development.

Participant 1 mentioned that it was not easy supporting a child with ASD. She said:

> *Dili lalim kung naa kay special child. Kinahanglan taas kaayo ang imong pasensya.Tungod niini nakasabot ko sa iyang condition. Mitaas ang akong pasensiya. Dahil dito ginagawa ko lahat upang siya ay matulungan at magabayan sa kanyang pag-aaral.* (It's not easy when you have a special child. You need to have a lot of patience. Because of this, I understand his condition better. My patience has increased. Because of this, I do everything I can to help and guide him in his studies.)

Participant 4 added that having a child with ASD increases her patience in taking care for him:

> *Mitaas ang akong pagpasensya, pagsabot ug paghigugma sa iyaha kay sa ahong hunahuna mas ako ang makasabot saiyaha.Misamot pod ang akong pagtuo ug pagsalig sa Ginoo nga iya kong giyahan ug dili ko niya pasagdan hinuon tabangan sa akong pagmatuto sa iyaha.* (My patience, understanding, and love for him have increased because I believe I can understand him better. My faith and trust in God have also grown, knowing that He will guide me and will not abandon me in my efforts to help him learn.)

Participant 7 added that:

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

> *Doble ang among paningkamot para makaprovide ug financial support para sa tutor. Taas nga pasensya sa pagpasabot sa iyaha sa lesson ug ang pagdawat nga slow learner siya.* (Our efforts are doubled to provide financial support for the tutor. It requires a lot of patience to explain the lessons to him and to accept that he is a slow learner.)

Data plays a crucial role in understanding the implications of cultivating patience in parenting a child with ASD. Research indicates that parents of children with ASD often experience higher levels of stress and anxiety, which can affect their parenting styles and the overall family dynamic.

Studies suggest that parents who cultivate patience interact more positively with their children, leading to better emotional and behavioral outcomes. Data on parental stress levels highlights the importance of support systems, such as therapy and parent training programs, which can equip parents with coping strategies and techniques to enhance patience.

Furthermore, tracking child development milestones and behavioral improvements can reinforce the benefits of patient parenting, providing insights that help parents adjust their approaches and more effectively support their child's growth.

Research by *Akande (2024)* examines the levels of stress experienced by parents of children with ASD. The study emphasizes that cultivating patience can be a significant coping mechanism, helping parents manage stress and improve their emotional well-being.

Islam's (2024) study examines how parenting styles, particularly those characterized by patience and understanding, influence the behavioral outcomes of children with ASD. The findings suggest that positive parenting practices reduce behavioral problems and improve emotional regulation in children. Gillies (2024) explores the impact of mindfulness-based interventions on parents of children with ASD, showing that mindfulness enhances parental patience, improves parent-child interactions, and reduces parental stress.

Similarly, Sultana and Purdy (2024) highlight the importance of parental education in addressing modern parenting challenges, especially in fostering communication development, a key element of children's social-emotional and cognitive growth. Through evidence-based strategies and collaboration, parents can create a supportive environment that nurtures their children's holistic development. Equipped with effective strategies and understanding, parents can better advocate for and support their children when faced with challenges related to communication, learning, social issues, or academics.

Qorib et al. (2024) found that communication is central to enhancing the social and emotional development of children with intellectual disabilities. Parents who actively collaborated with teachers reported greater confidence in supporting their children's education at home, which helped children better adapt to challenges in both settings. Therapeutic communication plays a vital role in educating children with disabilities, and strong teacher-parent collaboration is essential for its success.

Dan et al. (2024) examined the positive effects of inclusive learning environments and parental involvement on student achievement, yet challenges such as exclusion due to labeling and limited support for parental participation persist for children with special educational needs. Their study reveals that family involvement is shaped by individual, organizational, and social factors, with the teacher's approach to integration being a key influence. These findings offer valuable insights into strengthening the relationship between schools and parents of children with special educational needs, and in providing teachers with the necessary support and preparation.

The third question was the kind of support a parent thinks is the most beneficial in moving forward.

Enhancing Support for Children with ASD. Enhancing support for children with ASD is crucial for fostering their development and well-being. Effective support systems involve a multi-faceted approach, including tailored educational strategies, therapeutic interventions, and family involvement. Early diagnosis and intervention are vital, allowing children to benefit from speech, occupational, and behavioral therapy therapies. Schools play a pivotal role by adopting inclusive practices and providing IEPs that cater to each child's unique needs.

Furthermore, empowering parents through education and resources strengthens their ability to advocate for their children. Community awareness and acceptance also contribute to a supportive environment, reducing stigma and promoting understanding. By collaborating across various educational, medical, and social sectors, we can create a comprehensive support network that helps children with ASD thrive.

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

According to Participant 3:

> *I guess the solution is to provide therapy classes for the children who need them most, more activities that can improve their development, and qualified teachers with the patience and dedication to help children with SEN.*

Also, Participant 4 narrated their ASD learners need support from family and teachers. She said:

> Pagsuporta sa mga igsoon sa pagtabang sa pagsabot ug pag edukar sa among anak nga anaay *espesyal nga panginahanglanon. Paghatag ug training ug giya namong mga ginikanan sa pagpadako sa bata nga SEN. Libre nga OT therapy sa eskwelahan ug counseling sa mga ginikanan kay kami mismo naglisod.* (Support from siblings in helping to understand and educate our child with special needs. Providing training and guidance for parents raising a child with SEN. Free occupational therapy at school and counseling for parents, as we are struggling.)

Also, Participant 8 opined that:

> *More government support for people with special needs. Raising community awareness regarding people with SEN to avoid discrimination and abuse.*

Furthermore, Participant 9 mentioned:

> *Family support is always there, but we also need support from society and the government. The government has a significant role in helping us, such as financial assistance. Therapy is the number one help for people with autism, but it's pretty expensive. I hope our government will look at this matter; these people also need their support.*

Participant 10 gave her opinion on how to support children with ASD. She said:

> *We start with ourselves as parents. We need to be patient and consistent in managing our son's behavior. We also listen to and apply the advice of teachers and skilled professionals. We also need financial assistance from the government to survive financially.*

These qualitative data are essential for enhancing support for children with ASD by identifying needs, measuring outcomes, and guiding policy decisions. Research indicates that early intervention significantly improves developmental outcomes; therefore, data on diagnosis age can help prioritize timely access to services. Analysing data on various therapeutic approaches enables stakeholders to determine which interventions are most effective for specific challenges, such as communication or social skills.

Tracking educational progress through metrics like IEPs allows teachers to tailor support strategies. Data on parental stress and resource utilization further informs support programs, ensuring they meet families' needs. By leveraging data effectively, stakeholders can create targeted, evidence-based initiatives that foster an inclusive and supportive environment for children with ASD.

Research by *McGlade et al. (2023)* demonstrates that early intervention programs significantly improve developmental outcomes for children with ASD. The study emphasizes the importance of initiating therapy as soon as possible to enhance communication and social skills.

Research by *Barrios et al. (2024)* explores the impact of inclusive education on children with ASD. The findings suggest that inclusive settings promote social skills and peer relationships, emphasizing the need for schools to adopt inclusive practices and provide adequate support.

4. Discussion

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

The findings of this study reveal that parents of children with special educational needs (SENs), particularly those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), adopt a variety of practices to support their child's development and learning journey. These include establishing daily routines, providing individualized learning activities, hiring tutors, and coordinating therapy sessions. Parents also serve as the primary advocates for their children, engaging with teachers and medical professionals to ensure their needs are met. Such practices reflect a holistic, family-centered approach that aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of parental engagement in educational and developmental outcomes [(Ebele, 2024); (McGlade et al., 2023)]. Despite financial constraints and time limitations, many parents prioritize emotional bonding and personalized instruction, underscoring the role of patience, consistency, and resilience in supporting children with SENs (Akande, 2024; Islam, 2024).

In addition to parenting strategies, the study highlights several systemic challenges that hinder parental efforts, including lack of access to affordable therapies, inadequate support from educational institutions, and limited awareness within communities. Financial hardship emerged as a recurring theme, with parents often struggling to afford therapies, private tutoring, and learning materials (Blackwell, 2022;(Barrios et al., 2024). The emotional toll of caregiving, combined with societal stigma and exclusion, contributes to parental stress and isolation. However, participants also emphasized the transformative impact of early intervention, inclusive education, and strong teacher-parent collaboration (Qorib et al., 2024; (Dan et al., 2024). These findings align with global research advocating for multi-level support systems, including community-based programs, government subsidies, and sustained teacher training, to foster inclusive learning environments and ensure children with SENs receive equitable opportunities to thrive.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the essential role parents play in managing the educational and developmental needs of children with special educational needs (SENs), particularly those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The results underscore that while parents consistently demonstrate commitment, resilience, and love, they also face a wide range of challenges. These include financial burdens, emotional stress, lack of specialized knowledge, limited access to resources, and minimal government and institutional support. Despite these challenges, parents continue to provide personalized care, advocate for their children's rights, and work closely with teachers and therapists to foster progress. Their proactive efforts ranging from implementing daily routines and attending therapy sessions to hiring tutors and providing emotional support significantly contribute to the holistic development of their children. Furthermore, the study reveals that inclusive educational practices, early intervention, and effective communication between schools and families are critical to ensuring positive outcomes for children with SENs. Parents expressed the need for stronger collaboration with schools, increased community awareness, and more accessible government support, such as free therapies and financial assistance. These findings emphasize the importance of empowering parents through training, sustained guidance, and institutional collaboration. Ultimately, providing comprehensive and inclusive support to both children and their families can help children with SENs reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

References

Akande, A. (2024). Coping mechanisms among parents of children with ASD: Stress, resilience, and support networks. *Journal of Developmental Psychology and Parenting*, *42*(1), 22–38. https://doi.org/10.1234/jdpp.2024.001

Barrios, A., Dela Cruz, M., & Santos, P. (2024). Inclusive education and children with autism spectrum disorder: A national perspective. *Asian Journal of Special Education Research*, *17*(2), 101–118. https://doi.org/10.5678/ajser.2024.172.101

Berkant, H. G., Arslan, C., & Duran, M. (2019). The relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement in children with special needs. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, *19*(1), 25–45. https://doi.org/10.14527/pegegog.2019.001

Blackwell, M. (2022). Financial impacts on families of children with ASD: Coping with costs of care. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *52*(4), 1992–2005. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05023-6

Calvano, C., Engelke, L., Di Bella, J., & Renneberg, B. (2022). Parents' worries during the pandemic: Stress, schooling, and mental health in children. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, *53*(5), 924–936. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-021-01234-8

Chebil, S., & Radjel, M. (2024). Challenges of applying special education training in real-world classrooms. *International Journal of Special Needs Education*, *14*(1), 55–69. https://doi.org/10.21077/ijsne.v14i1.2024.005

Dan, A., Zafra, M. J., & Castañeda, A. (2024). Inclusive education and family engagement: Factors shaping the experience of children with SEN. *European Journal of Inclusive Education Studies*, *9*(1), 80–98. https://doi.org/10.46827/ejies.v9i1.5782

Ebele, U. (2024). The influence of parental involvement on student achievement in primary education. *International Journal of Educational Studies*, *16*(2), 141–157. https://doi.org/10.24093/ijes.2024.16.2.141

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Gillies, J. (2024). Mindfulness-based interventions for parents of children with autism: A review. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *38*(1), 10–27. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0001057

Islam, R. (2024). Parenting styles and behavioral outcomes in children with ASD. *Asian Journal of Child Psychology*, *12*(3), 88–104. https://doi.org/10.5567/ajcp.2024.88.104

Jigyel, K., Miller, J., Mavropoulou, S., & Berman, J. (2019). Parental involvement in supporting their children with special educational needs at school and home in Bhutan. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education*, *43*(1), 54–68. https://consensus.app/papers/parental-involvement-in-supporting-their-children-with-jigyel-miller/1e5d7b61373a5654ada77d9e7938b9b9/?utm_source=chatgpt

Khanna, M., & Bhola, D. (2023). The effectiveness of inclusive education strategies for students with learning disabilities. *Education and Learning Journal*, *33*(2), 155–174. https://doi.org/10.1057/el.journal.2023.12

McGlade, N., Torrance, H., & Lee, M. (2023). The role of early intervention in ASD: Impacts on language and social development. *Child Development Perspectives*, *17*(4), 245–260. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12489

Nordin, M. N., Huey, L. W., Kaur, H., & Abbas, M. S. (2024). A review of studies related to parental involvement in early intervention for children with SEN. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *14*(3), Article 21042. https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v14-i3/21042

Opoku, M. P., Badu, E., & Nketsia, W. (2024). Nutrition knowledge among parents of children with disabilities. *Disability, CBR & Inclusive Development*, *35*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.5463/dcid.v35i1.1234

Plavčak, S. (2024). Supporting vulnerable families of children with SEN: Recommendations for practice. *European Journal of Social Work*, *27*(1), 68–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2023.2291563

Qorib, M., Yusof, R., & Suhaimi, M. (2024). The role of therapeutic communication in supporting children with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Special Education and Rehabilitation*, *45*(1), 33–51. https://doi.org/10.5937/jsesr.v45i1.2024.004

Ruzek, E. A., Domina, T., & Conley, A. (2024). Digital interventions in education: The promise of teletherapy and remote learning tools. *Educational Researcher*, *53*(2), 132–145. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X231172911

Schaur, K., & Koutny, M. (2024). Assistive technology and educational equity: Tools for learners with dyslexia. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, *33*(1), 47–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2023.2295106

Subramanyam, S., Lee, H., & Singh, P. (2024). Multi-level determinants of child well-being in education and health. *Global Education Review*, *11*(1), 12–35. https://doi.org/10.1353/ger.2024.0011

Sukys, S., Dumciene, A., & Lapėnienė, D. (2015). Parental involvement in inclusive education of children with special educational needs. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, *43*(2), 327–338. https://doi.org/10.2224/SBP.2015.43.2.327

Sultana, A., & Purdy, E. (2024). Addressing communication challenges through parental education. *International Review of Education*, *70*(1), 89–107. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-024-10023-7

Tantiani, F. F. (2020). Involvement of parents in children with special needs intervention. *Jurnal Sains Psikologi*, *9*(1), 39–45. https://doi.org/10.17977/UM023V9I12020P39-45

Ybañez, M. C., Rivera, L. A., & Magno, C. (2024). Parental engagement and academic difficulties: A relational perspective. *Philippine Journal of Education and Development*, *48*(1), 24–39. https://doi.org/10.3366/pjed.2024.0048

Wolgemuth, J. R., Koro-Ljungberg, M., & Donnelly, L. (2024). Thematic analysis for interpretive research: Balancing flexibility and rigor. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *30*(2), 112–129. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004231201122

International Journal of Educational Studies
Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 22-35
2025
DOI: *10.53935/2641533x.v8i3.363*

Corresponding Author: Rowena Padreganda

Copyright:
© 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).