

# PARENTING

BY VIOLAH NIWAHA

## WHY PARENTS MUST BE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Education does not begin at the school gate. It begins at home.

Long before a child enters a classroom, they learn whether their efforts are appreciated, whether someone listens to them and whether their dreams matter. In this way, parents remain a child's first teachers and their strongest source of encouragement.

However, not every child returns to school feeling supported. In some homes, school matters are rarely discussed. When parents are not involved in their children's learning, the effects often go beyond poor grades. A child may begin to feel anxious, lonely and unsure of themselves.

### MORE THAN SCHOOL FEES

Mrs Beth Kaguma Rwankore, a mother and child counsellor, says parental support means more than simply meeting school requirements.

"Parental support goes beyond paying school fees and buying books," she explains.

"It includes showing interest in a child's school life, asking about homework, attending parent-teacher meetings and participating in school activities."

For children in boarding schools, such involvement becomes even more significant. Visiting days, for example, provide reassurance that learners are remembered and cared for. This emotional connection often motivates them to stay focused on their studies.

Conversely, when parents are absent from their



A mother multitasks at home, pausing her work to engage with her young child. Experts say small moments like these have a lasting impact on a child's development and confidence

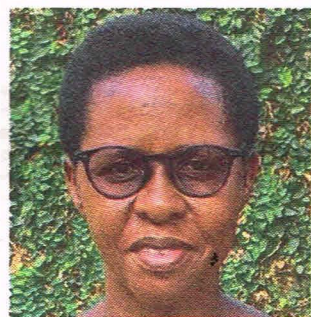
children's academic lives, the consequences can be serious. Learners may feel neglected, anxious or unsure of themselves, which can affect their concentration and mental health.

"A student whose parents never ask about school performance may start hiding poor grades, skipping assignments or losing interest in class," Rwankore says.

"On the other hand, children whose parents support them, even in small ways, tend to be more confident and perform better in school."

She also cautions parents against responding harshly when children perform poorly.

"Some parents become



Rwankore

very rough with learners who bring home low grades," Rwankore says.

"Instead, they should work with teachers to identify solutions such as remedial support and encouragement depending on the learner's needs."

### INVOLVEMENT A BOOST TO SUCCESS

Similarly, Dr Sabrina Kitaka, a paediatrician at Mulago Hospital and senior lecturer, emphasises that parental involvement is essential for a child's success.

"When teachers and families work together, students tend to perform better academically, attend school more regularly and stay motivated," she says.

Kitaka adds that parents can support their children both at school and at home



Nimusiima

by communicating with teachers, attending school meetings and helping children manage homework and other responsibilities.

Despite these benefits, some parents struggle to stay involved. Busy work schedules, financial difficulties and limited awareness about the importance of parental engagement often prevent them from participating fully in their children's education.

### TEACHERS SPEAK OUT

Teachers, however, say they quickly notice the difference between learners who receive parental support and those who do not.

Elite Nimusiima, an early childhood development teacher, said school events such as graduation ceremonies, sports days

### PARENTS SPEAK OUT

Jovan Gumisiriza, a father of three, believes modern fathers should be more involved in their children's education.

"I work on a construction site, and sometimes school meetings are scheduled during my working hours," he says.

"But when I miss them, I find other ways to connect with teachers or spend time learning with my children."

Reflecting on his own childhood, he says his parents rarely followed up on his education, which motivated him to do things differently. "I want them to know their father was present, not just busy," he says.

Another parent, Aaron Twesigye, a retail shop owner, says he and his spouse share responsibilities to remain involved in their children's education. "I run a shop with long working hours, but on weekends I check their exercise books and help with homework," he says.

Meanwhile, some parents say making time for their children's education, even with demanding schedules, is worth the effort.



Gumisiriza

and music festivals provide opportunities for parents to encourage their children.

"Parents are invited to these events to cheer their children, but only a few turn up," she says.

"Children whose parents attend feel proud and supported, while those whose parents do not come often feel lonely."

In response, teachers try to create supportive environments for all learners.

To support such children, Nimusiima says, teachers encourage teamwork and inclusive learning so that every child feels valued.

Ruth Ahereza, another teacher, says building strong teacher-learner relationships is equally important.

"When a child trusts a teacher, they become more open about their struggles

and more willing to learn," she says.

### A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

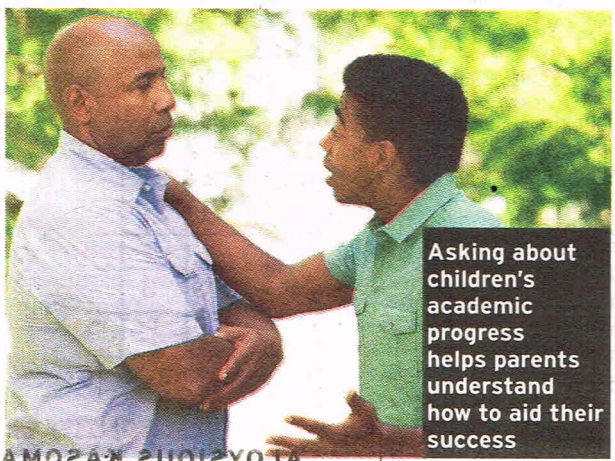
Students themselves also notice when parents take an interest in their education.

Joel Ashaba, a student, says his performance improved when his mother began attending visiting days and communicating with his teachers.

"My performance in geography was not good," he says. "But when my mother started asking about my progress and brought me extra practice papers, I began taking it seriously. I later passed my exams with a credit."

Ultimately, education experts say parental involvement does not require extraordinary effort. Simple actions such as asking about a child's day at school, checking homework or attending school meetings can make a significant difference.

In the end, when parents show interest in their children's education, they send a powerful message — that learning matters and that the child is not alone on the journey.



Asking about children's academic progress helps parents understand how to aid their success